

# Memo

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                          |                |                   |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>To:</b>      | Cheryl Low, Santana Minerals Limited                                                                                                                                     | <b>Job No:</b> | 04-18             |
| <b>From:</b>    | Keith Barber, Habitat NZ Limited                                                                                                                                         | <b>Date:</b>   | 28 September 2026 |
| <b>Subject:</b> | Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project: Reply to Request for Further Information (File ref: FTAA-2507-1089) Regarding Lizard Data from the Biodiversity Outcome Monitoring Programme |                |                   |

Matakanui Gold Limited has applied for approvals under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to establish, operate and remediate the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project (BOGP) on Bendigo and Ardgour Stations in the Dunstan Mountains of Central Otago.

At the direction of the Expert Panel (the Panel), the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has requested further information under section 67 of the Act (File ref: FTAA-2507-1089). The Panel asked for the raw data from all lizard surveys carried out to date within the Direct Disturbance Footprint (DDF), within the Ecological Study Area (ESA) and beyond the ESA. This includes any survey work done after the Lizard Values Assessment (RMA Ecology 2025).

RMA Ecology Ltd has replied separately for the surveys it carried out. This memo covers the lizard observations Habitat NZ Ltd recorded during the baseline Biodiversity Outcome Monitoring Programme (BOMP) in February to April 2026. The BOMP postdates the Lizard Values Assessment, so it falls within part 2 of the request.

## 1. Survey Scope

The BOMP was designed to establish baseline biodiversity values for outcome monitoring at fixed monitoring plots. It included timed lizard searches starting at set plots throughout the Ardgour Restoration Area (ARA), the Mine Regeneration Zone (MRZ), Bendigo Sanctuary and Ardgour Sanctuary (as proposed at that time). These observations supplement the RMA Ecology dataset. They do not replace it. We did not monitor the proposed monitoring points within the Direct Disturbance Footprint (DDF) for the BOMP baseline. Baseline monitoring at these points will start after rehabilitation.

## 2. Methods

Lizards were recorded through timed searches starting at 282 BOMP plots across the ARA, MRZ and proposed Sanctuary areas. Each search started at a 10 m x 10 m BOMP plot. Searcher(s) then moved in any direction, searching likely lizard habitat, for a total of one person-hour (30 minutes each if two people searched, or 1 hour if one person searched). Searches were not confined to a fixed transect or area, and search tracks were not recorded.

Lizards were not captured or handled. Each observation was assigned to Kowarau gecko, skink or Unidentified from a visual "best guess" in the field. Observations were recorded as "Unidentified" where the lizard moved too fast, or was too hard to see, for a confident identification.

Timed searches was the BOMP method that used to record lizards.

Vegetation type was not recorded at the point of each lizard observation. In time, the BOMP design intends to assign vegetation type at the analysis stage, by overlaying record locations on a vegetation mapping layer.

Searches took place from early February to early April 2026, in fine weather conditions.

### 3. Limitations

- **Skinks were not identified separately to species** McCann's skink and southern grass skink as they can only be told apart reliably by in-hand checks of ear opening, supraocular scales and belly colour (Appendix D of Dr Ussher's evidence, 17 April 2026). Skinks were not captured during the survey, so all skinks are recorded as "skink."

### 4. Results

Habitat NZ completed timed searches at 282 BOMP plots (282 person-hours of search effort). Searches recorded 1,987 individual lizards at 1,748 locations:

- Kawarau gecko (*Woodworthia* "Cromwell"): 410 individuals at 265 locations.
- Skinks: 1,466 individuals at 1,372 locations. Skinks were not identified to species (see Section 3).
- Unidentified: 111 individuals at 111 locations.

### 5. Response to RFI Items

| Panel request                                          | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Number of each species at each survey point</b>     | Provided per observation in the attached CSV file. Records are field "best guess" identifications, with skinks reported as one group. "Unidentified" is used where no confident identification was possible (see Section 2). |
| <b>Vegetation type at each survey point</b>            | Not recorded in the field. Vegetation type will be assigned by overlaying record locations on vegetation mapping. This analysis has not yet been done.                                                                       |
| <b>Survey locations where no lizards were detected</b> | This was not recorded, though plots that did not have lizard observations recorded can be inferred from the attached map.                                                                                                    |
| <b>All survey methods utilised</b>                     | Timed searches only.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Map of each survey data point or transect</b>       | Figure 1 shows all BOMP plots and the locations where lizards were observed.                                                                                                                                                 |

### 6. Data Provided

The following are attached:

1. CSV file "BOMP lizard locations 2026" provides Point ID, species, Site ID (the BOMP plot ID), date, count of individuals, zone (ARA / Bendigo Sanctuary / Ardour Sanctuary / MRZ) and coordinates in NZGD2000 NZTM (EPSG:2193).
2. Figure 1 (HNZ\_Map\_20260928\_001) is a map of all BOMP plots and the locations where lizards were observed.

If the Panel has a specific question arising from the attached data, we would be pleased to assist further.

Kind regards,

Keith Barber

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Barber', with a stylized, cursive script.

Director and Principal Ecologist, Habitat NZ Limited

Phone: [REDACTED]

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## References

RMA Ecology 2025. *Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project: Lizard Values Assessment*. Technical Report B.15.