



**CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN BLOCK MINING PROJECT – FTA-2512-1153**  
**20 MAY 2026**

This response is filed for Waikato-Tainui by:

**Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Incorporated**

PO Box 648

Hamilton 3240

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Te Whakakitenga o Waikato (Waikato-Tainui) Incorporated is the governing body for the 33 hapuu and 68 marae of Waikato (Appendix A) and manages the tribal assets for the benefit of over 97,000 registered tribal members. It is also:
  - a) the trustee of the Waikato Raupatu Lands Trust, the post-settlement governance entity for Waikato-Tainui for the purposes of the Waikato Raupatu Lands Deed of Settlement 1995 and the Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Act 1995;
  - b) the trustee of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust, the post-settlement governance entity for Waikato-Tainui for the purposes of the Waikato-Tainui River Deed of Settlement 2009 and the Waikato Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010;
  - c) the mandated iwi organisation for Waikato-Tainui for the purposes of the Maaori Fisheries Act 2004; and
  - d) the iwi aquaculture organisation for Waikato-Tainui for the purposes of the Maaori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004.
2. Waikato-Tainui thanks the Panel for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed “Central and Southern Mining Project” application under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024.

## **WAIKATO-TAINUI OUTSTANDING AND REMAINING CLAIMS**

3. Waikato-Tainui have outstanding claims (Wai 30) that are currently under active negotiation with the Crown. These include claims relating to the West Coast harbours (Kaawhia, Aotea and Whaaingaroa) and associated coastal and marine areas. The claims are comprehensive, encompassing whenua, takutai moana, the moana, and associated natural, cultural and economic interests.
4. Waikato-Tainui notes that the current application relates to activities occurring within areas and resource systems connected to matters that remain under active Treaty settlement negotiation. In that context, Waikato-Tainui considers it important that decisions made through the Fast-track process do not inadvertently prejudice

unresolved settlement matters or future arrangements relating to mana whakahaere and resource management.

## **OVERLAPPING IWI AND HAPUU INTERESTS**

### *TE NEHENEHENUI*

5. Waikato-Tainui acknowledges that the application area engages overlapping Treaty settlement and mana whenua interests, including those of Te Nehenehenui under the Maniapoto Claims Settlement Act 2022 and associated joint management arrangements (JMA) with relevant local authorities. Waikato-Tainui recognises the role of Te Nehenehenui in articulating Maniapoto-specific interests in relation to the substantive application.

### *NGAATI MAHUTA KI TE HAUAAURU*

6. Waikato-Tainui also acknowledges the interests of Ngaati Mahuta ki te Hauaauru (NMKTH), including the Te Whakakitenga marae of Te Kooraha, Aaruka, and Maketuu, in relation to localised environmental, cultural, and customary matters associated with the application area. Waikato-Tainui recognises NMKTH as the primary mana whenua entity for the application area and generally supports the positions and concerns they have raised in relation to the substantive application.
7. Waikato-Tainui further notes that other iwi and hapuu may hold overlapping, unresolved, or adjacent Treaty settlement, customary marine title, or statutory interests relevant to the application area. Waikato-Tainui does not seek to determine or pre-empt any such interests and considers these matters are appropriately addressed through the relevant statutory and engagement processes.
8. Waikato-Tainui provides this submission in its capacity as an iwi-wide authority responsible for articulating overarching iwi interests, settlement interests, and environmental policy positions across its rohe. As an iwi-wide authority, Waikato-Tainui provides this position to reflect overarching tribal interests, recognising that matters of localised environmental and cultural effects are primarily informed by mana whenua at place.

## **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

9. Waikato-Tainui acknowledges the historical development of iron sand mining within the Tahaaroa area and the long-standing relationship between the site, local communities, and successive land use and regulatory frameworks that have enabled such activity over time.
10. Waikato-Tainui understands that the commencement of mining activity occurred within the legislative and economic contexts of the time, and that local whaanau and land interests engaged with those frameworks in order to secure employment and economic opportunities for their people. Such engagement is understood as a pragmatic response to prevailing circumstances rather than an unconditional endorsement of mining activity.
11. Waikato-Tainui further recognises the complexity of Maaori land tenure in the area, including multiple land interests and consolidated governance structures intended to enable collective decision-making, retain whenua within whaanau ownership, and provide a mechanism for managing economic opportunities associated with the land.
12. At a general level, Waikato-Tainui understands that the enabling of mining activity was accompanied by an expectation of mutual benefit, including opportunities for local employment and contributions to the wellbeing of the surrounding community, alongside the retention of underlying land ownership and protection of whaanau interests.
13. Waikato-Tainui notes that over time there has been an evolution in both the operational scale of mining activity and the nature of associated benefits, and that perspectives may differ across the rohe as to the extent to which the original intentions and expectations associated with the early arrangements continue to be reflected in contemporary practice.
14. Waikato-Tainui acknowledges that some whaanau connected to the area continue to derive employment from the operation. However, Waikato-Tainui also recognises that there are differing views within the wider iwi context regarding the extent to which broader community, cultural, and intergenerational aspirations associated with the original engagement with mining activity are currently being realised.
15. Waikato-Tainui considers this historical context relevant to understanding the contemporary relationship with the operation and to assessing the need for robust, enforceable, and enduring environmental and cultural protections that reflect cumulative effects and intergenerational responsibilities.

