

Before an Expert Consenting Panel

Under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA)

And

In the matter of An application for approvals by Matakanui Gold Limited to establish, operate, rehabilitate and ultimately close an open pit and underground gold mining operation known as the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project

Statement of Planning Evidence of Stephen Cottrell for the New Zealand Transport Agency

Dated 22 April 2026

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Stephen David Cottrell. I work for the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) as the South Island Principal Property Manager based in the Christchurch office.
- 1.2 I have been a Chartered Surveyor for 40 years, the last 27 as a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.
- 1.3 I have over 47 years of land development and property management experience in both the private and public sectors, in both New Zealand and the UK, including the development of opencast mines. I have been employed by NZTA as a Property Manager since October 2005
- 1.4 My role within NZTA encompasses the acquisition and disposal of land under the Public Works Act, the management of land held for future development and management of the roads as property (as opposed to roading asset management).

2. Code of Conduct

- 2.1 While these proceedings are not before the Environment Court, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses as contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have complied with this Practice Note when preparing my written statement of evidence, and I will do so when I give oral evidence before the Hearing Panel. Unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my sphere of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express below.

3. Scope of evidence

- 3.1 In this statement of evidence, I focus on the concession that Matakanui Gold Limited (**MGL**) have applied for to enable the intersection upgrade, and the status of that land thereafter.

4. NZTA Role and Responsibilities, Site-Specific Context

- 4.1 NZTA is a Crown entity with its functions, powers and responsibilities set out in the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (**LTMA**) and the Government Roothing Powers Act 1989 (**GRPA**). The primary objective of NZTA under Section 94 of the LTMA is to contribute to an effective, efficient, and safe land transport system in the public interest.
- 4.2 NZTA's roles and responsibilities include;
- Managing the State Highway system, including planning, funding, designing, supervising, constructing, maintaining and operating the state highway network;

- Managing funding of the land transport system, including auditing the performance of organisations receiving land transport funding;
 - Managing regulatory requirements for transport on land and incidents involving transport on land; and
 - Issuing guidelines for, and monitoring, the development of regional land transport plans.
- 4.3 NZTA's interest in this proposal stems from its role as the manager of the state highway network and its responsibility to ensure efficient, safe and effective highway solutions for highway users.
- 4.4 Vehicle access to the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project (**BOGP**) site will be via Ardgour Road and State Highway 8 (**SH8**). The SH8/Ardgour Road intersection, located immediately south of the single-lane Lindis River Bridge, is presently a Give-Way-sign controlled intersection. This intersection is located on a horizontal curve on SH8, which has a 45 km/hr speed advisory sign.
- 4.5 Through pre-application consultation between MGL and NZTA it has been identified that safety improvements to the existing SH8/Ardgour Road intersection are desirable to manage the effects of the increased vehicle movements during the construction and operation of the mine. The upgrade to include a right turn bay (RTB) has been agreed between MGL and NZTA, and advanced by MGL in the Application.
- 4.6 NZTA acknowledges that the existing physical location of SH8, at the location of the intersection upgrade, sits outside of the legal road parcel and state highway designation. It is located on Department of Conservation (DOC) administered conservation land. This mismatch would have arisen many years ago when the highway was constructed. NZTA is aware of this issue and will take action to correct this issue. Irrespective of this mismatch, it remains NZTA's statutory responsibility to manage the SH8 asset in this location and the road corridor itself is given the same protections under the Government Roading Powers Act as if it were legal road.

5. Proposed concession related to the intersection upgrade

- 5.1 Mr Chrisp's SoE makes it clear that MGL remain of the intention to seek a 30-year concession from the Department of Conservation (**DOC**) to enable the intersection upgrade. NZTA, in its s53 comments on the Application, indicated its preference for NZTA to own the land upon which the intersection upgrade would be located, rather than having a long-term concession transferred to it from MGL to enable its use.
- 5.2 NZTA require freehold ownership of the land to be occupied by the intersection upgrade. Furthermore, MGL must facilitate this land transfer as NZTA cannot be involved in directly acquiring land because this is a private development project.

5.3 There are a number of procedural options that can resolve this, however. The simplest is for MGL to negotiate a concession with DOC to construct the intersection upgrade on whatever terms they agree upon. Following the completion of construction, to NZTA's satisfaction, the new 'road land' can be surveyed off and DoC can sign a consent to vest the land as road under s114 of the Public Works Act. NZTA would then gazette the land as state highway.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 It is my view that MGL should make mutually acceptable arrangements with DOC to construct the required roading improvements, the definition of the specific land converted into road (by survey) and the procedural mechanisms for ultimate ownership to be transferred from DOC to NZTA. MGL should be responsible to facilitating this change in ownership, including all costs associated with it.

Stephen David Cottrell

23 April 2026