

FINAL RECOMMENDED FOR ENDORSEMENT

Treaty Impact Assessment for the Proposed Southern Link Inland Port



Prepared for Southern Link Property Ltd

June 2026

Cover photos

Top left: The eastern shores of Lake Waiholā from Titiri Road looking across the lake towards Te Nohoaka o Takiaua.	Top right: Two whānau members enjoying the Whakaehu (Silverstream) at Whare Flat (at a site upstream of the inland port location).
Bottom left: A restoration initiative along Whakaehu riverbanks alongside Mosgiel township, a site downstream of the inland port site (Photo by Kyle Nelson).	Bottom right: Gordon Road, Mosgiel (Photo by Hamish McNeilly, extracted from https://www.stuff.co.nz/home-property/360885663/good-family-life-why-population-rural-town-has-exploded).

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	3
Executive Summary	5
 PART 1	 9
Chapter 1	9
1.1 Introduction	9
1.2 The North Taiari area	10
1.3 Methodology used for Impact Identification	11
1.4 Consultation timeline	11
1.5 Purpose of this Treaty Impact Assessment	12
1.6 Structure of this assessment	13
 PART 2	 14
Chapter 2	14
2.1 Origins of Ngāi Tahu in Te Waipounamu.....	14
2.2 Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	14
2.3. Te Runanga o Ōtākou	15
2.4 Kāi Tahu Whānui.....	16
Chapter 3	17
3.1. Introduction	17
3.2 Wahi tupuna: The Cultural Landscape	17
3.3. Kōrero tuku iho.....	20
3.4. Wai: Water	21
3.5 Mahika Kai: Traditional Food Gathering	25
3.6. Taoka Species including Native Flora	28
3.7 Kāika Nohoaka.....	30
3.8 Ara - Trails	30
3.9 Values against which impacts of places and their taoka will be assessed	31
3.10 Conclusion	33
 PART 3	 35
4.1 Kāi Tahu rakatirataka	35
4.2 Manawhenua recognised by the RMA.....	35
4.3 Manawhenua recognised within the Fast Track Legislation.....	37
4.4 Te Tiriti o Waitangi	39

PART 4	41
Chapter 5: Assessment of the cultural impacts.....	41
5.1 Introduction	41
5.3 Linking the impact assessment to discussion of cultural interests.	42
5.4 Structuring the assessment of impacts.....	43
5.5 Assessment of Cultural Impacts	44
5.6 Cumulative Effects Assessment	74
5.7 What is missing from the assessments	75
5.8 Identifying effects of major significance	77
5.9 Proposed Mitigation	79
5.10 Conclusion	83
Glossary.....	85
Reference list.....	87

Executive Summary

This Treaty Impact Assessment (TIA) has been prepared on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou (Ōtākou) in relation to the proposed Southern Link Inland Port (SLIP), a 40-hectare industrial freight and logistics hub at 270–292 Dukes Road North, North Taiari. The proposal, by Southern Link Property Ltd (a partnership of Port Otago and Dynes Transport), seeks consents via the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA).

The Proposal

The development involves converting rural land adjacent to the Taiari (Taieri) Branch railway and Whakaehu (Silverstream) into a major logistics hub. Key components include approximately 80,000 m² of warehousing, a rail siding connecting to Port Chalmers, up to 5-hectares of container terminal, road exchange areas, a 5-hectare container depot, and 24/7 operations with associated lighting, acoustic barriers, and flood mitigation infrastructure. Construction is anticipated in three stages. The development would discharge treated stormwater to Whakaehu.

Cultural Significance of the Area

The Taiari catchment holds profound cultural significance for Manawhenua. The Crown has recognised this significance through the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (NTCSA), including the Statutory Acknowledgement of the Waipōuri Waiholā Wetland (Schedule 70) and the tōpuni for Mauka Atua/Saddle Hill (Schedule 84). The proposed site lies within a cultural landscape captured in the narrative of the taniwha Matamata, whose movements created Whakaehu and shaped surrounding landforms. Named places including Wai-pōtaka, Te Konika o Matamata, Te Korikori o Matamata, Pukemakamaka and Turimakamaka carry deep cultural significance.

Whakaehu functions as a critical connection within the broader Lower Taiari system, contributing to the mauri of the wider aquatic environment including the Waipōuri-Waiholā wetlands. The catchment supports 40 taoka species recognised under Schedule 97 of the NTCSA, including longfin tuna (at-risk, declining) and kanakana/lamprey (nationally vulnerable). Whakaehu has the highest fish diversity in the catchment with six species recorded. The Lower Taiari catchment including parts of Whakaehu, sustains mahika kai, nohoanga (camping), and contemporary cultural connections for whānau.

Treaty and Legal Framework

This assessment is grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the statutory mechanisms that give effect to it. The Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (NTCSA) recognises Ngāi Tahu as Tāngata whenua holding rakatirataka within their takiwā. The assessment draws on established Treaty principles including: the recognition of rakatirataka and kaitiakitaka; the principle of partnership requiring co-operation in good faith; the principle of reciprocity; the duty to make informed decisions; and the principle of active protection of Māori interests. The Fast Track Approvals Act 2024, while designed to accelerate consenting, embeds obligations for Manawhenua participation to ensure the provisions of the NTCSA 1998 are honoured.

Assessment Methodology

Impacts have been assessed using two criteria: the sensitivity of a taoka or value to change, and the scale of impact as perceived by whānau. These are combined using a matrix to assign an overall significance rating from negligible through to major. The assessment was completed drawing on existing cultural narratives, iwi management plans, cultural monitoring reports, and a comprehensive review of twelve technical reports submitted with the Fast Track application. The assessment evaluates impacts across seven cultural interest areas: wahi tupuna (cultural landscape), wāhi tūpuna place names and narratives, wai māori (freshwater), mahika kai, taoka species, kāika nohoaka (settlements and camping sites), and ara (trails). These are then assessed within the broader values framework of whakapapa, rakatirataka, mana, kaitiakitaka, manaakitaka, and whānau ora.

Identified Benefits

The TIA acknowledges several benefits of the proposal: honouring Port Otago's "no more reclamation" commitment for Otago Harbour; economic transformation and employment for the Mosgiel-Taiari area; removal of approximately 19,000 truck movements annually from Dunedin streets through a road-to-rail shift; regional supply chain resilience as freight volumes from Central and South Otago are forecast to grow 30–40% over the next decade; a \$200 million private sector investment; and potential catalyst effects for wider infrastructure improvements across the Dunedin Taiari area.

Key Adverse Impacts

The TIA identifies 47 individual impacts across the cultural interest areas. Using the sensitivity/scale matrix, these are classified as follows:

Significance	Impact Numbers (from Chapter 5)	Count
Major (High adverse / High sensitivity)	32, 34, 38, 39, 41, 44, 45, 46	8
Moderate (Medium adverse / High sensitivity)	2, 6, 8, 10, 18, 26, 27, 35, 37	9
Minor (Low adverse / High sensitivity)	1, 5, 7, 9, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 28, 29, 33, 36, 40, 43	17
Very minor (Low adverse / Medium sensitivity)	47	1
Negligible	42	1
Unknown (scale undetermined)	3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15, 21, 22, 25, 30, 31	11

Eight impacts are rated as major significance. These relate predominantly to: traffic impacts on whānau and the Mosgiel community; cumulative effects on the Lower Taieri river system; constraints on rakatirataka and kaitiakitaka; and ongoing effects on mahika kai and taoka species. A further eleven impacts remain unassessed because the scale of effect is unknown, largely because critical design decisions (stormwater, wastewater management) are deferred

to detailed design stages, which it is essential that Otakou is engaged in. Otakou acknowledge that these ratings may change (i.e. their significance may be lessened) once conditions and management plans are finalised.

Cumulative Effects

The Lower Taiari Plain has already experienced significant cultural loss through the draining of lakes and wetlands, channelisation of waterways, ongoing decline in water quality (below National Bottom Lines at Taiari Depot), and decline in populations of taoka species. The proposed inland port adds to these cumulative pressures. While the applicant's technical reports conclude residual ecological effects would be "low" (less than minor), this assessment notes that ecological criteria do not fully account for the cultural significance of avoiding further degradation, the precautionary approach required for taoka species, downstream effects on the Taiari-Waipōuri system, and the intergenerational timeframe over which cultural effects accumulate.

Climate Adaptation Concerns

A significant concern not addressed in the applicant's technical reports is how the inland port may constrain future climate change adaptation options for the Taiari. The TIA identifies five areas of potential "lock-in": flood protection prioritisation shifting toward defending industrial assets rather than considering flexible alternatives; drainage infrastructure designed around current conditions that may prove inadequate; transport corridor constraints if no heavy traffic bypass for Mosgiel is funded; land use zoning rigidity as industrial clustering may reduce options for managed retreat and nature-based solutions; and insurance and property value dynamics that create perverse incentives for households in increasingly risky locations.

Mitigation Adequacy

The proposed mitigation measures are significant but represent a conventional engineering response to development impacts. While many measures reflect current best practice for environmental management, the overall mitigation package is assessed as not adequate to protect the range of cultural values identified in this TIA. The fundamental shortcoming is the treatment of cultural impacts as an extension of environmental impacts. This TIA explicitly states that ecological mitigation does not equate to cultural mitigation.

Value Domain	Technical Mitigation	Mitigation to address cultural impacts	Overall Assessment
Wāhi Tupuna	Adequate	Inadequate	Partially Adequate
Wai Māori	Adequate (if UPTs mandatory)	Inadequate	Partially Adequate
Mahika Kai	Partially Adequate	Inadequate	Partially Adequate
Whānau Ora	Adequate	Not addressed	Partially Adequate
Treaty Partnership	—	—	Partially Adequate

Key gaps in the mitigation framework include: no cultural monitoring framework or Manawhenua participation in monitoring; no kanakana habitat protection despite identified threats; no assessment of effects on mahika kai (as opposed to species survival); no governance framework recognising rakatirataka; and critical design decisions deferred to detailed design stages without explicit definition of the process for Manawhenua involvement.

It is noted that the form taken to mitigate the issues raised in this TIA (be it mitigation initiatives, consent conditions or targeted management plans) is the subject of ongoing discussions between the applicant and the runaka.

