

# BENDIGO-OPHIR GOLD PROJECT

Statement of The Chinamans Terrace Services Company Ltd, Bendigo Loop Road, Bendigo

**DATE:** 9 April 2026

## Introduction

1. The Chinamans Terrace Services Company Ltd (CTSC) was set up to manage the shared services required for the land holdings up on Chinaman's terrace at Bendigo Loop Road, Bendigo. Our focus is on provisioning of irrigation and potable water, but the scheme also administers servicing of our shared access roads. The company has issued shares to 7 vineyard holdings, a winery, 6 currently occupied residences (4 of which are part of a vineyard estate), and a proposal for new rural/residential development at Rocky Point.
2. Chinaman's terrace is one of two large glacial terrace formations in Bendigo, the other being the Schoolhouse terraces, These terraces are located between approximately 300-400m altitude, and date back approximately 800,000 years. This makes them some of the oldest glacial terraces used for winegrowing in New Zealand. Soil composition on the upper Bendigo terraces is a highly unique combination of schist, fine clay, sand, pedogenic lime, and windblown loess. Chinaman's terrace is sloped gently to the North, and bordered by the higher ranges of the Bendigo Department of Conservation Reserve that provides amphi-theatre like protection from Easterly, Westerly and Southerly quadrant winds. The resultant micro climate as well as soil profile on Chinaman's terrace provides unique growing conditions for ultra premium wine production, in particular pinot noir.
3. Vineyard developments on Chinamans terrace started in 1999, and came about as a result of the vision by several early viticulturists and the Bendigo Station owner John Perriam, to establish the Bendigo region as the "Tuscany of the South Pacific". It was recognized then that the area had the potential to grow some of the best pinot noir in NZ and possibly the world, which has since been materialized. Since then, John Perriam prioritized selling land on the terrace to parties that were committed to establishing vineyards and help him realize his vision and legacy. The land became available as a result of the tenure review of Bendigo station around 1990, which resulted in the establishment of freehold land generally below 400m for pasture and grape growing, in return for the establishment of DOC reserves and Conservation covenanted land higher up. Whilst the Conservation Covenant was meant to protect the land from mining in perpetuity, the Perriam family has now sold a part of this land to Santana pending a Fast Track approval, for NZ\$55 million.
4. Annual rainfall on Chinaman's terrace is around 300-350mm. Vineyard irrigation supplements natural rainfall and allows for optimal soil moisture conditions for grape growing, greatly reducing grapevine disease conditions. Several vineyards are

organically certified, and all are certified by NZ Wine under the Sustainable Winegrowing NZ program.

5. Land suitable for ultra premium quality winegrowing of pinot noir in NZ and Central Otago is in exceedingly limited supply. The following requirements limit suitability to very few distinct locations:
  1. Frost free during the growing season (early October (bud burst) to harvest (late April))
  2. High level of Growing Degree Days (GDD - a measure of sunlight hours during the growing season)
  3. Stable relatively predictable weather from year to year with a warm late summer and early autumn providing long fruit "hang time" leading up to harvest
  4. Large temperature variation between day and night time temperatures during fruit ripening (Feb-Apr)
  5. Specific soil types that impart highly unique wine flavours - In Central Otago this means mostly lean arid soils
  6. Generally dry conditions that help to reduce grapevine diseases
  7. Altitude up to 400m above sea level
  8. Protection from strong damaging winds
  9. Availability of irrigation water supply
  
6. The reputation of Chinaman's terrace wine brands, and pinot noir in particular, has been growing since its first grapes were planted. Some of our wines retail up to NZ\$200 per bottle and are globally recognized as representing NZ's finest wines. Two of our vineyards are owned & operated by wineries that are globally recognised in the top echelon of NZ fine wine - with the remaining vineyards supplying high value premium grapes to other top wineries of Central Otago. Wine journalists increasingly recognize our terrace as able to consistently produce ultra premium wines. It is believed our soil types, higher altitude, and warm northerly orientation contributes significantly to our wine quality. Our wine brands are marketed and branded strongly on their unique location, and often combine a visual (virtual or real world) experience of our landscapes as well as our clean pristine environment into the narrative.
  
7. Increasingly, tourist wine experiences involve visiting the area and its vineyards and venues (incl. cellar doors). Whilst these activities are still in their infancy in Bendigo, there are several major investments made by wineries in this area. Examples are The Canyon (an events venue in the Bendigo hills catering to high value tourism experiences as well as weddings, etc), and winery at Prophets Rock (on Chinamans terrace), a major regional investment that is already organizing functions for selected wine trade and consumer customers. In addition, there are several Air BnB operators (both on Chinamans terrace and the wider Tarras/Bendigo region) that rely heavily on our landscapes and regional wine tourism experiences.
  
