

MEMORANDUM OF THE NEW ZEALAND TRANSPORT AGENCY WAKA KOTAHI ON THE BENDIGO-OPHIR GOLD PROJECT

9 April 2026

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This memorandum presents the assessment undertaken by the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (**NZTA**) of the substantive application for the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project (**Application, BOGP**) (NZTA reference 2024-1125), submitted by Matakanui Gold Limited (**MGL**) under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTAA**).
- 1.2 NZTA appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Application.
- 1.3 The assessment has been prepared in response to an invitation from the Expert Panel (**the Panel**) to provide comment and includes a summary of preliminary findings relating to transport network matters.
- 1.4 This assessment is based on the Application materials submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (**EPA**).
- 1.5 NZTA has drawn on input from qualified and experienced internal staff when putting together its comments. Specifically, input was sought from:
 - Roy Johnston: Principal Safety Engineer based in the NZTA Dunedin Regional Office. Roy has been employed by NZTA for 19 years and holds a Diploma in Engineering (Level 6) (Civil) from Otago Polytechnic.
 - Helen Dempster: Principal Planner based in the NZTA Dunedin Regional Office. Helen has been employed by NZTA in their Environmental Planning team, since 2020. Helen holds the qualification of Bachelor of Science with Honours (First Class) from the University of Otago.
 - Matthew Jones: Holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and has 34 years experience in civil and structural design and construction. He has worked as the Central Otago Senior Network Manager at NZTA for the last 2 ½ years.
 - Steve Cottrell: Is a Principal Property Manager for NZTA. He is a Chartered Surveyor, a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. He has 47 years of experience in property work, 25 in New Zealand and 22 in the United Kingdom.

2 Background

- 2.1 NZTA has had pre-application engagement with MGL representatives, commencing in late 2024 and continuing through to the present. These discussions have focussed on the effects of traffic generation associated with the BOGP on the intersection of State Highway 8 (**SH8**) and Ardour Road, and how those effects should be mitigated.

2.2 During pre-application consultation, MGL provided NZTA with a copy of an Integrated Transport Assessment (ITA) prepared by Stantec. As summarised in Part A.12, Section 5.4.1 of the Substantive Application, NZTA requested the following upgrades / measures ((a) to (e) below) be included within the transportation assessment to manage the potential adverse effects on the safe and efficient operation of SH8 at the Ardgour Road intersection.

- (a) Construction of a right-turn bay from SH8 into Ardgour Road;
- (b) Widening of Ardgour Road to ensure two-way movements of trucks can take place;
- (c) Roadside barrier changes, flag lighting and signage to be determined through detailed design and in consultation with NZTA;
- (d) Implementation of a Project Traffic Management Plan; and
- (e) Undertake a safe system audit as part of the proposed upgrades to the SH8 / Ardgour Road intersection.

2.3 NZTA has subsequently corresponded with MGL representatives about MGL entering into a developer agreement with NZTA. That agreement would sit outside of the formal FTAA process and would formalise the roles and responsibilities of both parties in relation to the SH8 / Ardgour Road intersection upgrade. At this time, it is NZTA's expectation that MGL would cover the full costs associated with the SH8 / Ardgour intersection upgrade, including the costs associated with obtaining all necessary statutory approvals (like resource consents, Notices of Requirement, Outline Plan of Works under the Resource Management Act, Wildlife Act and/or Conservation Act approvals and Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga Act authorities); the costs associated with the design and construction of the intersection upgrade works including the associated design and post construction audits; and the costs of land transfer and provision of exchange land.

3 Assessment of proposal on NZTA's network and assets

3.1 NZTA's interest in the Application is confined to the robustness of the relevant technical reports submitted, and to ensure that effects on the safe and efficient functioning of SH8, particularly the SH8 / Ardgour Road intersection, are appropriately managed.

3.2 NZTA wishes to comment on the following matters:

- The proposed upgrade of the SH8 / Ardgour Road intersection; and
- The proposed concession that MGL have applied for from the Department of Conservation to authorise the use of Conservation Areas and Marginal Strip for the SH8 / Ardgour Road intersection upgrade.

4 State Highway 8 and Ardgour Road Intersection

4.1 The Application, and in particular the Stantec Integrated Transport Assessment (ITA) dated 12 September 2025 and provided in Part B.30 of the Application, accepts and recommends the measures that were sought by NZTA (listed in paragraph 2.2 of this memorandum).

- 4.2 Consent conditions to implement those measures have been proposed by MGL in Part D.01 of the Application. NZTA supports these measures being formalised through consent conditions. However, NZTA consider that some amendments are required to the wording of each of the relevant conditions proposed to manage the upgrade of the SH8 / Ardgour Road intersection (Conditions 43 to 45, and 50 to 52, inclusive), as detailed below.
- 4.3 In respect to Condition 43, NZTA considers that this condition should be amended to include a timeframe within which the intersection upgrade must be completed. The ITA indicates that traffic generation is anticipated to be greatest during mine construction, with up to 400 vehicles per day (vpd), dropping to 250 vpd during the mine's operational phase. Given that vehicle generation will be most intensified during the construction phase, and therefore effects on the safe and efficient operation of SH8 will likely be greatest during this phase, NZTA consider that the intersection upgrade should be completed prior to mine construction commencing.
- 4.4 Condition 43(a) currently requires that the right turn bay must be designed in accordance with NZTA design requirements. NZTA consider that the wording of this condition should be amended to specify the relevant design guidelines, so that there is certainty as to what requirements must be met. The relevant guidelines are the New Zealand Transport Agency 'Traffic Control Devices Manual Part 4 (Intersections) October 2024 and Section 15 (including Figure 15.5 "Markings for right turn bays in rural areas"), as well as Austroads 'Guide to Road Design Part 4: Intersections and Crossings – General' dated May 2023.
- 4.5 Condition 43(b) refers to 'extending sightlines' at the SH8 /Ardgour Road intersection, but does not quantify to what extent the sightlines should be extended. NZTA understand that the extent to which sightlines can be reasonably practicably extended will be determined through the detailed design process. NZTA suggest that the wording of this condition be amended to reflect this.
- 4.6 Similarly, Condition 43(b) seeks to ensure that two-way movement of vehicles through the intersection is accommodated but doesn't link this to any design guidelines or the agreed outcomes of the detailed design process. NZTA suggest the condition wording be amended to reference relevant standards/guidelines and the outcome of the detailed design process. NZTA anticipate that Central Otago District Council will also have standards/guidelines that it is likely to want the applicant to adhere to in designing changes to Ardgour Road to accommodate the two-way movement.
- 4.7 Lastly, NZTA consider that Condition 43(c) uses uncertain terminology, 'Provide for'. NZTA suggest that more directive and certain wording, like 'incorporate', should be used instead. NZTA also suggest that the relevant guidelines and standards to be complied with when designing roadside barriers, flag lighting and signage are referenced in the condition.

4.8 Below are all of the amendments that NZTA suggest be made to the wording of Condition 43, shown with underline (new text) and ~~striketrough~~ (text to be deleted):

~~43. Prior to the construction of the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Mine~~ the Consent Holder must upgrade the intersection of State Highway 8 and Ardgour Road to:

a. Include a right turn bay on State Highway 8 from the southwest into Ardgour Road. This must be designed in accordance with New Zealand Transport Agency Traffic Control Devices Manual Part 4 (Intersections) October 2024 and Section 15 (including Figure 15.5 “Markings for right turn bays in rural areas”), and Austroads ‘Guide to Road Design Part 4: Intersections and Crossings – General’ dated May 2023. NZ Transport Agency / Waka Kotahi design requirements;

b. Extend sightlines and ensure that two-way movement of trucks turning in and out of Ardgour Road can be accommodated. The detailed design, addressing these matters, must be prepared in accordance with Austroads ‘Guide to Road Design Part 4: Intersections and Crossings – General’ dated May 2023 and the NZTA Planning Policy Manual 2007, and as determined through the detailed design process; and

c. ~~Provide for~~ Incorporate consequential changes to roadside infrastructure including roadside barrier changes, flag lighting, and signage as determined through detailed design processes. Design of roadside barriers must be in accordance with Austroads design guidance. Design of flag lighting must be in accordance with New Zealand Transport Agency lighting policy for flag lighting (3 lights) and the design of signage must be in accordance with New Zealand Transport Agency Traffic Control Devices Manual and Rule for signage.