Conclusion

The proposed Southern Link Inland Port will result in cultural impacts across multiple areas including wāhi tupuna, wai, mahika kai, taoka species, and the broader cultural values of whakapapa, rakatirataka, mana, kaitiakitaka, manaakitaka, and whānau ora. The mitigation measures proposed in the technical reports are extensive and provide a foundation for managing effects but, from a cultural perspective, require enhancement.

The acceptability of the proposal to Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou will ultimately depend on: the final decisions of the Southern Link partners, especially with respect to wastewater and stormwater system design; the commitment to implement a full suite of proposed and additional mitigation measures; the incorporation of appropriate conditions into any consent granted; the establishment of genuine partnership arrangements for ongoing management of cultural effects; and recognition that this TIA is a living document that may be updated as discussions progress.

This TIA has been prepared to assist Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou in exercising their rakatirataka in relation to the proposed development. Any development proposal must genuinely engage with the cultural values documented in this assessment and recognise the rakatirataka of Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou.

PART 1

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The Taiari catchment remains of importance to the whānau of Te Runanga o Ōtākou (Ōtākou) and Kai Tahu whānau whanui. The Crown has recognised this significance in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. Schedules 70 and 84 contain the Statutory Acknowledgement of the Waipouri Waiholā Wetland and the topuni for the Maukaatua respectively. Other schedules of relevance from the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 include Schedule 97 which details species the Crown recognises as taoka species. As Manawhenua, the members belonging to Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou have a responsibility to assess how the proposal impacts their taoka and the cultural beliefs, values and practices underpinned by those taoka.

Southern Link Property Ltd (SLPL) proposes development of the Southern Link Inland Port (SLIP). The project involves establishment and operation of an inland port / logistics hub to service Port Otago at 270-292 Dukes Road North, North Taiari (legally described as Part Section 9 Block V East Taiari Survey District, Part Section 10 Block V East Taiari Survey District, & Deposited Plan 5579 East Taiari Survey District).

The site is a 40ha block of rural land located adjacent to industrial zoned land at Dukes Road North, North Taiari. The site is bounded by Dukes Road North to the north, the Taiari Branch railway and Stedman Road to the west, and Whakaehu (Silverstream) to the south. Rural pastoral land lies to the east. Figure 1 illustrates the site location.

The development was fully described in the Project Description of Southern Link Property Limited's Substantive Fast-track Application and Otakou was aware that it will include:

- A new rail siding off the Taiari Branch Line to enable loading, unloading and operation of a rail freight shuttle service to Port Chalmers and the wider rail network;
- Approximately 80,000 m² of high stud warehousing (chilled and ambient);
- Truck canopy and unloading areas;
- A 5 hectare container depot facility enabling the inspection, cleaning, upgrading and repair of containers including for food grade repacking;
- Up to 5 ha of container terminal for storage of full containers including refrigerated containers;
- Break bulk storage facilities;
- Road widening;
- Ancillary activities to support the above including earthworks, construction of the rail siding, site access, internal roadways and parking, hardstand areas, truck waiting areas, onsite road network, three waters infrastructure, flood mitigation, landscaping, buildings for storage, administration and maintenance facilities, and associated infrastructure and works including measures necessary to manage stormwater and stabilise the site.

Construction of the Inland Port is anticipated to be undertaken in three stages however the timing of the delivery of each stage, and discrete works within each stage, may change in response to demand for logistics capacity at the Inland Port.

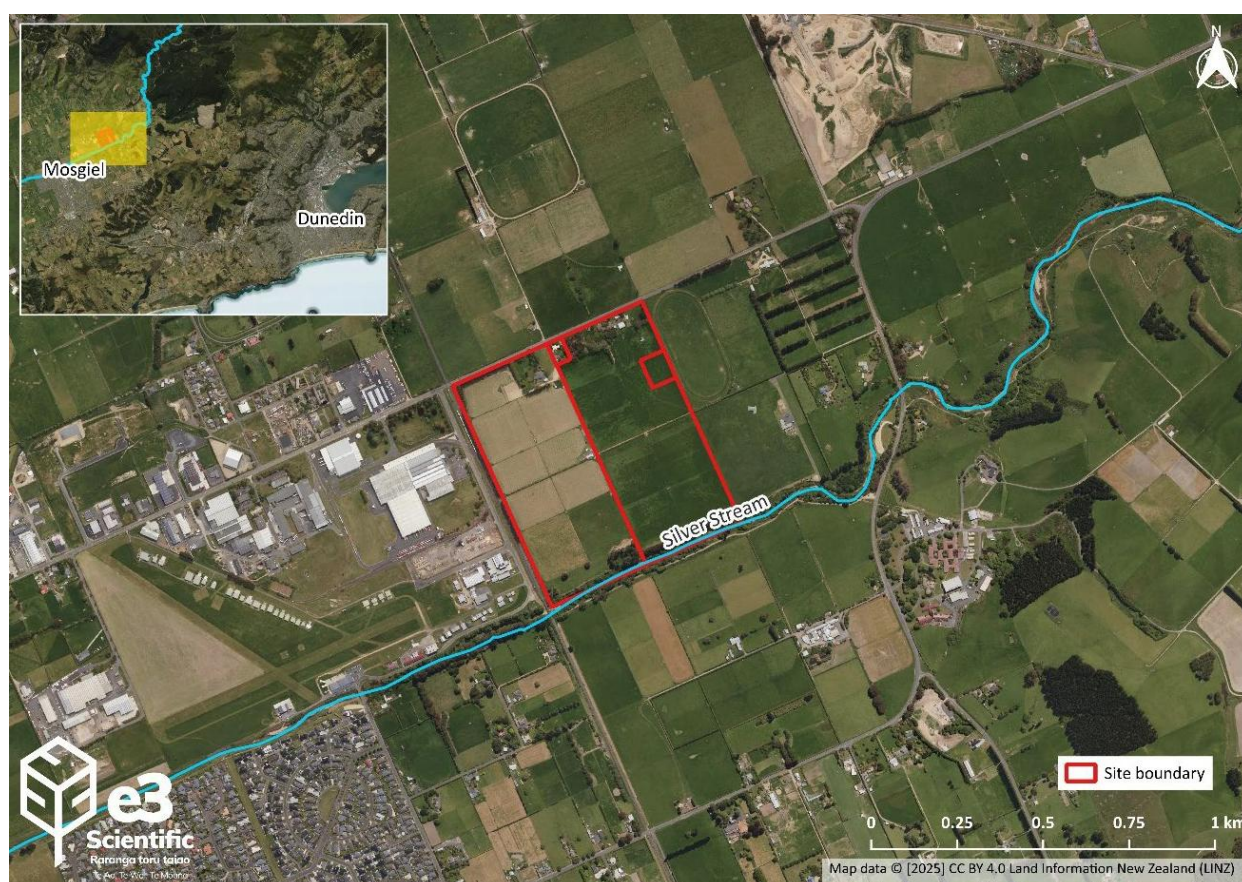
1.2 The North Taiari area¹

In the North Taiari area the three main tributaries are Mill Stream, Whakaehu (Silverstream) and Ōwhiro Stream – they all drain to the Taiari River. The elevation of the site is approximately 30m asl and the topography is essentially flat. There is a gentle south-westward fall across the site.

The site is on the north-eastern outskirts of Mosgiel and adjacent to an area zoned in the Dunedin City District Plan (DCDP) as 'Industrial'. The site itself, along with the land to its north and east is zoned 'Taiari Plain Rural'. Nearby, across Whakaehu and between the site and residential zoned land in Mosgiel, is an area of Rural Residential zoning and character.

Currently, the site is characterised by rural paddocks used for grazing and cropping. There are three dwellings with associated sheds and plantings located adjacent to Dukes Road North and also a farm shed centrally located.

Figure 1: The location of the Southern Link inland port²



¹ The description of the North Taiari location was extracted from the applicant's technical reports.

² This location map was extracted from E3 Scientific, 2025, Southern Link Inland Port, Freshwater Ecological Impact Assessment, page 4.

A significant natural feature of the proposed site and its immediate landscape context is Whakaehu. The stream is incised approximately 6m into the surrounding plains surface and its straight alignment adjacent to the site reflects the modifications undertaken as Mosgiel and the Wingatui area developed. The stream corridor is approximately 50m wide and the banks have a cover of rough grass and wilding exotic trees, particularly willow, poplar and sycamore. The stream meanders slightly within its bed and there are pools and riffles with small areas of gravel beach. Along much of the site boundary with the stream there are eucalyptus trees.

1.3 Methodology used for Impact Identification

The methodology used to prepare this TIA was to:

- (a) Work with members from Ōtākou to ensure that the significance of the lands, waters and resources of the Taiari catchment is conveyed to Southern Link partners.
- (b) Review reports / plans / narratives prepared by Aukaha or Ōtākou about the Taiari catchment to the extent that the information is relevant to assessing the impact of the proposed development (e.g., previous CIAs, cultural monitoring reports, Iwi Management Plans).
- (c) Review technical reports which supported the substantive Fast Track application that have been supplied by the applicant.
- (d) Assist Ōtākou to determine whether the inland port will have negative or positive effects on their values, and the significance of the effects.
- (e) Collaborate with representatives of Ōtākou to discuss how the effects could be mitigated or remedied and the best mechanism for achieving the relief sought..

The principal sources of information from Kāi Tahu should be considered valid and demanding of respect. The range of methods utilised to identify both the taoka, beliefs, values and practices, and the potential effects, demonstrates good faith by Manawhenua to fully identify the impacts of the development.

1.4 Consultation timeline

We acknowledge that Port Otago and Te Runanga o Ōtākou have a long-term established relationship.

The history of engagement between the Southern Link partners and Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou specific to the inland port on the Lower Taiari is set out in the table below. Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou has proactively sought to engage constructively with the partners to ensure that the project progresses in a timely manner while ensuring that the project, its effects and the proposed mitigations are well understood.

