

UNDER the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**Act**)

IN THE MATTER an application for approvals for the Waihi North
Project (**WNP**) – a listed project described in
Schedule 2 of the Act

BY **OCEANA GOLD (NEW ZEALAND) LIMITED**
Applicant

**SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE BY
KYLE WELTEN
ON BEHALF OF OCEANA GOLD (NEW ZEALAND) LIMITED**

Engagement with Hako Tūpuna Trust

Dated 10 September 2025

Counsel acting:
Stephen Christensen
Project Barrister

[REDACTED]
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Introduction

1. My full name is Kyle Antony Francis Welten.
2. I provided a statement of evidence dated 1 September 2025, in which I responded to comments made by Ngāti Pū, Ngāti Tara Tokanui / Ngāti Koi, and Ngāti Porou ki Hauraki. My qualifications, experience, and role in the Waihi North Project (**WNP**) are detailed in that statement of evidence.
3. I have been asked by OceanaGold (New Zealand) Limited (**OceanaGold**) to provide a response to the statement of evidence from Alice Anderson on behalf of the Hako Tūpuna Trust (**HTT**).

Consultation

4. An overview of the engagement undertaken with HTT is provided in section F.01 of the substantive application.¹ Since 2020, this engagement has been extensive, including: phone calls, emails, kanohi ki te kanohi hui (face to face meetings), wānanga (open discussion), site visits, the sharing of technical information, briefings from OceanaGold technical experts, and the provision of resourcing.
5. From the outset, much of this engagement was centred around supporting HTT to prepare a Cultural Impact Assessment (**CIA**) in relation to the WNP. The CIA was intended to assist OceanaGold in ensuring that HTT cultural values and interests, and the potential impacts on these, were well understood so that they could appropriately be planned for and reflected in the WNP application, and subsequently (assuming approvals were granted and the project proceeds) in the way the project was developed.
6. Until recently, I was of the understanding that a final draft of the CIA was to be made available for OceanaGold's review in due course. I now

¹ See F.01. Waihi North project consultation summary.

understand that, with a change in the authorised representative with whom the company has been directed to engage at HTT, the CIA process may no longer be proceeding to completion.

7. I note that in Ms Anderson's statement of evidence, at paragraphs 17-18, she states that consultation has not been adequately completed, and that the accelerated timeframes imposed by the Fast-track consenting process have resulted in both parties being unable to meet and conclude discussions.
8. In my statement of evidence dated 1 September 2025, I commented on some of the challenges I have experienced in attempting to engage with iwi.² Many of these challenges are also applicable to engagement with HTT. However, I consider that engagement with HTT has been wide-ranging, and that there has been comprehensive opportunity for HTT to engage on WNP.
9. This engagement has included site visits, the provision of effects assessments and technical reports as they have become available, as well as offers to facilitate meetings with OceanaGold's technical experts, should HTT have wished to do so. I note that many of these opportunities were extended well before the Fast-track process was even contemplated. For example, the recent hui on groundwater referred to in Ms Anderson's statement³ was not a one-off event, but rather one of a number of hui on the topic that have taken place over several years.
10. It is not clear to me whether the specific details of previous engagement between the former representative of HTT and representatives of OceanaGold has been communicated to the newly mandated representative of HTT. In any event, it is my view that consultation and engagement with iwi, including HTT, is an ongoing process that does not have a fixed point of conclusion. I will continue to actively offer opportunities

² Statement of evidence of Kyle Welten dated 1 September 2025, paragraphs 8 - 10.

³ Statement of evidence of Alice Anderson on behalf of Hako Tūpuna Trust dated 25 August 2025, paragraph 45

to engage on the project, in line with OceanaGold's commitment to open and transparent consultation.

Biodiversity Project

11. At the time of the announcement of WNP, OceanaGold made a key project commitment to initiate and sustain an environmental net gain project throughout the life of the project. This commitment is intended to ensure that the immediate area and surrounding environment are left in an improved ecological state, compared to what would have occurred had the project not proceeded.
12. As part of this commitment, OceanaGold intends to establish a biodiversity enhancement programme in the Southern Coromandel, extending through to at least 2050. This programme is proposed to be developed in partnership with iwi, and will be supported by a minimum investment of \$8.4 million. OceanaGold has been actively engaging with iwi, including HTT, over a period of several years to co-design the objectives and structure of this programme.
13. In Ms Anderson's statement of evidence, at paragraphs 16, and 50 – 52, she states that while the proposal aligns with the Hauraki Iwi Environmental Plan, HTT holds concerns regarding the project. In particular, the Biodiversity Project is viewed as being linked to the approvals for WNP, and is therefore perceived as an offset measure; one that, in HTT's view, does not adequately ameliorate the cultural effects associated with underground mining.
14. If there are significant cultural effects that require further mitigation beyond what has been proposed as part of WNP to-date, OceanaGold remains open and willing to explore opportunities to better understand and manage those effects. From my perspective however, the Biodiversity Project has never been intended or presented as an offset or form of mitigation related to effects on the WNP. Rather, it is an additional, discretionary conservation initiative that reflects a significant and long-term commitment from

OceanaGold to enhance the ecological values of the Forest Park. I consider that OceanaGold has been clear and consistent in explaining this to iwi, including HTT.

15. I acknowledge Ms Anderson's concern that the Biodiversity Project is linked to the granting of approvals for the WNP. This concern has been consistently raised by HTT. In response, OceanaGold sought to bring forward funding in order to commence the co-design of the project, including undertaking a baseline ecological study, prior to any approvals for the broader WNP being granted.
16. Unfortunately, for the reasons outlined in Ms Anderson's statement, as well as due to other concerns raised by iwi in consultation, including questions regarding which groups should or should not be involved, engagement on the proposed Biodiversity Project has not progressed significantly to date. However, OceanaGold remains committed to continuing engagement with iwi on the development of the initiative, should iwi wish to do so.

