

BENDIGO-OPHIR GOLD PROJECT

Statement of Suze Keith on behalf of Sustainable Tarras Inc

DATE: 6.4.26

1. My name is Susan Elizabeth Keith. I am providing this statement as part of the comments submitted by Sustainable Tarras Inc on the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project.
2. My statement is about the following topics:
 - a. Landscape
 - b. Light
 - c. Noise
 - d. Natural environment
3. I have read the following application documents:
 - a. I have read a number of the application documents and the expert evidence provided by Sustainable Tarras. These are listed in Appendix 1.
4. I am aware that the Panel has been given thousands of pages of technical analyses to aid your decision-making regarding the Bendigo Ophir Gold Project. I hope my statement below provides some contrast as I describe the why I care so deeply about this remarkable piece of Central Otago and seek to ensure these values are understood, recognised and protected for future generations and the environment itself.

5. Deserts, for Instance

The loveliest places of all
are those that look as if
there's nothing there
to those still learning to look

Brian Turner, from *Just This*, VUP, 2009

To step onto the broad glacial plains of Tarras is to step into the widest sky, the mighty tumult of the Clutha Mata Au, the grandeur of Mount Pisa, the St Bathans Range, Grandview and the awesome Dunstan Mountains. It takes my breath away.

By day the light can be flat, almost one dimensional, under a hoar frost, as if you're walking around the largest fridge in the world. The horizons shrink, sounds are muffled and the sun is missing in action. Or it could be the sharpest, clearest blue and gold day, which unavoidably slows my breath, calms my mind, lifts my eyes and heart.

By night the land disappears and the sky takes prominence. As has been seen in this period of frequent auroras, the dark sky in Central Otago is of significant value to

locals and visitors alike. The visibility of the Milky Way on a clear night in Tarras is simply gobsmacking.

To trail alongside the Clutha Mata Au, well below the plains, is another experience again - the regenerating kānuka, kōwhai, and flaxes, the frequent visitor of the black morph pīwakawaka, the roar of the river delivers something quite different. The water mesmerises as the light alters the colours from green to blue to gold rendering the water either immensely appealing or unwelcoming. Saved recordings on my phone reminds me of this beauty when I can't get there in person.

The Lindis River gifts us a gentler experience - the swimming hole under the Lindis Bridge provides a safe spot for families to swim, wade, swing, picnic and rest. The Lindis acts as a signpost to me - "Welcome back! Tarras is just around the corner."

The scale and remarkableness of this place humbles me. It reminds me that I am simply someone passing through, a mere blip in this landscape. It gifts me something quite indescribable, and I am so very grateful. I am still learning to look.

Appendix 1 - Reports

1. A.02B Legal Overview
2. A.10 Section 3 Project Description
3. A.13- Section 6 Assessment of Environmental Effects (PDF, 923 KB)
4. B.01 Benje Patterson (People and Places)- Economic Impacts of the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project (Benje Patterson 2025) (PDF, 894 KB)
5. B.06 Mine Waste Management Limited Mine Impacted Water Overview Report (MWM 2025) (PDF, 1 MB)
6. B.21 Tailings Storage Facility Technical Report
7. B.40 Mine Closure Management Plan
8. B.44 Bond Introduction
9. D.03 Schedule One Central Otago District Council and Otago Regional Council Common Conditions
10. F.16 Bendigo Ophir Gold Project Pre Application Engagement Report
11. G.02 Ecological Management Plan
12. G.07A & G.07B Landscape and Ecological Rehabilitation Management Plan
13. G.09 Matakanui Management Sanctuary Plan
14. G.16 Tailings Management Plan
15. Sustainable Tarras' Legal Overview and Expert Evidence