



Bendigo-Ophir Mine – comments from adjacent landowner - S. Brodie

From [REDACTED]**Date** Tue 7/04/2026 6:16 PM**To** Bendigo-Ophir Gold <bendigoftaa@fasttrack.govt.nz>; FastTrack Substantive <substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz>

Dear Panel Members

I am writing in response to your invitation to comment under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 regarding the Bendigo-Ophir Golf Project you are assessing on behalf of Matakanui Gold Limited.

I am the owner of land at [REDACTED]

I wish the panel to know that I am opposed to Santana's fast-track application. I would like the panel to know my concerns and would like to see a full and thorough review take place before any type of mine can be considered.

I live and work in Bendigo so I spend 98% of my time in Bendigo and my recreational time is spent walking the many tracks in our area, including the Bendigo Reserve.

My concerns are as follows:

Modern mines often use dewatered tailings (dry stacking or paste) to reduce volume and risk, but many conventional operations still use, or are forced by design to use, slurry with water, where residual cyanide still exists and so does other toxic chemicals – this is something noted in the Santana marketing material and they say this goes through a detox process that breaks down the cyanide and changes it into cyanate, leaving the trace amount of cyanide, however there is still amounts of cyanide, arsenic as well as ferric chloride, which is used to dissolve the arsenic, which Santana Minerals hope will turn into ferric arsenate which they say stays safely locked into the tailings dam.

Combine the above with the pulverised rock which is left over, this also contains other naturally occurring and hazardous elements which as lead, mercury and cadmium. Dewatering does not remove these metals, it will simply store them in a more stable physical form in the Tailings Dam. Santana Minerals say that the Tailings Storage Facility has special layers of rock and clay to stop water leaking out and drainage systems that filter seepage back to the processing plant. History shows this is not always the case and if you pour water into rock, clay, shist and silty soils, the water can simply go anywhere, how do they know this will be contained with drainage in an unlined tailings dam? Santana also say this dam can withstand a 1 in 10,000 year earthquake – with predictions of this happening in the next 3-5 years as part of the alpine fault earthquakes, what proof do they have of this in a rocky alpine environment? This tailings dam is not lined and by Santana's own admission has an 'allowed seepage rate', which should be enough to stop the Fast Track process and complete a thorough investigation to ensure that the effects of the mine do not cause acute or chronic risk to human life, wildlife and the environment.

Additionally, the Tailings Dam is open, so what happens with sulfide minerals in the tailings when they are exposed to air and moisture? This can react to create sulfuric acid which can then leach heavy metals out of the rock and into the surrounding soil or groundwater through surface runoff, so what happens if it rains on this open Tailings Dam? Research shows that when the rain falls on the dry stack layers this creates leachate when the water filters through the layers, picking up toxins. How can the drainage the mine has proposed guarantee in this shist, rocky and silty environment that it can be contained when it is not even lined?

Bendigo is renowned for high wind at certain times of year, something Santana Minerals is aware of. There are certain times of year that winds are constantly high and can easily surpass 120 to 160 kms winds. As the dry stacked tailings are not kept under a water "cap," they are susceptible to wind erosion – this can lead to the emission of toxic dust, causing respiratory issues for workers and nearby communities – another red flag that requires investigation.

Santana state in their marketing brochures that their project does not rely on rivers or community water supplies, however they will use the Bendigo Aquifer. The water supply for our community solely gets its water from the Bendigo Aquifer – which means their use of this Aquifer and toxic runoff has the potential to have a direct effect on human life as well as the livelihoods of local farms and orchards that use this supply. As a result, this process should **not** be Fast Tracked.

Regarding the noise pollution – Santana states that their daytime (between 7am and 10pm) noise is no more than 55 dB, and nighttime (10pm to 7am) is no more than 40 dB which they say is like background rural noise. Anyone who lives in the country knows how quiet noise levels are at night and if Santana are blasting at night, which they say they will be, this will not be quiet in the dead of night. I have walked the hills in the dark, even at 7pm in early May as winter is starting, wildlife get spooked when you just walk by – quite simply when it gets dark – wildlife settle and this will completely disrupt their natural habitat.

I would suggest the above requires full and in-depth consideration on how this affects human life as well as the wildlife and the environment both in Bendigo and the surrounding areas, including what the effects downstream will be.

I understand that commerce needs to happen but is New Zealand really getting enough of the profits for the direct impact this mine will have on the environment? It would appear majority of the profit will go back to Australia and New Zealand will be left to deal with the long term impact both to human life and wild life not to mention the scab left on our current landscape and how this will affect an area that is currently labelled as one of the most biodiverse landscapes between Kawarau George and Bendigo Reserve in the Southern Hemisphere.

Recently I took the opportunity to go to the Santana Tent at the Wanaka A & P show to hear their side of the story and what they proposed, and it is with their marketing information that I have been able to see the information for myself, which backs up a lot of local concern. While waiting for my turn to ask questions I stood to listen to one of the Santana Geo engineers and two others with him, absolutely blasting local people in the area for even being concerned. The disparaging remarks and negativity to the locals in the area raised another valid concern on the type of organisation that seeks to be part of the community as well as the attitude that is being promoted – this does not show integrity or good trustworthy behaviour.

Already there are locals who oppose the Fast Track process and mine and instead of having democratic discussions, Santana is seen to promote bullish behaviour, with some locals having their properties vandalised and the owners physically abused to the point where the local police have had to be called. I see that address and contact details are only held by the EPA and it is only the name that will be made public. I request that my full name and address details be kept private and not disclosed to Santana Minerals or any public forum, as I do not wish to be a recipient of this bad behaviour – a valid concern in light of current behaviour.

I am happy to be part of discussions and communications and answer any questions you have should this be required. My details are noted below.

Kind regards
Sharon Brodie

[REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]