

BENDIGO-OPHIR GOLD PROJECT

Statement of Bev Batchelar on behalf of Sustainable Tarras Inc

DATE: 22 March 2026

1. My name is Beverley Ann Batchelar. I am providing this statement as part of the comments submitted by Sustainable Tarras Inc on the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project.
2. My statement is about the following topics:
 - a. The Tarras Community voice as outlined in the Tarras Community Plan.¹
 - b. The Central Otago Destination Management Plan.²
 - c. The Tarras area which is classed as an Outstanding Natural Landscape.
 - d. The effect of the proposed Gold Project on the rural character, lifestyle, visual amenity and a tight-knit Tarras community feel.
3. Areas of Consideration:
 - a. Tarras Community voice to be considered in the development of their environment.
 - b. Consideration of the Tarras Community's wishes to maintain their area in a planned and sustainable form to support the historical and future growth with a strategy that would enhance the current environment and community activities.
 - c. Comparison to Central Otago District Council's Destination Management Plan, and the desire to maintain the Outstanding Natural Landscape.
4. The Tarras Community has historically been a farming community but in the last ten years it has grown to encompass a wide range of professionals, retirees and young families who have integrated well into the farming community and thrived alongside the varied businesses that have become established there. These businesses range from Tourism, hospitality, IT, viticulture, and a variety of services and consultancies.
5. Tarras residents have skills and expertise of real relevance to contribute to its development. They range from history, horticulture, viticulture, farming, tourism, business and academic research. These skills can be willingly used to the benefit of the wider district.

¹ <https://www.centralotagonz.com/assets/Documents/Community-Plans/Tarras-Community-Plan.pdf>

² <https://www.centralotagonz.com/discover/>

6. The Tarras region, which extends from the Summit of the Lindis Pass, west to Sandy Point, east to the Dunstan Ranges and south to Northburn, contains extensive areas that have been designated as Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL).
7. The Tarras Chapter of Rural Women was established in 1930 and the ladies of the district have looked after the health and wellbeing of the community and its varied interest groups.
8. In 2007 the first Tarras Community Plan was written in consultation with the community. From the early days of Rural Women and community groups, the drive for Tarras residents has been to maintain the character of the region and develop Tarras as a "Destination" rather than the "Gateway to Central Otago" it is often seen to be.
9. In 2023 a very successful Community Plan consultation was led by the CODC, hosted by Rural Women. It included several workshops and liaison with the Tarras Community. After extensive collaboration the Council published the Tarras Community Plan 2023.³
10. This plan highlighted the desire of the Community to have a voice in the area's growth and development. The plan echoes many of the statements in the CODCs Destination Management Plan and the Economic Development Strategy. It outlines the desire for an overall strategy of growth and development in a sustained way that maintains the values we are all striving for:
 - a. A place with essential character (small town, historic village)
 - b. A place where people can connect with nature (e.g. spectacular night skies)
 - c. Exploring the Bendigo Wetlands, Historic and Conservation areas plus enjoying the mighty Clutha Mata Au and many backcountry experiences)
 - d. Wide open spaces
 - e. Boutique experiences and particularly A place to relax and unwind
11. As indicated in the Community Plan (comments on projects taken verbatim from the community members), Tarras is keen to be part of a planned growth strategy for it's village and surrounds:
 - a. To attract tourists to stop awhile and enjoy the unique country vibe
 - b. Investigate what is involved to become a dark sky precinct
 - c. Consider community led environmental action (planting days, weed eradication and

³ <https://www.centralotagonz.com/assets/Documents/Community-Plans/Tarras-Community-Plan.pdf>

- d. Community clean ups
- e. Build on great farming, quality produce and products with a vibrant country village
- f. To work with Council to ensure appropriate land use provision exists for the Tarras area and surrounds, including the provision of future housing options
- g. The stunning Tarras environment is maintained and enhanced for future generations.

12. The Vision for Tarras (from the Community Plan), is:

“Tarras is a strong, thriving community that is a great place to live, work and visit, set in an outstanding environment”

- 13. The proposed Fast Track application from Santana for the establishment of the Bendigo/Ophir Gold Mine detracts in all areas from the anticipated growth of the area as passionately expressed by the community in the 2023 Tarras Community Plan.
- 14. The Plan indicates the Community’s desire for development in a strategic and planned way. To enhance the Outstanding Natural Landscape and continue to offer the benefits of the rural environment to provide for residents and visitors a like a place to relax and unwind which is beneficial for their physical and mental health.
- 15. Despite suggested mitigation in the Application, we consider the proposed Bendigo/Ophir mine would have adverse environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts which are all interconnected ranging from short-term to long-term.
- 16. A major concern for a majority of Tarras residents is the introduction of pollution – noise, air, water and light. These are linked to social issues such as the reduction of amenity and overall quality of life as well as economic consequences affecting agriculture and the ecosystem of the Clutha Mata-Au river.
- 17. Infrastructure for the area would be affected. Extra traffic on the already inadequate roading system would become even more dangerous.
- 18. The Santana Bendigo/Ophir mine Fast Track application does not align with the values and aspirations of Tarras which has a consensus on valuing the Outstanding Natural Landscape, rural character, lifestyle, visual amenity and a tight-knit community feel.
- 19. In our small way we **“honour the past, we are embracing the present and we are passionately navigating the future”**