Table 1: Timeline of engagement

Date	Nature of Engagement
6 March 2025	Initial contact from Port of Otago seeking to meet Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou about the Project.
9 April 2025	Initial briefing from Port of Otago with Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou and Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki about the Project.
[10] May 2025	Process Agreement executed by Port of Otago and affected Papatipu Rūnanga setting our arrangements for consultation and engagement about the Project.
15 May 2025	Lodgement of Referral Application by Port of Otago and Dynes Group for the Project

Date	Nature of Engagement
15 October 2025	Port of Otago commences making technical reports available to Ōtākou advisors
13 November 2025	Site visit provided to Ōtākou advisors
December 2025 to January 2026	Engagement between Port of Otago and Ōtākou advisors about the draft technical reports making up the substance
12 January 2026	Provision of first feedback from Ōtākou advisors about the scope of the project, effects and mitigations
19 January 2026	Provision of further feedback from Ōtākou advisors about the scope of the project, effects and mitigations
4 February 2026	Port of Otago provided an update on the application and draft technical reports.
9 February 2026	Provision of further feedback from Ōtākou advisors about the scope of the project, effects and mitigations
18 February 2026	Draft Treaty Impact Assessment provided to Port Otago.
23 February 2026	Meeting with Port Otago to present findings of the draft Treaty Impact Assessment.
25 February 2026	Meeting with Port Otago to discuss future structured engagement.
27 February 2026	Port of Otago provided updated draft technical reports.
2 March 2026	Confirmation of next steps provided to Port Otago via email.
3 March 2026	Port of Otago provided further updated draft technical reports.
4 March 2026	Port of Otago confirmed they are developing a plan for structured engagement and integration of feedback provided into consent conditions.

1.5 Purpose of this Treaty Impact Assessment

This Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) assessment relates to a development within the Lower Taiari catchment and the proposal of Port Otago and Dynes Transport (together the Southern Link partners) to seek consents via Fast Track to establish an inland port in the northern part of the Lower Taiari plain.

This assessment is a living document and will be updated as required to respond to changing circumstances.

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) requires comprehensive assessments of effects on the environment, including cultural effects. This document:

- summarises the cultural values, interests and associations with the Lower Taiari
- then focuses on the impacts of the proposal,
- provides comments on the technical reports that the applicant has provided, in particular how the Southern Link partners propose to mitigate those impacts, and,
- as a result, concludes with an assessment of the extent to which the applications are consistent with Manawhenua expectations, informed by Te Tiriti.

This approach is both necessary and appropriate, given the significance of the Taiari to Kāi Tahu, and the relevance of Te Tiriti.

As an indigenous cultural assessment, this document reflects the aspirations of the Manawhenua side of the Treaty partnership and is intended to contribute to a Treaty-compliant resource management regime. The Waitangi Tribunal (2011) defined this as a regime that enables iwi/hapū to express tino rakatiraka in their traditional territories and is capable of delivering effective influence and appropriate priority to kaitiaki interests. That is the purpose of this assessment. Te Tiriti and, to an extent, the RMA, establish Manawhenua as partners in environmental decision-making (Ruckstuhl et al 2014). It is for this reason

that this Treaty-based impact assessment model does not relegate Manawhenua to the status of stakeholder.

As a reflection of good practice (Jolly, 2016), this assessment:

- has been developed through a process that was on Manawhenua terms and led by Manawhenua;
- is Te Tiriti based, as the legal framework that requires that such an assessment be taken seriously (Ruckstuhl et al. 2014); and
- strictly avoids narrow definitions of cultural effects, to prevent the marginalisation of Manawhenua in this process.

This document should be given the weight and respect akin to a planning document recognised by Manawhenua³, as a comprehensive assessment that reflects the perspective of those holding and exercising rakatirataka in the Taiari.

1.6 Structure of this assessment

There are four parts to this TIA.

Part 1 is the introductory section that provides an overview of the proposal and explains the purpose and structure of the TIA.

Part 2 was requested by the Southern Link partners. It is a summary of the association of Kai Tahu with the Lower Taiari and more specifically the footprint of the proposal. Although this part has been prepared by Gail Tipa it draws heavily from existing cultural narratives that have been prepared by Aukaha Ltd⁴.

Please note that the proposal includes changes to the structure and operation of Port Otago infrastructure in Dunedin City. We have not included a description of the cultural association with Dunedin City as Port Otago has received reports from KTKO Ltd (and then Aukaha) previously. The focus for this section of the TIA is the Taiari catchment, in particular the Lower Taiari Plain.

Part 3 provides the legal and Treaty context for the consent discussions with the Southern Link partners. This part has been prepared with assistance from Anderson Lloyd.

Part 4 provides a summary of the impacts of the proposed development of concern to Ōtākou. This part has been prepared by Dr Gail Tipa from Tipa and Associates Ltd.

Having different authors, with differing professional backgrounds, drafting the respective parts of the TIA means that it is inevitable that writing styles differ.

Note that the Kāi Tahu dialect uses a 'k' interchangeably with 'ng', and this document reflects this approach.

³ See KTKO Ltd (2006) Kai Tahu Natural Resource Management Plan.

⁴ Dr Megan Ellison has drafted many cultural narratives specific to the Taiari catchment on behalf of Aukaha Ltd.

PART 2

Chapter 2

2.1 Origins of Ngāi Tahu in Te Waipounamu

Kāi Tahu take their name from Tahupōtiki, a descendant of Paikea. Sometime in the seventeenth century his descendants gradually migrated south from the Poverty Bay-Hawkes Bay area, travelling first to the Wellington coast and then crossing Raukawamoana (Cook Strait) in several waves to Te Wai Pounamu. Over a number of generations, they spread through Te Waipounamu and on to Rakiura (Stewart Island) (Wai 27, Chapter 3).

As Kāi Tahu moved south, they sometimes fought and defeated, and sometimes intermarried with, other tribes. In doing so they absorbed these peoples' older knowledge and experience of the land and its resources, forging links with more ancient history and resources. Kāi Tahu is therefore an amalgam, formed from three main lines of descent which flowed together to make the modern tribe (Wai 27, Chapter 3).

These three tribes can be described as:

- First, Waitaha, being also a collective name given to a number of ancient tribal groups which occupied Te Waka o Aoraki (South Island), descending from the founding ancestor Rakaihautu of the Uruao canoe.
- The second tribe, Kāti Mamoe came from the Heretaunga (Napier) area around the sixteenth century and gradually filtered through the South Island to intermarry with Waitaha and assume control.
- The third, Kāi Tahu, also migrated from the eastern region of the North Island and gradually united with Kāti Mamoe, absorbing Waitaha at the same time and inheriting many traditions.

By the time of Te Tiriti, Kāi Tahu were in control of a vast territory, but existed in hapū and whānau communities, with different genealogies, often reflecting the mixed origins of the tribe (Wai 27, Chapter 3).

2.2 Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is the present iteration of a process that has spanned nearly two centuries, involving at various times tribal councils, tribal parliaments at Ōtākou, Kaiapoi, and Temuka and the Ngāi Tahu Māori Trust Board.

On 6 September 1991, the Waitangi Tribunal issued a '*Supplementary Report on Ngāi Tahu Legal Personality*' to its Minister recommending the Minister of Māori Affairs introduce legislation constituting a Ngāi Tahu Iwi Authority. The Tribunal noted in that report that Kāi Tahu had engaged widely with tribal members and that:

'Te Runanganui o Tahu' has been formed which is recognised as the real 'owners' of Ngāi Tahu and the repository of the tribe's collective tino rakatirataka. Ngāi Tahu affirm that tino rakatirataka resides ultimately in the papatipu runanga which comprise the runanganui.

Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu Bill was introduced to Parliament by Hon Doug Kidd in mid-1993 but was not passed until 1996. It was passed as a Private Act, for the particular interest and benefit of Ngāi Tahu Whānui. The 1996 Act says Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu was established for the benefit of, and as the representative of, "*Ngāi Tahu Whānui*". That Act states that:

- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu shall be recognised for all purposes as the representative of Kāi Tahu Whānui.
- Ngāi Tahu Whānui "*means the collective of the individuals who descend from the primary hapu of Waitaha, Ngāti Mamoe, and Ngāi Tahu, namely, Kāti Kuri, Kāti Irakehu, Kāti Huirapa, Ngāi Tuahuriri, and Kāi Te Ruahikihiki*".
- Where any enactment requires consultation with any iwi or with any iwi authority, that consultation shall, with respect to matters affecting Ngāi Tahu Whānui, be held with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

The 1996 Act specifies the charter of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu as the charter adopted at a meeting of representatives of the Papatipu Rūnanga of Ngāi Tahu Whānui at Aparima on 21 August 1993. The Kaupapa Whakakotahi of the charter adopted at Aparima, as recognised by the 1996 Act, is that the poupou of the House of Tahu are the Papatipu Rūnanga of our people, each with their own mana and woven together with the tukutuku of our whakapapa. In them resides the tino rakatirataka of Kāi Tahu. Its collective voice is Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu supports Kāi Tahu hapū and Rūnaka throughout the takiwā. Te Rūnanga operates according to tikaka, and on the shared understanding throughout Kāi Tahu that tino rakatirataka rests with hapū and Rūnaka.

In accordance with this tikaka, while Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu has been involved, it is Ōtākou that have led this process, consistent with their tino rakatirataka.

2.3. Te Runanga o Ōtākou

The Papatipu Rūnaka representing Manawhenua for the affected area within the Taiari Catchment is Te Runanga o Ōtākou. The takiwa of Te Runanga o Ōtākou centres on Ōtākou and extends from Purehurehu to Te Matau and inland, sharing an interest in the lakes and mountains to the western coast with Runanga to the North and to the South (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Declaration of Membership Act) Order 2001). This means SILP is located solely within the takiwa of Te Runanga o Ōtākou.

Ōtākou Marae is located near the end of Otago Peninsula, Dunedin. Ōtākou is 'home' to Waitaha, Rapuwai, Kāti Hāwea and Kāti Māmoe; where in the early 19th century, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Māmoe and Waitaha had blended into a single tribal entity.

Tūpuna laid claim to the eastern coast of Otago stretching inland to Whakatipu and Piopiotahi (Milford Sound). The original settlement was centred on Pukekura, the fortified pā at Taiaroa Head, and the Otago Harbour.



Figure 2: Ōtākou Marae

Ōtākou was the name of a channel running in the lower harbour and became applied to the entire region. Of significant importance is Ōtākou Marae, which was one of the places where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840.

2.4 Kāi Tahu Whānui

After many years of negotiations, Kāi Tahu signed the Deed of Settlement for its historic claims against the Crown at Kaikoura on 21 November 1997, and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act was passed on 29 September 1998. The Kāi Tahu settlement was expressed on the basis that it was full and final with regard to the specified claims of Kai Tahu Whānui. Importantly, the validity of the Deed of Settlement cannot be undermined.