Treaty of Waitangi matters

17. In her statement of evidence, Ms Anderson recommends a number of actions the Panel should take to ensure that iwi rights and interests are appropriately considered in decision-making⁴. While many of these recommendations are matters for the Panel's consideration, I note however the specific reference to Pukehangi Maunga, which is a joint site that is intended to be transferred in fee simple to Ngāti Hako and Ngāti Maru as part of Treaty Settlement processes. Ms Anderson raises concerns regarding the location of this site in relation to the proposed project area.
18. Pukehangi Maunga has not previously been raised with me by either Ngāti Hako or Ngāti Maru. To my understanding, the maunga lies outside the proposed mining area but is located on the boundary of the Area 1 pest control enhancement area. In my view, enhancement activities such as pest

⁴ Anderson Statement of Evidence dated 25 August 2025, Paragraphs 19-25

control would be beneficial in the vicinity of the maunga. However, if Ngāti Hako and/or Ngāti Maru consider these activities to be inconsistent with their values and interests relating to Pukehangi Maunga, OceanaGold is willing to adjust the boundaries of the enhancement area to exclude the maunga.

19. For clarity, I have attached a map marked as Appendix 1, which clearly shows the boundary of Area 1, the Wharekirauponga Access Arrangement area, and the Northern Concession area in relation to Pukehangi Maunga.

Protection of Taonga Species (Frogs)

20. At paragraphs 33 – 38, Ms Anderson states that Archey's frogs are considered an important taonga species by Hauraki iwi, and details comments made by Ngāti Hako representatives to the Department of Conservation in 2018 regarding the significance of these taonga within the cultural landscape of Wharekirauponga. To the best of my knowledge, OceanaGold has not previously been provided with, or had sight of these comments.
21. In any case, since that time, significant additional work has been undertaken by OceanaGold in relation to Archey's frog, including additional surveying, population modelling, effects assessments, and the development of proposed measures to mitigate any potential risks the project may pose to frog populations.
22. Despite the work undertaken, Ms Anderson makes it clear that HTT's position has not changed since 2018, maintaining that there is still insufficient evidence to demonstrate that Archey's frog is not, and will not be, adversely affected by the WHP. In expressing this position, she states that HTT support the technical expert evidence of Dr Bruce Waldman, provided on behalf of Coromandel Watchdog.
23. A response to Dr Waldman's comments is provided in Dylan Van Winkel's statement of evidence, on behalf of OceanaGold, dated 1 September 2025.

Water

24. In paragraphs 39 – 49 of her statement, Ms Anderson emphasises that wai (water) is a sacred taonga with its own mauri, and raises concerns about the potential for WNP to cause degradation of water bodies through sedimentation, stream diversion, habitat loss, and contamination. She also expresses strong opposition to the potential impact of the project on a warm spring at Wharekirauponga. In raising these issues, Ms Anderson states her agreement with the evidence and recommendations of Dr Russell Death on freshwater ecosystems, provided on behalf of Coromandel Watchdog.
25. A response to Dr Death's comments is provided in Ian Boothroyd's supplementary statement of evidence, on behalf of OceanaGold, dated 10 September 2025.
26. As I have previously stated⁵, I acknowledge and respect the view that mining operations may affect the mauri and/or wairua of springs, and of water more broadly. OceanaGold remains committed to maintaining ongoing dialogue with tangata whenua to explore how such effects may be appropriately addressed or mitigated. As part of this, OceanaGold has committed to working collaboratively to develop a mātauranga-based monitoring programme, including the creation of cultural health indicators for water and the regular sharing of monitoring data.

Hauraki Iwi Environmental Plan

27. Throughout Ms Anderson's statement, she refers to *Whaia Te Mahere Taiao a Hauraki* (the Hauraki Iwi Environmental Plan) as a document that outlines the environmental, cultural, and spiritual values of iwi across the Hauraki rohe. She describes it as providing "a robust framework for assessing development proposals, particularly those with potential to impact freshwater, coastal ecosystems, and sites of significance".⁶

⁵ Statement of evidence of Kyle Welten dated 1 September 2025, paragraph 76.

⁶ Statement of evidence Alice Anderson dated 1 September 2025, paragraph 27.

28. As previously mentioned, and described in more detail in my statement of evidence dated 1 September 2025,⁷ OceanaGold has proposed a condition of consent requiring the company to offer support and resourcing to the Iwi Advisory Group to develop a Mātauranga Māori Monitoring Programme. This programme must include cultural health indicators and associated performance metrics for waterways, as well as for other ecosystems and/or culturally significant sites, as deemed necessary by the Iwi Advisory Group. *Whaia Te Mahere Taiao a Hauraki* could provide a useful basis for developing the framework of this programme.

Conclusion

29. OceanaGold has a long-standing relationship with Ngāti Hako, and I am grateful for the relationship that has developed with HTT, which, from my perspective, has been characterised by respect and transparency.
30. OceanaGold maintains a genuine desire to reflect iwi concerns, including those of HTT, in the project and to respond to them meaningfully. I intend to continue offering opportunities, namely through engagement on the development of outcomes under the suite of conditions relating to tangata whenua, to ensure that any further concerns they may have are well understood, appropriately planned for, and reflected in the project.

Dated: 10 September 2025

Kyle Welten

⁷ Statement of evidence of Kyle Welten dated 25 August 2025, paragraph 125.

Appendix 1:

