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## Submission

To: The Expert Consenting Panel

ProjectName: Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project

Applicant: Matakanui Gold Limited

### SUBMISSION ON A FAST-TRACK CONSENTING APPLICATION

#### 1. Personal Details

- Full Name: Lilian CHERYL Lucas
- Address: [REDACTED]
- Email: [REDACTED]
- Phone: [REDACTED]

#### 2. Right to Speak

- I wish to speak to my submission.

#### 3. Position

- I strongly **OPPOSE** the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project.

#### 4. Reasons for Opposition

- **Irreversible Environmental Damage:** It is inevitable that this project will cause irreversible damage to flora, fauna and landscape features. Landscape features will be modified and not reinstated. Instead, the large, engineered landforms proposed, will permanently alter the existing naturalness. This is not some high rainfall area with gentle green pasture, this is rugged, semi- arid, schist country, with distinctive divaricating shrubs, tussock and cushion plants. Land, that once disturbed, may never recover as we see it now. These sites would be very difficult to revegetate, and one only needs to view the tailing spoils left from previous miners to see that natural revegetation does not occur readily.
- **Water Contamination/Usage:** The mine will risk contaminating or reducing the [water table/local river/groundwater], which is essential for [local farming, drinking water, native species]. Water is and always has been, of particular concern at Bendigo with the lowest rainfall in New Zealand. Can we trust that the water take required for the mine will not have an adverse effect on domestic use? Can we trust that the tailings dam will not leak?
- **No Genuine Public Input:** This Fast Track process is a truly David and Goliath one. Those opposed are forced to use all their resources, energy and

volunteered time to stand up to a large company that pays people to lure the locals with sweeteners such as fireworks displays and rugby sponsorship.

Santana Minerals has never made any attempt to inform us, or to engage with us as an affected party, on any level whatsoever. Mining companies have no legal obligation to inform landowners that their land has been “pegged out” with a prospecting permit, but in my mind, in terms of general courtesy and community engagement, this omission is inexcusable.

- **Economic/Social Disruption:** I am old enough to remember the houses being trucked from Roxburgh to Benmore on the gravelled roads through Tarras. Biking to catch the school bus we would have to dive into the ditch to let them pass. Given the mine is hoping to employ over 300 people it is inevitable that there will be a big increase in traffic on our already busy, very fast roads that have no proper passing lanes.

Employment appears to be a major draw card to proceed with the mine. Central Otago currently has a very low unemployment rate and from searching job vacancies over the last year, I have observed that there are many vacant positions at existing mines in the South Island.

Like the construction of the Clyde dam, the mine proposal could be a relatively short-term sugar hit for a few workers.

- **Climate Concerns:** It is not possible to say how great the carbon emissions will be as Santana Minerals have not given clarity on this and the company are expecting that the public will trust them to be responsible and transparent in reporting this matter. Without specific information, and a board chairman who is a climate change sceptic, I am not at all optimistic that there will be any care taken to limit carbon emissions.
- **No Critical Reason to Mine for Gold.** Gold is not on the critical mineral list and is not in short supply globally or nationally. Only 7 – 10% of gold mined will be used for medical and tech purposes, the rest will be made into jewels or stored in vaults.

Mining a unique landscape for questionable financial gain of a material not critical to survival is certainly not a legacy our generation should ever be proud of. Added to this is the possibility of the engineered structures not withstanding natural catastrophic events.

- **Trust.** The applicants are asking the public to trust them that they have covered all risks. The applicant is yet to win my trust. Santana Mining has said they will be tracking noise levels; they will keep checking and reporting emissions; they will be closely monitoring all aspects of the mining processes. Isn't this like marking your own homework? Who else will be monitoring the processes and how will the public know if the company is complying with environmental standards?

**OR** Will there be added pressure on the local authorities to undertake such work?

If there were to be structural or company failures, can we be sure of proper redress? We have examples in New Zealand where there has not been proper redress or adequate financial cover for mistakes as in Stockton mine clean up; the Pike River Mine disaster and CTV building collapse.