The legislation records Ngāi Tahu Whānui tikaka that Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is “*recognised for all purposes as the representative of the Ngāi Tahu Whānui*”. Ngāi Tahu Whānui is defined as “*the collective of the individuals who descend from the primary hapu of Waitaha, Ngāti Mamoe, and Ngāi Tahu, namely, Kāti Kuri, Kāti Irakehu, Kāti Huirapa, Ngāi Tuahuriri, and Kāi Te Ruahikihiki*” (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996, ss 6 and 15).

For the avoidance of doubt, Waitaha in Te Waipounamu is part of Ngāi Tahu Whānui. The plain words of the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996 state Te Rūnanga is the representative of Waitaha and other Ngāi Tahu Whānui. The Ngāi Tahu settlement has settled all Waitaha claims in Te Waipounamu (as part of Ngāi Tahu Whānui) that are specified in the Deed of Settlement (Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement, cl 1.2.1; and Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, s 10), and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is to be recognised for all purposes as the representative of Ngāi Tahu Whānui.



Figure 3: Upoko of Te Runanga o Ōtākou, Dr Edward Ellison, welcoming Dunedin community members to Waitangi Day celebrations at Ōtākou.

Chapter 3⁵

3.1. Introduction

The assessment of cultural effects requires more than an inventory of impacts on physical sites. It requires a genuine consideration of the worldview, relationships, and obligations that give meaning to places found in the Lower Taiari that shape the way Manawhenua understand, interact with, and care for their landscapes. For Kāi Tahu, these values are lived realities—woven through whakapapa, expressed through practices such as mahika kai and kaitiakitanga, and carried forward through the intergenerational experiences that enable the transfer of mātauraka.

This TIA examines the proposed development through this cultural framework. The values, beliefs, and interests discussed in the following sections are interconnected and mutually reinforcing; they cannot be meaningfully separated into discrete categories. Whakapapa connects people to place and to one another across time. Mauri speaks to the life force and vitality that animates waterways, wetlands, and the broader environment. Kaitiakitanga expresses the reciprocal obligations that arise from these connections—the responsibility to nurture and protect so that future generations may inherit a landscape capable of sustaining them and their descendants in turn.

The interests considered here are grounded in both tikaka and in the rights and responsibilities recognised through Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

The discussion that follows forms the foundation upon which the assessment of the cultural impacts associated with the proposed activity will be presented in the next part of the TIA.

3.2 Wahi tupuna: The Cultural Landscape

3.2.1 Mauka Atua

The Whakaehu, North Taiari and Mosgiel areas sit under the Mauka Atua, the mountain range that extends along the breadth of the Taiari Plains. Rising 895 metres above the floodplain of the Taiari River, Mauka Atua dominates the western horizon and is a landmark of profound cultural significance⁶.

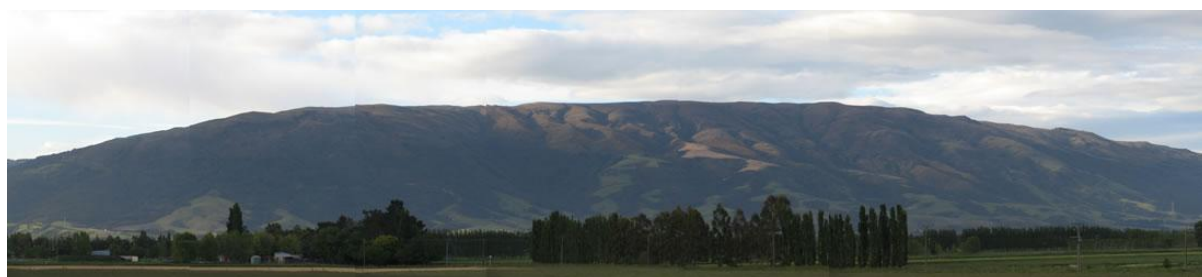
Mauka Atua is an ancient name brought to Te Waipounamu from distant homelands, reappearing in recognisably similar forms throughout the Pacific Islands and into Indonesia. The name serves as a reminder of the links between Kāi Tahu and their whānauka of Te Moana Nui a Kiwa.

⁵ Note: Parts of this chapter have draw upon mātauraka Kāi Tahu as recorded in cultural narratives prepared by Dr Megan Ellison for Aukaha Ltd. Mātauraka Kāi Tahu is intellectual property held collectively and represented by Mana Whenua.

⁶ See Taiari / Taiari FMU discussed at orc.govt.nz

In 1997, Mauka Atua was recognised as a tōpuni site in Ngāi Tahu settlement deed and legislation⁷. The Crown acknowledges the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional values related to Mauka Atua. An urupā (burial site) is located on the north shoulder of Mauka Atua, making the entire mountain a wāhi tapu (place of restriction) for Manawhenua.

Figure 4: Looking west across the Taiari Plain to Mauka Atua (sourced from Wikipedia⁸)



Dr Ellison explains in Kāi Tahu narrative, Mauka Atua was a passenger on the Ārai-te-uru waka that crashed on the Otago coastline near Matakaea (Shag Point). After the waka capsized, many passengers went ashore to explore the land but needed to return before daylight. Mauka Atua did not make it back and instead transformed into the mountain range we see today.

The mauka is imbued with spiritual qualities respected by the tūpuna. It was likened to a sleeping giant and said to be the source of strange noises in particular winds or climatic conditions.

3.2.2 Matamata: The Taniwha of the Taiari

Dr Megan Ellison explains that Matamata is a taniwha of immense cultural significance. In the Indigenous narrative of Otago, Matamata was a giant creature, similar to a serpent or lizard in shape, that carved out the Otago Harbour and rivers on the Taiari Plains. Places throughout the Lower Taiari plains are named after his movements.



Figure 5: Saddle Hill viewed from the inland port site. Saddle Hill was where Matamata remains after he eventually solidified in the sun (extracted from the applicant's landscape assessment)..

⁷ See Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998

⁸ Note, on Wikipedia, the reference is to incorrectly to Maungatua rather than Mauka Atua.

Matamata was the kaitiaki (guardian) of Te Rakitauneke, a well-known Kāti Māmoe chief who fought in battles from Kaikōura to South Otago. According to Beattie, Te Rakitauneke had a pā near the peak of Mauka Atua. Matamata was living in a small bush beside Whakaehu below his master.

When Te Rakitauneke went on a trip inland because the noise of the sea disturbed his sleep, Matamata found his master was gone and went searching for him. The Taiari River itself, with all its sharp bends and twists, was formed by Matamata wriggling as he searched for Te Rakitauneke. An aerial view illustrates the obvious image of a lizard winding through the earth. Many sites in the North Taiari – Mosgiel area are named because of their association with Matamata including the following:

Placename	Significance
Wai-pōtaka	A lagoon near Whakaehu. Pōtaka means spinning top, referring to the spinning and turning of Matamata in desperate search for his master.
Te Konika o Matamata	The Crawling of Matamata. A depression in the land where Mosgiel now stands, formed as the taniwha crawled across the landscape.
Te Korikori o Matamata	The Turning of Matamata. The last 500 metres before the river enters the gorge, where the taniwha turned in frustration.
Pukemakamaka & Turimakamaka	The humps of Saddle Hill today, where Matamata was caught by the sun and lies solidified.

Recently, Te Nukuroa o Matamata, a major restoration project implemented by Te Rūnaka ō Ōtākou, was a Jobs for Nature three-year initiative to restore the lower Taiari catchment area.

Concluding each sub-section of this chapter will be a table that links the interest to potential impacts discussed in Part 4 of this TIA; the technical reports that were reviewed because of their relationship to the cultural interest described and a linkage between this cultural interest and the requirement under Fast Track Act 2024 to consider Treaty settlements.

Wahi Tupuna - Current status	Potential impacts to be assessed/ relevant technical report reviewed	Justification for consideration under Fast Track
Matamata and Mauka Atua narratives are embedded in landscape features Multiple culturally significant names: Wai-pōtaka, Te Konika o Matamata, Whakaehu are found across the upper part of the Lower Taiari plain	Physical alteration to landscape features named in narratives and associated with Matamata; Disruption to visual and spiritual connections to features in narratives and consequently the experience of whanau. Physical transformation of named places; disconnection between names and landscape; loss of opportunity to restore names Technical reports reviewed: Landscape and Lighting.	In 1997, Mauka Atua was recognised as a tōpuni site in Ngāi Tahu settlement legislation. The Crown acknowledges the cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional values related to Mauka Atua.

3.3. Kōrero tuku iho: Ancestral Narratives and Whakapapa⁹

3.3.1 Rākaihautū and the Waitaha

The first people to lay their eyes upon Te Waipounamu were the Waitaha under the chieftainship of Rākaihautū. Traditions speak of Rākaihautū carrying an enormous spade called Tūwhakarōria. He would plunge his spade into the soil and a lake would appear. The Waitaha journey is associated with the waterways of the assessment area, including the Taiari River and its connected lake systems. In former times, every spring in this area was known to Kāi Tahu by name.

3.3.2 Tukiauau and Whakaraupuka Pā

Tukiauau is an important ancestor connected to this area. Moving south from Kaikōura, Tukiauau established a pā named Whakaraupuka at what was previously known as Sinclair Wetlands now known as Te Nohoaka o Takiauau. The pā was established on an island in the middle of a difficult-to-access swamp that was nevertheless rich in food resources. This demonstrates the historical significance of the wetland systems within and around the assessment area.

3.3.3 Hā-ki-te-kura: Te Rereka (The Leap)

The narrative of Hā-ki-te-kura (also known as Hākitekura) is embedded in the landscape of Taiari Gorge nearing Taiari mouth. Tūwiriroa, her father, had a pā (Motupara) at the mouth of the Taiari River and provided sanctuary for Tukiauau. When Tukiauau's son Korokīwhiti fell in love with Hā-ki-te-kura, their romance was interrupted when Tukiauau received word of an approaching war party. As the flotilla of waka passed below the pā, Hā-ki-te-kura was distressed at being left behind. She raced to the edge of the cliff and dived into the river at the place now known as Te Rereka o Hā-ki-te-kura (The Leap of Hā-ki-te-kura), where she fell onto the rocky banks and was killed. This event led to the significant battle Tarere-ki-whenua-uta, through which strategic marriages were formed between Kāi Tahu and Kāti Māmoe, cementing the whakapapa connections that continue to define mana whenua identity today.

Current status	Potential impacts to be assessed/ relevant technical report reviewed	Justification for consideration under Fast Track
Rākaihautū created Lakes Waipouri and Waihola Whakaraupuka Pā is located within the Waipouri-Waihola Wetlands.	Physical alteration to landscape features named in korero Disruption to visual and spiritual connections sites described in korero and consequently the experience of whanau. Technical report reviewed: • Landscape	Schedule 70 of the NTCSA 1998 is the statutory acknowledgement for Waipouri-Waihola Wetlands.

⁹ Section 3.3 draws extensively from the cultural narratives prepared by Dr Megan Ellison that are listed in the references. If publicly available, the narratives can be requested from Aukaha Ltd.

3.4. Wai: Water

Water is the provider and sustainer of life. Waterways are of particular significance to Kai Tahu. A waterbody with an intact mauri will sustain healthy ecosystems and support mahika kai.

3.4.1 Mauri of Water

A mauri (life force) embodies all waters in the assessment area. The mauri represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life. All elements of the natural environment possess a life force, and all forms of life are related.

Dr Megan Ellison explains that *the key values of Mauri, Mana and Whakapapa are compromised when whenua is affected by development. Mauri should be continually assessed, and it is critical for any development to invest time and resource in mitigating negative environmental impacts.*

3.4.2 Historical Water Systems of the Lower Taiari

Historically a diverse pattern of wetlands, lakes, and waterways covered the Lower Taiari plain reaching almost to today's township of Mosgiel. The connected waterways and lakes provided a rich and varied source of tuna, waterfowl, birds and plants to the Taiari and Peninsula settlements¹⁰.

In former times, the Taiari had a gravelly bottom that could easily be seen as it flowed past Henley. John Adam, a resident of Otokia, recalls standing on Titri Bridge and seeing the pebbles on the riverbed – a depth that varied between of 4-6m¹¹.

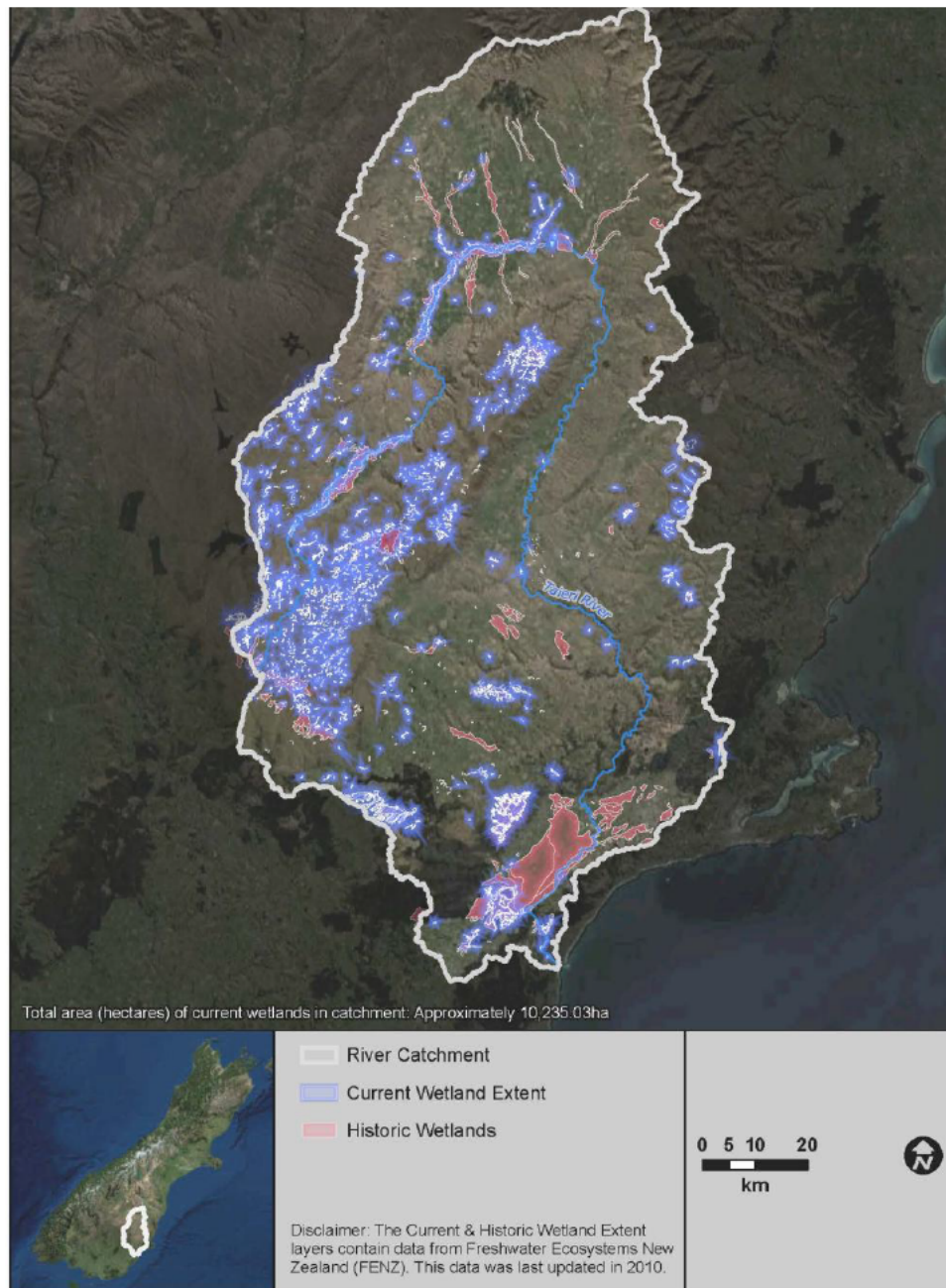
Sadly, many of these waterways were taken by the government and drained. As the Taiari Plains were developed and lands privatised, Kāi Tahu whānau, by necessity, shifted from the area as they were unable to gather their mahika kai.

Figure 6 clearly shows the network of wetlands and waterways stretching from Mosgiel to Waihola. All of these waterways were intrinsically connected to the livelihood and whakapapa of Ōtākou.

¹⁰ Schedule 70 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

¹¹ An observation conveyed to Gail Tipa in 1998.

Figure 6: The Taiari Catchment showing current historic and historic wetlands – the extent of loss is particularly noticeable in the Lower Taiari south of Mosgiel township (Figure prepared by Sean Bragg (Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu).



3.4.3 The Lost Lakes

Ryder and Tocher (2020) describe the loss of three large lakes of the Taiari catchment as a result of agricultural development. All were important to Kāi Tahu. Lake Taiari on the Maniototo was drained in the 1940s, and Lakes Tatawai and Marama Te Taha (Loch Ascog), both situated on the lower Taiari Plains were drained soon after European settlement.

The importance of Tatawai as an important fishery cannot be overstated. Mahika kai involved all the wetlands and lakes. Sadly, with land sales and settlement tupuna were not welcome on

private land and discouraged from accessing traditional mahika kai. For that reason representations were made to the Crown to secure Lake Tatawai as a

fishery, which was eventually granted early 1900's only to be removed by drainage in the 1920's.

3.4.4 Taiari River

The Taiari River catchment covers an area of approximately 5700 square kilometres, with the river itself being 288 km in length, the fourth longest in Aotearoa (Ryder and Tocher, 2020). The river, lakes and wetlands in the Taiari catchment are home to at least 40 taoka species and sustained hundreds of mahika kai. The catchment was covered in a range of fortified, permanent and seasonal settlements that enabled a range of uses by Kai Tahu whānau¹².

3.4.5 Whakaehu (the Whakaehu)

Whakaehu is a major tributary of the Lower Taiari River that dominates the Taiari Plain. Whakaehu features prominently in one of the most significant Māori korero of the area (see section 3.2)



Figure 7: The Whakaehu at Whare Flat (upstream of the inland port site)



Figure 8: The Whakaehu adjacent to Mosgiel township (downstream of the inland port site)

Whakaehu originates in the Silverpeaks on the southern slope of Silver Peak itself, and flows initially southwards through a steep-sided forested valley which widens to become Whare Flat, before turning west at the eastern edge of the Taiari Plains at the foot of Three Mile Hill, close to Invermay Research Station. It continues in a south-westerly direction past the northern edge of Mosgiel, and past the proposed inland port development, reaching the Taiari River just north of Allanton¹³.

In 2023, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou gifted the name Te Puna o Whakaehu ("the pool of Whakaehu") to Mosgiel's new community pool facility. According to Upoko Dr Edward

¹² Taiari / Taiari FMU – see orc.govt.nz

¹³ This description was sourced from Wikipedia

Ellison, the name acknowledges how "our people used to" enjoy the Whakaehu for recreation¹⁴.

Today, the river flow is typically small (at or below one cumec), but it has a history of flooding. This has been largely remedied by the artificial raising of its banks, especially close to Mosgiel.

Regarding contemporary uses, several hiking trails traverse the upper Whakaehu valley, while walking tracks are found alongside the North Taiari and Mosgiel reaches and pass alongside the proposed site of the hub. Whānau still camp in the upper reaches around Whare Flat and swim in the waters above Mosgiel township.

3.4.6 Wai rongoa

Wairongoa, located in North Taiari, is of significance due to its naturally carbonated mineral springs.

3.4.7 The Waiholā/Waipōuri Wetlands

The Waiholā/Waipōuri wetlands remain highly valued by Manawhenua. Historically the wetlands were one of the most significant food baskets in the Otago region and the destination of seasonal visits from coastal settlements as far away as the Otago Peninsula, Pūrākaunui and Puketeraki¹⁵.



Figure 9: Looking towards the east over Lake Waipouri to the left, Lake Waiholā to the right with the Waipouri/Waiholā wetlands through the centre of the photo.

¹⁴ Otago Daily Times "Name for new Mosgiel Pool announced" Friday, 27 January 2023

¹⁵ Schedule 70 of the NTCSA 1998.

During the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 negotiations, the opportunity arose to obtain ownership of the property known as Sinclair Wetlands. This purchase was to help settle the long-running issue of the loss of Lake Tatawai.