8. Whilst the NPS-HPL covers land generally suitable for agriculture production, there is no provision specific to viticulture. Viticulture land is often captured under LUC 4 and sometimes 5 and as such not "valued" under the NPS-HPL. And whilst QLDC has completed Rural Landscape Classification mapping, CODC has not yet done so. As a

result, there is no formal protection for these often relatively small parcels of land optimally suited for ultra premium wine production.

9. Bendigo wine growers some years ago started a process to have the Bendigo sub-region (within Central Otago) officially recognized within NZ and internationally as a separate "Geographical Indication". This process allows certain powerful Trademark protections and was recently approved for the Bannockburn sub-region. Unfortunately with the initiation of the mine project and its likely impact on our sub-regional brand, this process was put on hold for the time being. Some of the Bannockburn application documentation can be found here.
10. CTSC is very concerned that mining activity is not compatible with ultra premium winegrowing, and that the proposed Santana mine will likely only be one of many to come that will threaten the viability and future growth potential of our Bendigo and Central Otago winegrowing regions. We outline our primary concerns below, and are cognizant of other submissions that are supported by expert evidence. As such we will attempt to be brief in our concerns. We thank the panel for its consideration of these concerns.

### **Major Concern areas**

11. The CTSC water take comes from a bore on land on which the Bendigo station homestead is located. Whilst this location is near the Clutha Mata Au, and likely to be readily replenished by it, we are nevertheless concerned about a nearby Santana water take of around 100l/s and the effects on nearby bores like ours. Any reduced depths at which water may be available may have effects on our bore's ability to draw water.
12. We note and agree with concerns expressed by others that Santana submits for a 35 or so year water take permit, when our permit only allows for 6 or so years. If and when high quality Bendigo water becomes scarce we ought to have precedence over this resource as having made application for and relied on this water before the mine.
13. We are also concerned about any impact that mine polluted waters may cause on the Rise and Shine creek, which runs via the Bendigo creek through the Bendigo wine growing area into the Clutha. Mine polluted waters may end up polluting not only Ardour aquifer derived waters via the Shepherds creek but also Bendigo aquifer derived waters via the Rise and Shine creek. We are concerned about reports that as these streams are largely ephemeral, the polluting effects will be minimal. This does not take into account effects that may occur in large rainfall events that create a flush out of possibly polluted land and waters upstream that will find their way down in such events. We note that several structures, incl. open pits and a tailings dam, will remain there in perpetuity, and any likely polluting effects must be considered in this perpetual context.
14. We have seen visual reports of large dust plumes emanating from Macraes mine structures. We are highly concerned to hear the applicant stating that dust will not impact areas beyond the mine works. Our concerns relate to dust with high arsenic

contents finding its way into our own vineyards, but more particularly to the negative reputational impact to the Bendigo wine growing area of any visible dust plumes being generated from the mine site. With strong winds being a regular occurrence (most notably in spring and early summer), any visible large mine environmental impacts will affect our ultra premium wine brand values and customer perceptions.

15. Noise and dark skies impacts are other major concerns. We have in Bendigo extremely low baseline levels of noise and light pollution, and whilst effects may be within rurally permitted levels we are concerned that these impacts will significantly affect our daily amenity values, and ask that this is taken into account when evaluating effects. We would also ask that the applicant commits in a consenting condition that Bendigo Loop road is not used for mine related traffic from the time when the Bendigo Loop road base camp is moved to the Ardgour valley location. Mine traffic in our rural vineyard location is not appropriate when the major access route to the mine is via widened and upgraded Ardgour and Thomson Gorge roads. We note that the cost to seal much of Bendigo Loop road was borne by its local residents and a large increase in heavy traffic will rapidly degrade this road.
16. Our other major concern is the impact that an operational disaster or long term deleterious environmental impact will have on the brand reputation of Bendigo as a premier wine brand and tourism experience. A mine safety disaster like the Pike river disaster will forever affect the way Bendigo is perceived with a resultant decrease in brand perception and value of our existing and growing industry. Likewise, a long term gradual pollution of groundwaters or regular dust plumes emanating from the mine site will erode the brand image of Bendigo as a 100% Pure experience both of our wine brands as well as the tourism experience. Whilst the exact monetary impact of such effects are hard to quantify, the impacts on our existing industry would be undeniable.
17. Lastly, we are very concerned any approval of this mine will set in motion additional exploration in the wider Bendigo area. Indeed, Santana recently made enquiries to DOC to commence application for an exploratory mine licence in the Bendigo Historic Reserve. An approval of this mine must take into account any spill over effects on applications and more likely approvals of subsequent mines in Bendigo and Central Otago.
18. **In summary**, we do not see this mine project to be compatible with our current and future Bendigo based wine industry to which we at CTSC are a major contributor. We thank the panel for considering our submission.

**Signed & Dated**  
**On behalf of the CTSC directors,**



Brian Allen (Director)

10 April 2026

Date