## **RECONSENTING OF THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN BLOCKS**

16. Waikato-Tainui is aware that the Central and Southern Blocks were the subject of a re consenting process completed in 2024, which resulted in a decision granting consent for dry mining activities and imposing a revised suite of conditions, while declining wet mining activities as outside scope.
17. That process resulted in strengthened conditions addressing key matters including setbacks, rehabilitation obligations, monitoring and reporting requirements, bonding, and engagement frameworks. Those conditions reflect the outcome of a contested process involving technical evidence and submissions from multiple parties.
18. Waikato-Tainui notes that aspects of that decision are now under appeal and remain unresolved, with the appeal currently in mediation. In parallel, mining continues under section 124 of the Resource Management Act 1991.
19. The present Fast-track application overlaps with matters that were directly considered in the re consenting process and, in some respects, seeks outcomes that differ from or extend beyond the scope of that decision.
20. Waikato-Tainui considers it important that the Fast-track process does not operate in a manner that undermines or displaces the outcomes of the recent re consenting process. The conditions imposed in 2024 represent a relevant and material regulatory baseline.
21. We note that NMKTH consider the conditions developed through the previous RMA process provide an appropriate baseline framework for managing effects. Waikato-Tainui acknowledges this position as relevant and notes that the Applicant has also acknowledged those conditions as a starting point for the Fast-track application.

## **WAIKATO-TAINUI POSITION**

22. Waikato-Tainui acknowledges the engagement undertaken by the applicant to date. However, consistent with the mandate structures of Waikato-Tainui, the position of our marae within the affected rohe (namely Aaruka, Maketuu, and Te Kooraha) is determinative. In the absence of clear and collective support from mana whenua, Waikato-Tainui is not in a position to support the application. The views of mana whenua at place remain paramount.

23. It is understood that the collective marae position in relation to the proposed activity is to oppose the application as currently presented. The principles reflected in Tai Tumu, Tai Pari, Tai Ao – Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan provide guidance on meaningful engagement with mana whenua, including how collective positions are formed and expressed, and how engagement processes should enable those outcomes.
24. In circumstances where a collective mana whenua position has not yet been reached, it would be inappropriate for Waikato-Tainui, as iwi authority, to provide a definitive response that could pre-empt or cut across those processes. Waikato-Tainui recommends further engagement between NMKTH and the applicant prior to any decision being made on the Fast-track application. We concur with NMKTH that the application must be assessed on a cumulative, “ki uta ki tai” basis, including the effects of existing and past activities within the Tahaaroa environment.
25. Accordingly, it is Waikato-Tainui’s position that the application should not be granted in its current form unless it is amended to appropriately reflect and incorporate the positions and protections sought by NMKTH.

#### **SUGGESTED DRAFT CONDITIONS**

26. Should the Panel be inclined to grant the substantive application, Waikato-Tainui supports the continued application in full of all conditions imposed by the 2024 RMA Hearing Panel Decision. In the event of any inconsistency between those conditions and any conditions proposed as part of the Fast-track process, Waikato-Tainui considers that the more stringent or environmentally protective condition should prevail.
27. Waikato-Tainui notes that NMKTH has proposed a suite of additional and amended conditions in relation to the application. Waikato-Tainui generally supports those proposed conditions as a package, including those relating to strengthened mana whenua engagement and participation in monitoring, decision-making, and the practical expression of kaitiakitanga.

#### **CONCLUSION**

28. Waikato-Tainui has considered the substantive application and supports the position of NMKTH that the actual and potential adverse effects of the proposal in its current form are significant when assessed against the existing environmental baseline and the matters traversed through the 2024 RMA Hearing Panel Decision process.

29. Waikato-Tainui considers that, as currently framed, the application risks resulting in cumulative and ongoing adverse effects within the Tahaaroa area, and that key protections previously identified through the 2024 RMA Hearing Panel Decision have not been adequately retained or reflected. Accordingly, Waikato-Tainui concurs that, at a minimum, the conditions imposed through that decision should be retained as a baseline, with any departures requiring clear justification and stronger protective conditions where uncertainty exists.
30. Waikato-Tainui reiterates its position that the substantive application, in its current form, is not supported.

DATED

20 MAY 2026

TE WHAKAKITENGA O WAIKATO INCORPORATED

*T Mapu*

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Te Maakariini Mapu

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Waikato-Tainui 68 Marae