The wetlands are run under two separate trusts – the first an area of 56.5 hectares for the beneficiaries of those with rights to the former Lake Tatawai. The balance is an area of 259 hectares for Manawhenua who have mahika kai rights and interests in the Taiari wetlands area. Ultimately the loss of habitat, waterways and specifically lakes such as Tatawai and Marama Te Taha is something Manawhenua will grieve forever.

Current status	Potential impacts to be assessed/ relevant technical report reviewed	Justification for consideration under Fast Track
Whakaehu is connected to and Taiari – Waipouri River system. The Crown's acknowledgment of significance of Waipouri Waihola wetlands compels consideration of waterways of significance throughout the catchment.	Degraded water quality through stormwater, wastewater contamination risks (oils, heavy metals, sediments) Groundwater impacts Instream habitat degradation and flow on impacts on taoka species and kai gathering. Impacts relating to present and future water supply Technical reports reviewed: - Ecology report; - Water supply; - Wastewater; - Stormwater	The Crown's recognition of Waipouri Waihola Wetlands in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 cannot be treated as geographically isolated. The Settlement Act's recognition of Waipouri Waihola implicitly acknowledges this wetland as a receiving environment for the entire contributing catchment. The Crown cannot recognise the significance of a downstream waterbody while ignoring the tributaries that sustain it. Whakaehu is a tributary of the Taiari River system, and its waters flow directly into the lower catchment that joins the Waipouri Waihola system. Any degradation of water quality, flow regimes, or changes to contaminant or sediment loads in the Whakaehu will inevitably manifest downstream impacting the waterbody the Crown has formally recognised as significant. To assess the inland port's impacts in isolation from this downstream statutory recognition would fragment what is, both ecologically and culturally, a single connected system.

3.5 Mahika Kai: Traditional Food Gathering

Dr Megan Ellison explains that mahika kai is an all-encompassing term that literally means *food workings* and refers to food gathering and sources of food, but also embodies the traditions, customs and collection methods. Rights to harvest were hapū and whānau-based, with gathering areas generally divided into wakawaka (furrows), each assigned to a family who could work that area exclusively.

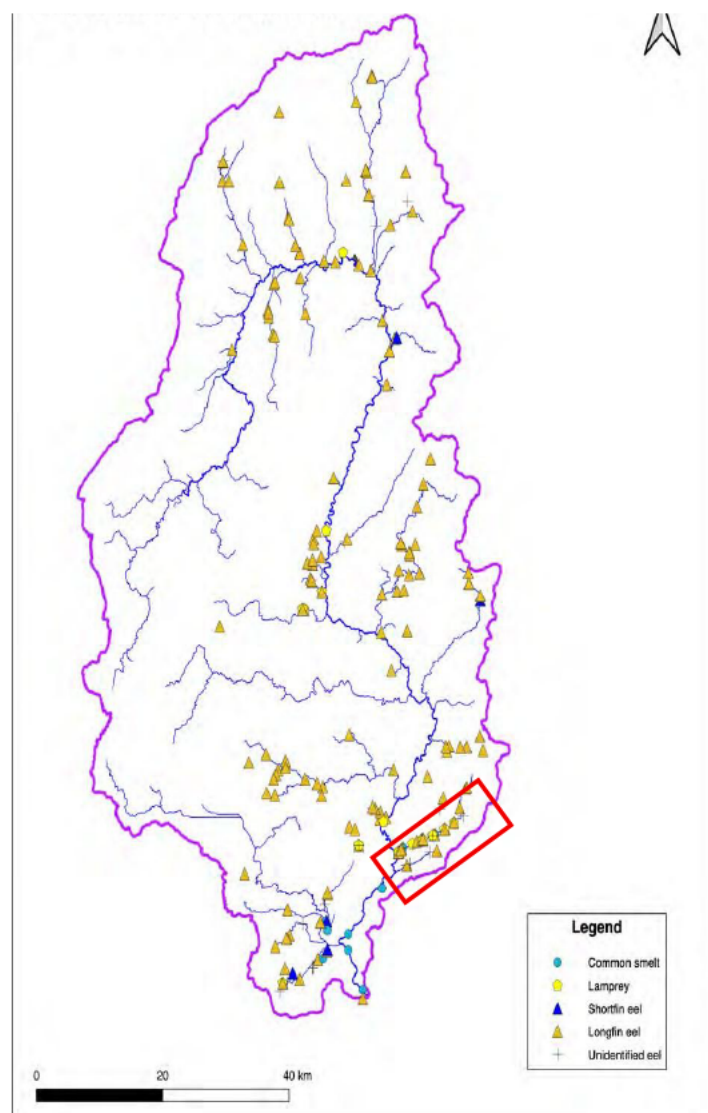
3.5.1 Tuna (Eels)

Tuna were an valuable food source for Kāi Tahu whānui (Anderson, 1997). The availability of tuna could be relied upon when travelling. Tuna were harvested at all times of year from awa (rivers) and repo (wetlands), and systematically during the tuna heke (eel migration). Particular whānau would travel to seasonal nohoaka (settlements) to carry out systematic eeling activities, preserving tuna to share with their hapū.

3.5.2 Kanakana (Lamprey)

Kanakana, or lamprey (*Geotria australis*), are ancient, jawless migratory fish native to New Zealand, that have existed for around 450 million years. They move between freshwater and saltwater, spending most of their lives in freshwater. They are characterized by a long, eel-like body and a sucker-like mouth used to climb waterfalls and attach to host fish. Ryder and Tocher (2020) recognise the importance of kanakana to Kai Tahu, noting that kanakana are gathered from the Waihola Waipouri wetland and are found in Whakaehu as shown in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Distribution of tuna, kanakana & inaka in the Taiari Catchment with Whakaehu highlighted by the red rectangle (Ryder & Tocker (2020))



Today kanakana are classed as nationally vulnerable.

3.5.3 Whitebait

Whānau still whitebait in the tidal reaches of the Taiari catchment.

3.5.4 Other Mahika Kai Resources

Other sought-after food resources historically gathered in the assessment area include kōura (freshwater crayfish), waterfowl such as pūtakitaki (paradise duck), pāpera (grey duck) and birds from the neighbouring native forests. The area also provided access to materials including wood, plants, and taramea (wild Spaniard) for fragrant oil production.

Figures 11 (top left) kōura; Figure 12 (top right) taramea; Figure 13 (bottom left) putakitaki: Figure 14 (bottom right) eel



Current status	Potential impacts to be assessed/ relevant technical report reviewed	Justification for consideration under Fast Track
Mahika kai are already degraded; Tuna populations present but long-fin population classed as at risk. Kanakana populations present in Waiholā-Waipouri and Whakaehu but are declining.	Further degradation of habitat; Potential contamination from stormwater, wastewater and fuel storage; Potential loss of remaining gathering areas Technical reports reviewed: Ecology report;	Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 is an Act “to make better provision for Maori non-commercial traditional and customary fishing rights and interests”. The preamble of this Act states “the Crown recognises that traditional fisheries are of importance to Maori and that the Crown’s Treaty duty is to develop policies to help recognise use and management practices and provide protection for and scope for exercise of

	• Wastewater; • Stormwater • Earthworks and roading	rakatirataka in respect of traditional fisheries". These provisions establish that any development affecting waterways where tuna and kanakana are present engages ongoing Crown Treaty obligations.
--	---	--

3.6. Taoka Species including Native Flora

The Taiari River catchment hosts 40 taoka species¹⁶. The area's diverse lands and wetlands once contained stands of kahikatea, tōtara, rimu and mataī, kōwhai and ribbonwood, along with flaxes and various grasses. At the point of European contact, the bush was so thick in the area that when some Europeans ventured in they never returned.

3.6.1 Fish species

Fish species diversity among the Taiari sites that were surveyed by Ryder and Tocker (2020) averaged 2.5 species per site, which is lower than the Otago average of 4.83 species per site. Diversity is highest at sites closer to the coast; in the Taiari catchment, of particular relevance to this assessment, the Whakaehu was the nearest site to the coast and recorded the highest number of species (six).

Table 2: Fish species at a selection of sites across the Taiari catchment

Site	Common bully	Redfin bully	Eel	Longfin eel	Roundhead Galaxias	Koura (Crayfish)	Lamprey	Brown trout	Number of species	% Fish exotic
Gimmer Burn						1		1	2	50
Kye Burn at SH85				8	94			7	3	6
Pig Burn above O'Neill Rd				4				22	2	85
Sheepwash Creek			2						1	0
Whakaehu at 3MH	67	1		20		6	3	215	6	69
Sow Burn above Duffy Lane								11	1	100

3.6.2 Significant Plant Species

Taoka plants in the Lower Taiari included akeake, harakeke, kahikatea, purei, toetoe, ti kouka, kanuka, manuka, and mingimingi.

In addition, Dr Megan Ellison highlights the following species:

¹⁶ Ryder and Tocher (2020).

- Tōtara: The tōtara was a very useful plant for southern Māori, used for waka, housing, musical instruments, toys, and containers. The bark was used for torches and splints for broken bones. The tree's importance is recognised in the saying when a chief dies: "*Kua hinga te tōtara i te wao nui o Tāne*" (The great tree in the forest of Tāne has fallen).
- Kōwhai: The bark was soaked in water as an excellent remedy for cuts. Swellings were treated with wai kōwhai (kōwhai water), and an infusion was used for colds and sore throats.
- Kareao (Supplejack): Essential for making hīnaki (eel pots), kareao was recorded as growing on the flat below Hanover and Frederick Streets, the area named Mataukareao (supplejack fish-hook). Young tender shoots were eaten and tasted like beans.
- Māhoe: A soft wood that burns slowly, used for fire-making. In the narrative of Māui and Māhuika, māhoe was one of the trees that took to fire, enabling Māui to show his people how to bring out fire by rubbing sticks together.

3.6.3 Traditional Birdlife

Over the wider Taiari catchment the diversity of waterbodies and native forests was home to a rich diversity of birds. Several native bird species are found in and around the Whakaehu catchment, and the Lower Taiari.

