



Bendigo-Ophir Mine – comments from adjacent landowner David and Juliet Towers

From Juliet Towers [REDACTED]

Date Wed 8/04/2026 9:14 PM

To FastTrack Substantive <Substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz>

1 attachment (768 KB)

Bendigo mine comments.jpg;

Dear Panel Members

We are writing in response to your invitation to comment on the Bendigo-Ophir Mine project you are assessing.

We are the residents and land owners of [REDACTED]

We wish the panel to know that we are strongly opposed to Santana's fast-track application and all proposals for any mining at Bendigo.

We have been in the area for 11 years and then here at Thomson Gorge Road for the last 5 years. There was no indication from real estate agents or previous owners of any gold exploration in our close proximity, we would not have pursued any purchase of a home for ourselves and 2 children if we were aware. We work as a nurse and local truck driver for our local community, so we value our community along with the serenity of life at home.

We also have a peony farm on our property that will be affected by the hundreds of vehicles going to the mine causing a significant increase in dust along the road.

Our concerns are as follows:

- House value decline along with the inability to sell. 3 homes currently on the market with the mine being evidenced as the factor in not being able to sell.
- Quality of life – noise intrusion, constant significant HGV and other vehicles, the mine will operate 24/7....the miners on shift will get a 12 hour break between shifts ..for us it will be constant.
- Advised by a Santana representative who made initial visits to our home that there would be around 500 vehicles per day passing our home. In comparison to the 10-30 per day on a busy day.
- Dust – Damien Spring advised us that dust doesn't travel! The high winds and the dust already experienced in this area tell a different story. However the dust that the mine would create, will

contain cyanide, arsenic and other heavy metals and toxins that contaminate our air we breathe, waterways, from which we get our drinking water. Our home grown fruit and vegetables and the soil they grow in. We have not seen any dust monitoring carried out in our residential areas to help them assess the impact we will face from their activities. An article on dust from a gold mine in close proximity of residential homes stated on dry, windy days it is advisable to close windows. So, no enjoying sitting outside enjoying our garden, or hanging laundry to get contaminated with toxic dust. This along with other evidence, for example the Cadia Mine in Australia where local residents are taking class action about the pollutants they are being exposed to.

- We as shareholders and users of water from Ardour Pipeline Ltd have our water tested annually. There is a huge concern that our water will be contaminated with an increase of toxic elements from the mine that affect our ability to remain in our homes, yet as stated above selling is currently impossible unless we make a loss on what we have paid for our homes. This along with the toxic slurry in the tailings dam that remains there well after mining finishes. We live in an earthquake prone area with the risk of the AF8 event being discussed at local and civil defence levels as a significant risk. Any earthquake will pose a risk to the stability of the tailings dam and the toxic waste entering all the water supply to the local community over a period of time, that is of huge concern.
- No respite from the constant running of the mine, vehicle, processing plant and blasting. The workers get to go to their homes but we have to listen to it constantly when we are home.
- Dangerous and hazardous goods being transported past our house multiple times per week. Cyanide in vast quantities along with other harmful substances. The risk of human error or incidents with such a huge increase in the daily traffic. If the road is 100kph, this risk significantly increases.
- Workers camp, very little communication from Santana on where this will be and how it will be managed. We believe that no alcohol is able to be purchased on site, but no restrictions on workers having alcohol there and the risk of increased noise, dangerous driving and general unpleasant behaviours which make us feel unsafe in our own homes. These are not local people who respect us or our community.
- As the manager of 2 local aged care facilities with approximately 120 staff, housing concerns are noted to be a major concern for locals of Cromwell with difficulty in securing rental accommodation along with the upcoming closure of Cromwell Chalets. Although Santana say they will bus people into the area, there will still be a demand on the already scarce rental properties. Aged care staff are an absolutely essential workforce in Cromwell for the 127 elderly and palliative residents we care for and there is a huge concern of retaining and getting new staff if the housing issue worsens in the area.
- Santana will need to use thousands of litres of diesel per day to keep its heavy plant working 24/7. The amount of diesel used for this in times that are so unstable will be prohibitive. Millions of litres per year, when everyday people are seeing the harsh reality where the energy commodity is holding the world to ransom. We feel the main necessity of diesel is to ensure goods get delivered to supermarkets, that farmers can continue to produce affordable goods for us to eat. Not for gold to be extracted to be shipped offshore into underground vaults
- The destruction of the local environment – the damage to an area of natural beauty will be changed forever, the impact on our local flora and fauna that is so unique. The toxic land that we then are left to endure and manage for our children and future grandchildren.
- All of the above has already been taking a toll on our mental health, the stress and worry for our health and financial situation. Knowing we currently can't sell and actually wouldn't even be considering it if it weren't for Santana and the prospect of this mine in such close proximity.

If you invite parties to make comment verbally, we do wish to be heard.

can you please respond to this email to acknowledge receipt.

Thank you.

Sincerely
Dave and Juliet Towers