4.9 NZTA is the road controlling authority for the state highway network and we have a statutory obligation to ensure that the state highway network is designed to an acceptable standard to ensure that it is safe, efficient and effective. In recognition of our role as the road controlling authority for SH8, NZTA considers that the wording of Condition 44 should be amended to include a requirement that the Consent Holder obtain written confirmation from NZTA that NZTA is satisfied that the final design drawings, and any changes suggested in the design safety audit, meet NZTA and Austroad standards. Similarly, we also consider that the condition should be amended to require the Consent holder obtain written confirmation from NZTA that the physical upgrade works, including any works recommended by the post construction safety audit, have been completed to an acceptable standard. The written confirmation from NZTA should be submitted to the Council, prior to Council certifying the final design drawings and the completion of the physical upgrade works respectively. NZTA takes the view that the intersection upgrade works, including any further works recommended in the post construction safety audit, should be completed prior to the construction of the mine commencing, to ensure that the intersection is safe for use during the mine construction phase when vehicle movements are expected to be greatest.

4.10 Below are the amendments that NZTA suggest are made to the wording of Condition 44, shown with underline (new text) and ~~striketrough~~ (text to be deleted):

44. The Consent Holder must:

- a. Prior to commencing construction of the State Highway 8 / Ardour Road intersection upgrade works, submit the final design drawings for the intersection upgrade to Central Otago District Council for certification that the design meets the requirements of Condition 43 (a) to (c) above. The final design drawings must also be accompanied by the independent design safety audit required by condition 45 below, as well as written confirmation from the New Zealand Transport Agency that it is satisfied that the final design drawings meet New Zealand Transport Agency and Austroads standards; and
- b. Upon completion of the upgrade to the State Highway 8 / Ardour Road intersection and prior to the construction of the Bendigo-Ophir gold mine commencing, provide to the Central Otago District Council, for certification, documentary evidence that the upgrades certified under (a) have been completed in accordance with the design certified under Condition 44(a) and that any further works recommended in the post construction safety audit, required by Condition 45, have also been undertaken. This documentary evidence must also include written confirmation from the New Zealand Transport Agency that it is satisfied the upgrade of the intersection, including any changes required by the post construction safety audit, have been satisfactorily completed.

- 4.11 In respect to Condition 45, NZTA agrees that both the design safety audit and post construction safety audit are necessary. As mentioned in paragraph 4.9 above, NZTA takes the view that any changes recommended by the post construction safety audit should be implemented before construction of the mine commences. For the avoidance of doubt, we suggest the following amendment is made to the wording of Condition 45, shown with underline (new text):

45. The design of the proposed upgrade of the intersection of State Highway 8 and Ardour Road must be subject to an independent design safety audit and post construction safety audit. The audits are to be carried out by safety auditors experienced in highway intersection design, appointed in consultation with NZ Transport Agency / Waka Kotahi. Any changes recommended as a result of the safety audits, including design changes and post construction changes, must be agreed with the Central Otago District Council in consultation with NZ Transport Agency / Waka Kotahi. Any changes to the intersection that are recommended in the post construction safety audit shall be undertaken prior to the construction of the mine commencing.

- 4.12 NZTA has reviewed the proposed Access Road Construction Traffic Management Plan (ARCTMP), dated July 2025, provided in G.19 of the Application and considers that its content relating to the SH8 / Ardour Road intersection upgrades, in Section 5.1, is acceptable. However, NZTA would recommend one amendment be made to this Plan, for the avoidance of doubt, being that no road sealing associated with the intersection upgrade should occur during the months of winter, as the typically cooler winter temperatures adversely impact the quality of the new seal.

NZTA suggest the following addition be made to Section 5.1.2 of the ARCTMP, shown with underline (new text):

5.1.2 Construction Methodology

The first stage of works will involve earthworks to enable widening of the carriageway. This may be undertaken in advance of the NZTA pavement surfacing season, September to March. No road sealing will occur during the cooler winter months, due to the cooler temperatures adversely impacting the quality of new seal.

- 4.13 NZTA considers the wording of the proposed ARCTMP conditions (Conditions 50 to 52 inclusive) to be acceptable.
- 4.14 Prior to any construction within the State Highway corridor, the Consent Holder is legally required under the Government Roadings Powers Act 1989 to apply to the New Zealand Transport Agency for a Corridor Access Request and for that request to be approved. On this basis, NZTA suggest an advice note be included within the Consent Decision, should the Panel be minded to grant the application, to flag this requirement.