- Wetland and riverine species included Pūkeko (*Porphyrio melanotus*), Paradise shelduck/pūtangitangi (*Tadorna variegata*), and Grey duck/pārera (*Anas superciliosa*) - though increasingly rare due to hybridisation with mallards.
- Bush and riparian species included Tūtī (*Prothemadera novaeseelandiae*), Bellbird/kōparapara (*Anthornis melanura*), Grey warbler/riroriro (*Gerygone igata*), Fantail/tīrairaka (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*), Silvereye/tauhou (*Zosterops lateralis*) and Kererū (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*), Kākāpō (owl parrot). A remnant South Island robin (*Petroica australis*) population in the Whakaehu near Whare Flat.
- Other species included Kāhu (hawk), Weka (woodhen),
- Four species of moa once roamed the area, with moa hunter sites at Andersons Bay, St Kilda and St Clair.

Current status	Potential impacts to be assessed/ relevant technical report reviewed	Justification for consideration under Fast Track
Multiple taoka species in catchment are at risk	Habitat destruction; Sediment disturbance affecting fish species; Contaminants potentially affecting spawning and feeding of species;	In section 288 of the NTCSA 1998 "The Crown acknowledges the cultural, spiritual, historic, and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu with the taoka species." In section 298 of the NTCSA "The Crown acknowledges the cultural,

	Wildlife corridor disruption Technical reports reviewed: Ecology report; Wastewater; Stormwater, Earthworks and roading	spiritual, historic, and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu with the taoka fish species." Species are then listed in Schedules 97 & 98.
--	--	---

3.7 Kāika Nohoaka

Historically there were many nohoaka located across the Taiari catchment including within the lake and wetland complex, used by food gathering parties which would travel to gather kai; to eel, hunt water fowl and gather plants¹⁷.

Nohoanga represent a cornerstone of the exercise of customary rights formally recognised through the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. These seasonal camping sites along waterways enabled tūpuna to travel and maintain access to mahika kai resources, observe the state of the environmental, and transmit mātauranga through direct, place-based experiences.

Camping alongside awa embodies whakapapa relationships with the waterway itself, reinforced ahi kā through physical presence, and provides the sustained observation necessary to understand the mauri and ecological patterns of each place.

While the Settlement Act did not establish specific nohoanga entitlements in the Lower Taiari plains, the cultural practice they represent extends throughout the takiwā wherever whānau historically gathered resources.

- Camping is popular at Te Nohoaka o Takiaua; and
- Camping beside the Whakaehu continues, albeit usually around Whare Flat.

Current status	Potential impacts to be assessed/ relevant technical report reviewed	Justification for consideration under Fast Track
Contemporary camping continues in the Upper Whakaehu, in the Lower catchment around Lakes Waipouri and Waiholā, and at Te Nohoaka o Takiaua.	Degradation of water quality Inability to use the lands and waters around the nohoaka Impacts on the usability of the site Impact on the experiences of whānau camping	Nohoanga represent a cornerstone of the exercise of customary rights formally recognised through the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. Te Nohoaka o Takiaua has camping facilities for whānau and communities.

3.8 Ara - Trails

Whakaehu and its surrounding landscape retain significance through the network of traditional ara (trails) that connect inland and coastal communities. Historically these routes served as pathways for travel and seasonal gathering expeditions, linking the Taiari plains to

¹⁷ Schedule 70 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

settlements along the coast and facilitating access to mahika kai resources throughout the catchment.

Today, this legacy of movement and connection finds contemporary expression in the walkways that are established along the Whakaehu. While the modern trails may serve different purposes than their predecessors, they nonetheless maintain the fundamental relationship between people and this landscape—a relationship characterised by passage along the waterway and engagement with its natural features.

Current status	Potential impacts to be assessed/ relevant technical report reviewed	Justification for consideration under Fast Track
There are a number of hiking trails in the Upper Whakaehu catchment. There are walkways along the Whakaehu in its lower reaches More walkways and cycleways are planned	Loss of access Impacts on the experience of whānau and communities using trails and walkways	Access is a prerequisite for cultural use, in particular mahika kai. With respect to mahika kai, the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 is an Act “to make better provision for Maori non-commercial traditional and customary fishing rights and interests”. Access needs to be part of consideration of provisioning.

3.9 Values against which impacts of places and their taoka will be assessed

The purpose of this section is to summarise some of the fundamental values that help define the relationship between Kāi Tahu and the natural world, which is an essential consideration within this TIA. Values of whakapapa, rakatirataka, mana, kaitiakitaka, manaakitaka, and whānau ora are not discrete concepts but form an interconnected social fabric through which potential impacts of the inland port on the Lower Taiari translate directly into effects on Manawhenua.

- Whakapapa establishes both the genealogical connections between people and place and the authority structures that determine who holds kaitiaki responsibilities; any proposal that affects the mauri of waterways or ecosystems affects these relationships and the mana of those entrusted to protect them. The TIA evaluates effects on whakapapa by examining how the proposal may disrupt the connections between whānau and place that have been maintained across generations and which define the identity of tangata whenua.
- Rakatirataka – A proposal that diminishes the capacity of Manawhenua to exercise rakatirataka (decision-making authority) over their taoka today and into the future — whether through physical impacts, jurisdictional displacement, or procedural exclusion — causes cultural harm distinct from effects on specific sites or practices. This TIA must therefore try to provide a complete picture of cultural effects and risks to aid Manawhenua decision-making.

- **Mana** - must be considered in assessing the impacts of the proposed inland port development because it is fundamental to understanding how Kāi Tahu experience and relate to the lands, waters and resources within their takiwa. Development activities, such as the inland port, that degrade water quality, sever access to mahika kai sites, or diminish the mauri of natural systems, cause environmental harm and diminish the mana of both the landscape and the Manawhenua whose identity and standing are interwoven with it.
- **Manaakitaka** - This TIA examines impacts on manaakitaka—the cultural obligations of care, generosity, and hospitality—which are fulfilled through access to healthy ecosystems and the resources they provide. In other words the effects on manaakitaka are assessed in terms of how the proposal may compromise the ability of Manawhenua to uphold their responsibilities of care and hospitality toward whānau, communities and visitors.
- **Whānau ora** - This TIA considers impacts on whānau ora, recognising that the health and wellbeing of Kāi Tahu whānau is directly connected to the health of the waterways, land, and ecosystems within their takiwa. The assessment considers whānau ora by recognising that degradation of the natural environment undermines the foundations upon which whānau wellbeing is built—including cultural identity, mahika kai practices, and connection to tūpuna. Effects on whānau ora are assessed in terms of how the proposal may compromise the ability of current and future generations to achieve wellbeing through their connection to healthy lands, waters, and resources.

We have included this brief discussion of values as the failure to assess potential impacts against these cultural values would result in an incomplete understanding of effects and we contend would be inconsistent with the Crown's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Current status	Potential impacts to be assessed/ relevant technical report reviewed	Justification for consideration under Fast Track
Whānau ora: Whānau maintain connection to the Lower Taiari including Whakaehu for mahika kai, recreation, and a range of cultural practices	Air quality impacts (diesel, dust); noise disturbance; reduced amenity; health impacts particularly for tamariki and kaumātua	The inclusion of whānau ora in this TIA is not an expansion of scope but rather reflects an accurate and culturally appropriate framing of how the proposed inland port may affect Manawhenua. It is necessary to ensure decision-makers have before them the full picture of potential cultural effects, consistent with their statutory obligations derived from Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
Rakatirataka: Manawhenua authority over takiwā affirmed by Treaty and Ngāi Tahu Settlement	Potential for decisions being made without meaningful Manawhenua engagement and Treaty principles compromised Potential for decisions being made that lock in infrastructure decisions that limit a meaningful role in panning for the future.	In Section 6 (Apology, paragraph 7) of the NTCSA The Crown explicitly apologises for "past failures to acknowledge Ngāi Tahu rakatirataka and mana" and recognises Ngāi Tahu as "holding rakatirataka within the Takiwā of Ngāi Tahu Whānui."

Manaakitaka is a lived practice with material requirements. Its exercise in the Whakaehu/North Taiari area depends upon healthy waterways, accessible mahika kai, and a cultural landscape that reflects the kaitiakitanga of Kāi Tahu.	The proposed inland port has the potential to affect each of these foundations through direct environmental impact, landscape transformation, access severance, and cumulative effects on the wider Taiari-Waipouri-Waihola system.	The NTCSA acknowledges the historical grievances of Ngāi Tahu, including the loss of mahika kai that sustained cultural practices.. Permitting further degradation of resources that support manaakitaka would be inconsistent with the intent of the Treaty settlement.
Mana encompasses authority and the power that resides in whānau, and the natural environment itself. The waterways, wetlands, and whenua of the Whakaehu/North Taiari area hold their own mana. Furthermore, the ability of Kāi Tahu to exercise rakatirataka and fulfil kaitiaki responsibilities is itself an expression of mana.	Activities associated with the inland port that generate adverse impacts and diminish the mauri of natural systems cause environmental harm that, in turn, can diminish the mana of both the landscape and the Manawhenua, whose identity and standing are interwoven with it.	Recognition of mana in this TIA is a substantive requirement flowing from Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, and the obligations under the Resource Management Act 1991 to have particular regard to kaitiakitanga and the relationship of Māori with their ancestral lands, water, and taoka.

Technical reports reviewed in relation to these cultural values included:

- Water supply
- Wastewater;
- Stormwater
- Economics
- Noise
- Traffic

3.10 Conclusion

In this section we have described how the Whakaehu, North Taiari, and Mosgiel areas hold profound cultural significance for Manawhenua. The landscape is not merely a physical environment but a cultural text inscribed with the movements of Matamata, under the gaze of Mauka Atua, with knowledge of the footprints of tūpuna, and generations of mahika kai experiences.

Whakaehu, though modest in scale, functions as a critical connection within the broader Lower Taiari system. Its significance to Ngāi Tahu encompasses its role as a contributor to the mauri of the receiving environment of the Lower Taiari, which includes the Waipouri-Waihola wetlands – a waterbody that the Crown has acknowledged in the NTCSA 1998 is significant to Kai Tahu.

Small tributaries such as Whakaehu serve a vital function within a catchment, and their cumulative health determines the vitality of the larger system. From a mātauraka Kai Tahu perspective, the condition of any single waterway cannot be isolated from te mauka ki te moana —the interconnected flow from mountains to sea. The waters of Whakaehu carry volume alongside quality, temperature, sediment load, and ecological connectivity that directly influence the Lower Taiari's capacity to sustain its life-supporting functions which are essential for mahika kai and other cultural practices.