- **Conservation:** This proposal will entail the partial lifting a conservation covenant. I am particularly concerned that if this mine is allowed to proceed it will create a precedent and an unstoppable rush to mine all over Central Otago and the South Island.

## 5. Detailed Comments (personal stories)

My husband (Peter Rough) and I own [REDACTED]. This is the original Bendigo Township site at the corner of Loop Road and Blue Mines Road.

This land has remnant gardens (a very early grapevine which some say is the first grown in Central Otago, rosemary bushes and fruit trees) and the remains of a hotel from the early days of mining at Bendigo.

I have collected local kanuka seed and planted on this site. It is an unkempt haven for skinks and insects plus a local beekeeper's hives.

We have house plans for this site which are currently on hold.

The Christchurch Earthquakes disrupted our home and work spaces in Christchurch and Lyttelton and this in turn changed my work focus for 12 years as I worked to reconstruct chimney pots, finials and tiles for notable Christchurch buildings (Riccarton House, The Sign of The Takahe, Christ's College etc) as well as continuing exhibition work.

My sisters and I own [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which borders the Clutha river.

My parents, Dick and Elsie Lucas owned Bendigo Station from 1947 – 1979. They were careful stewards of this land and I firmly believe they would not agree with

industrial mining of this land, even though, coincidentally, mother's stepmother spent some of her youth living at Bendigo when her father was a mine engineer.

I have worked as a ceramicist for 50 years (18 of those years also tertiary teaching) I was honoured to become a Aotearoa New Zealand Arts Foundation Laureate in 2025.

<https://www.thearts.co.nz/artists/cheryl-lucas>

<https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events/cheryl-lucas>

<https://mcleaveygallery.com/artists/cheryl-lucas>

<https://thenational.co.nz/artists/cheryl-lucas/>

Bendigo has been pivotal in shaping how I think and in what I do. The vast quiet open spaces, clarity of light, purity of air, warm north facing slopes with divariating plants and schist formations are some of the distinct aspects I have referenced many times in my work over the years. *Shaped by Schist and Scoria* was the title of my solo exhibition at Christchurch Art Gallery 2022. This title is a direct reference to my Bendigo and Lyttelton addresses.

I owe it to the memory of my parents and my offspring to defend the preservation of this land from any further destruction.

Memories:

Ironically ceramic shards discarded by the Chinese and English miners is an early memory for me fossicking amongst the tussocks around Welsh Town.

Pre school years, just me and my dad bouncing around unrestrained on "instant roads" as my father called them to check stock and pastures in our first landrover.

We sometimes called in on goldminer and water race cleaner Wattie Thompson, until a major sudden flood in 1971 forced him to shift camp. "the creek, bringing great quantities of stone and gravel which were deposited to some depth over the scene of his labour..." Geoffrey R Duff *Sheep May Safely Graze* 1978.

Working on Bendigo Station for a year after Art School. Rabbits had become rare thanks to rabbiters and 1080. If I saw one rabbit Dad would get the map out and have to know exactly where it was.

No mine shafts were covered when we lived there. We knew where they were and how dangerous. Dad knew exactly the right spot to stand and throw a stone into the Bluemine. We would stand back and wait and listen for the stone to hit the bottom.... 13 seconds it took I seem to recall.

- **To Conclude** Mining a unique landscape for questionable financial gain of a material not critical to survival is certainly not a legacy our generation should ever be proud of.  
1978 In the book *Sheep May Safely Graze* by Geoffrey R Duff:..."centuries later came the white man who in a short span of 100 years was to bring about more change to the landscape and environment, alas not all for the better, than nature would have achieved in thousands of years"

**6. Relief Sought**

- I request that the Expert Panel declines the application for the gold mine in its entirety.

Signature:  Date: 8 April 2026.