5 DOC Concession associated with SH8 / Ardgour Road Intersection upgrade

- 5.1 MGL have applied for a Right-Of-Way concession-type from the Department of Conservation (DOC) to enable the upgrade of the SH8 / Ardgour Road intersection, which will extend onto land to the north of the existing intersection that is part of the Ardgour Road / Lindis River Conservation Area, Lower Lindis Conservation Area and Lindis River Marginal Strip. MGL have signalled an intention to transfer this concession to NZTA (noting there's a separate concession that would be transferred to CODC) in the future. NZTA has not previously agreed to take a concession for this land, and nor is it our preference to take a concession for this land.
- 5.2 NZTA have reviewed the comments made by DOC in their s51(2)a FTAA Concessions Report, dated 25 March 2026. Our view aligns with DOC, in that NZTA is not in favour of the use of the land required for the intersection upgrade being secured through a concession. It is NZTA's preference that we legally own the land upon which state highway assets are located, and not have the land be Public Conservation Land (PCL). That is, NZTA would want to have the land legally transferred to NZTA, such that NZTA would legally own the land that the upgraded SH8 /Ardgour Road intersection would physically occupy. NZTA also consider that the risk and provision of exchange land to support a land transfer must sit with the developer.
- 5.3 NZTA note that DOC has suggested a short-term easement could be granted to facilitate the proposed mine activity in the short term, should the Panel deciding this Application be minded to proceed with the concession approach. DOC has suggested amendments to the concession

conditions proposed by the applicant (Appendix C of DOC's Report). Should the Panel be minded to proceed with the concession application associated with the SH8 /Ardgour Road intersection upgrade, NZTA agrees with the amendments proposed by DOC to the conditions in Table 3 (Appendix C of DOC's Report). But, for the avoidance of doubt, NZTA does not accept state highway road being on a concession.

- 5.4 Furthermore, if the concession application is to be advanced, NZTA suggests that the wording of the 'Concession Activity' in Clause 2, Schedule 1 of the document titled 'D.07A Concession and Conditions for SH8 and Ardgour Road 10 March 2026' in the Application, be amended to allow some degree of variation on the respective widths of the right turn bay and road shoulders, as may occur through the detailed design process. Presently the wording affords no flexibility, nominating a right turn bay width of 3.5m and a road shoulder width of 1.5m. NZTA suggests the following amendments (strikethrough showing suggested deletions, underline showing additions):

A concession (easement in favour of NZTA) for activities occurring on public conservation land within the underlying Ardgour Road / Lindis River and Lower Lindis Conservation Areas as follows:

- *Safety improvement upgrades within the existing road reserve at the SH8 / Ardgour Road intersection, which is likely to consist of ~~includes~~:*
 - *The formation of a 3.5 m wide right turn bay on SH8;*
 - *The reprofiling of the existing roadside safety barrier on Ardgour Road to follow the new road edge alignment;*
 - *The widening of the SH8 road carriageway and provision of 1.5 m wide road shoulders; and*
 - *New pavement marking and give way controls; and*
- *All associated construction activities including the establishment of construction laydown areas, erosion and sediment control measures, any necessary culverts and temporary traffic management measures.*

- 5.5 Lastly, it is noted in the Application (Page 6 of the memorandum document titled 'DOC Concession discussion – amendments to application' dated 10 March 2026, from Mitchell Daysh (on behalf of MGL) to the EPA) that the line for demarcating the land subject to the concession that would be transferred to NZTA versus that of CODC, is described as follows: "The demarcation line is 20m east of the existing intersection 'limit line' (the latter being the give way lines that will be painted on Ardgour Road)." NZTA is of the view that the area for which NZTA should be responsible extends only 10 metres behind the Give Way limit lines and Application references, including to maps of the concession areas, should be amended accordingly.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 NZTA appreciates the Applicant amending its Application to take into account the pre-application feedback NZTA provided.
- 6.2 NZTA supports the intent of the proposed conditions that seek to manage effects of the BOGP on the state highway network, however, NZTA seeks that the Panel include the amendments and advice note sought by NZTA, as detailed in the Sections 4 and 5 above.
- 6.3 NZTA welcomes further discussions with MGL and DOC regarding the SH8 /Ardgour Road intersection upgrade, including related consent conditions, as well as the matter of the concession/land transfer.