
Waihi North Comments on the conditions

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Comments on the Conditions to the Waihi North Expert Consenting Panel

Chris and I previously provided our comments to the Panel about the Waihi North Project, particularly the Gladstone Open Pit.

Our home is only about 400 metres from the edge of the proposed GOP pit, and 700 metres from the Northern Rock Stack. Although the GOP may not be developed for several years, the knowledge that it is planned so close to us already causes great anxiety and affects how we feel about our home and future.

After reading the draft conditions, we appreciate the effort to address environmental effects. However, several of our earlier concerns remain, and we ask that the conditions be strengthened in some important areas.

Property value effects

The potential loss of value to our home remains our greatest concern. We purchased our home in 2016 specifically because it was not near any mining activity, and we have invested significant savings into renovating it for retirement. We also recently installed solar panels, expecting to live here comfortably for some time.

We are elderly and will rely on the value of our home to fund future assisted-living options. If our home loses value, we will not be able to recover that loss, and our choices for the future will be reduced. We cannot understand how this potential negative economic impact can fall on us as individuals while the company stands to make millions of dollars from the project. That seems very unfair.

Our home is outside the areas that Oceana has defined for its Top-Up Scheme, yet we feel that the Gladstone Pit is so close to us that it must affect the appeal and value of our property to future buyers. Nothing in the conditions currently addresses this potential impact on us or others in our neighbourhood, which is deeply concerning.

We ask the Panel to require that the company make its top-up payments or buy-out options available to all affected residents on Barry Road as one of the conditions.

If the environmental protections put in place through your decision and implemented by the company prove to avoid any loss to people like us (which seems to be the thinking) then the market difference will be nil and the company will not need to make any top-up payments. But if the loss does occur, we will not be able to afford to bear it ourselves.

Noise, vibration, blasting and dust

These issues will directly affect our home. We are not technical experts and find the conditions very hard to follow. Many conditions rely on detailed management plans, but we struggle to understand what these plans will mean for us day-to-day.

We would like the Panel to require that the Noise, Vibration/Blasting, and Air Quality Management Plans be independently peer reviewed before they are certified by the Council. Independent review would give the community a little more confidence that these plans are robust and protect residents as much as possible.

We also ask that the consent holder be required to start planting vegetation buffers as soon as possible. Early planting would help reduce future noise and dust effects and would demonstrate goodwill toward the community.

We thank the Panel for considering our comments and for the opportunity to participate in this process.

Anne & Chris Hatton