Having described the species found in the Whakaehu, the health of tuna populations, for instance, depends upon access to smaller waterways for feeding, refuge, and seasonal movement. Kōura and other freshwater invertebrates that form the foundation of aquatic food webs rely on the habitat diversity that tributary systems provide.

The Lower Taiari Plain, including Mosgiel and North Taiari areas, has already experienced significant cultural loss through the draining of lakes, modification of waterways leading to degradation, and decline of taoka species including longfin tuna and kanakana. Further development carries the risk of compounding these losses and severing intergenerational connections.

Any development proposal must genuinely engage with the cultural values documented in this assessment, and recognise the rakatirataka of members of Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou. In the next part of this TIA we lay out the legal and Treaty context for consideration of the cultural interests summarised in this chapter.

PART 3

4.1 Kāi Tahu rakatirataka

To Kāi Tahu, rakatirataka means chiefly sovereignty, authority and autonomy. Rakatirataka is exercised by leaders (rakatira) of an iwi or hapū and is closely related to and derived from the concept of mana. In exercising rakatirataka leaders must make decisions that consolidate and improve the mana of the wider whānau, hapū and iwi.

Kaitiakitaka is an inherited obligation on mana whenua to maintain the hauora of the taiao and the mauri of the resources of the takiwā to sustain current and future generations. Rakatirataka and kaitiakitaka go hand-in-hand: only those who hold rakatirataka can and must exercise kaitiakitaka.

Wai māori is a key taoka for Kāi Tahu and, as guaranteed by Te Tiriti, Kāi Tahu continues to hold rakatirataka over wai māori, which includes rights, responsibilities and obligations. Importantly, the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 recognised Ngāi Tahu as tāngata whenua of, and holding rakatirataka within, the Ngāi Tahu takiwā (NTCSA, s 6):

The Crown apologises to Ngāi Tahu for its past failures to acknowledge Ngāi Tahu rakatirataka and mana over the South Island lands within its boundaries, and, in fulfilment of its Treaty obligations, the Crown recognises Ngāi Tahu as the tāngata whenua of, and as holding rakatirataka within, the Takiwā of Ngāi Tahu Whānui.

The Environment Court has recognised that, where it finds that certain hapū have the right to exercise rakatirataka or customary authority over an area, the finding means that it is the tikaka of those hapū which must be applied (*Ngāi Te Hapū v Bay of Plenty Regional Council*).

The Taiari lies under the cloak of Manawhenua rakatirataka and is cared for and managed by Manawhenua to the greatest extent possible, in a manner consistent with kaitiakitaka.

As current legislation and regulation do not provide adequate recognition of rakatirataka, Ngāi Tahu has lodged a claim in the High Court. This Treaty assessment is provided without prejudice to these ongoing legal proceedings. It is the right and responsibility of Kāi Tahu to protect Te Taiao including freshwater as under the current framework, while pursuing recognition of rakatirataka through the courts and in negotiations with the Crown.

Ōtākou wishes to engage in a constructive relationship that furthers the practical recognition of their rights, responsibilities and obligations to te taiao. The approach that Manawhenua has taken to discussions with Southern Link partners, and this TIA, reflects the desire of Ōtākou to fulfil obligations and responsibilities to te taiao to the extent currently possible.

4.2 Manawhenua recognised by the RMA

The Environment Court has found that kaitiaki have a right to protect the history of their cultural and customary associations to an area (*Ngāi Te Hapū v Bay of Plenty Regional Council* [2017] NZEnvC 73 at [88]). In a Kāi Tahu context, the Environment Court in *Aratiatia Livestock Ltd v Southland Regional Council* has commented that it is the responsibility of kaitiaki to ensure that water is available for future generations in as good as, if

not better, quality, and tikaka goes beyond any rights or obligations that may attach to the use of water (*Aratiatia Livestock Ltd v Southland Regional Council* [2019] NZEnvC 208 at [50]).

The recognition of Manawhenua in an RMA context has been summarised in findings of Whata J in *Ngati Maru Trust v Ngati Whatua Orakei*, which discusses the comprehensive provision for Māori and iwi interests in the RMA ([2020] NZHC 2768):

- section 104 of the RMA, which provides a power to grant resource consents, is expressly subject to Part 2 of the Act, which outlines “numerous mandatory considerations concerning a wide range of matters” that, alongside Part 2, provide scope for consideration of Manawhenua;
- citing Lord Cooke in *McGuire v Hastings District Council*, sections 6(e), 7(a) and 8 of the RMA are “focal points” of “special significance” and “strong directions, to be borne in mind at every stage of the planning process”, going on to note that “As stated by the Supreme Court in *New Zealand King Salmon Co Ltd*, planning instruments may set the frame for resource management decision-makers without further need to refer to pt 2”;
- the RMA is “replete” with references to kupu Māori, and Parliament “plainly anticipated that resource management decision-makers will be able to grasp these concepts and where necessary, apply them in accordance with tikaka Māori”;
- case law over the last 30 years demonstrates “an evolving understanding and application of mātauranga Māori and tikaka Māori”;
- “While tikaka Māori is defined in the RMA as “customary values and practices” it has come to be understood as a body of principles, values and law that is cognisable by the Courts”;
- iwi involvement in policy and plan promulgation is also anticipated by the RMA “and that iwi and hapū with defined customary rights will be specifically provided for where relevant”, including through preparation of Mana Whakahono a Rohe agreements, which demands that persons making decisions under the RMA can “identify, involve and provide for iwi and their manawhenua in accordance with mātauranga Māori and tikaka Māori”;
- “The statutory obligation to recognise and provide for the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their whenua and tāonga, to have to regard to their kaitiakitaka and take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, does not permit indifference to the tikaka-based claims of iwi to a particular resource management outcome”;
- decision-makers exercising functions under the RMA are necessarily engaged in ascertaining tikaka Māori in order to discharge statutory directions in Part 2 outlined above and must “meaningfully respond” to claims by iwi that a particular resource management outcome is required to meet those statutory outcomes, which may require evidential findings of how “kaitiakitaka, in accordance with tikaka Māori, is to be provided for in the resource management outcome”.

In light of the above, this TIA sets out the process through which tikaka was followed in preparing for these consent applications, and the approach that Ōtākou takes to the assessment of consent applications, with appropriate mitigation, is informed by tikaka. This must be respected throughout the consenting process.

4.3 Manawhenua recognised within the Fast Track Legislation

The Fast-track Act establishes a permanent fast-track regime for infrastructure and development projects of national or regional significance. While the purpose of the Fast-track Act is to accelerate consenting of major infrastructure and development projects, it also embeds obligations that strengthen Manawhenua participation at various stages in the consenting process.

The intention for iwi to have a strong and influential voice under the Fast-track Act was emphasised by Minister Hon Tama Potaka in the first reading of the bill when he stated:

With regards to Te Arawhiti, and the leaders of tribes, their view is that the Treaty settlements issues be safeguarded - agreed. In the pages and discussion of this initiative of the bill, it can be seen that at every management level, at every decision-making level the applicant and Ministers and the panel must make contact with Māori, with iwi, and with hapū, to discuss in-depth the way forward.

It is clear that Parliament's intention is not just that the Crown must safeguard Treaty settlement obligations but also actively recognise Māori rakatirataka by ensuring iwi engagement is meaningful, influential, and embedded at every stage of the fast-track process.

Obligations under the Fast-track Act include:

- **Consultation before applying:** The Fast-track Act imposes strict iwi consultation requirements for both referral and substantive applications, mandating early, genuine, inclusive, and responsive engagement with Manawhenua before lodgement. Applicants are required to consult relevant iwi authorities, hapū, Treaty settlement entities, and groups under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act and provide a summary of the consultation and explain how it informed the project. Applications that fail to meet these requirements are deemed incomplete and returned. In a recent judicial review of a Fast-track application for the Port of Tauranga the importance of these obligations was considered when the High Court considered there was an "arguable" case for inadequate consultation occurring particularly in regards to reliance on prior engagement and whether the consultation was in accordance with tikaka.¹⁸ The High Court subsequently confirmed that the following principles from *Land Air Water Association v Waikato Regional Council* apply in relation to consultation with Māori under the Fast-track Act:¹⁹

The nature and object of consultation must be related to the circumstances.

Adequate information about a proposal is to be given in a timely manner so that those consulted know what is proposed.

Those consulted must be given a reasonable opportunity to state their views.

While those consulted cannot be forced to state their views they cannot complain, if having had both time and opportunity, they for any reason fail to themselves of the opportunity.

Consultation is never to be treated perfunctorily or as a mere formality.

The parties are to approach consultation with an open mind.

¹⁸ *Ngāti Kuku Hapū Trust v Environmental Protection Agency* [2025] NZHC 2046.

¹⁹ [2001] ELHNZ 428 at [453].

Consultation is an intermediate situation involving meaningful discussions and does not necessarily involve resolution by agreement.

Neither party is entitled to make demands.

There is no universal requirement as to form or duration.

The whole process is to be underlain by fairness.

- **The referral application stage:** At the referral application stage the Minister for Infrastructure decides whether the project should be referred to the substantive stage of the Fast-track process. This involves inviting comments on the referral application from relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities and other relevant Māori groups.
- **The land exchange stage:** Before lodging a substantive application, projects seeking approval for a land exchange must lodge their application with the Department of Conservation who must invite comments on the proposed land exchange from relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities and other relevant Māori groups.
- **The substantive application stage:** at the substantive application stage an expert panel decides whether to approve or decline a project, and whether to impose conditions on a project. To do so they are strongly encouraged to invite comments on the application and draft conditions, or request further information about the application, from relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities and other relevant Māori groups.²⁰ To support this process the panel conveners have developed practical guidance for participants, including panel members. The guidance note suggests panels should invite comments and consider information regarding mātauranga Māori, tikaka, matters of significance to Māori, whether the application aligns with Treaty settlement obligations and recognised customary rights under relevant legislation as well as how iwi feedback could be incorporated into consent conditions and management plans;
- **Hearing stage:** if a hearing is held, section 58 requires panels to recognise tikaka Māori where appropriate. The guidance note states it is important that panels consider the need to consult with participants over tikaka requirements ahead of the hearing event in either an exchange of memoranda and directions or in a conference.
- **At all stages:** the guidance note states even if no hearing is required, panels need to be mindful of tikaka throughout the process they are adopting, including during any activity that requires either remote or face-to-face engagement of the participants, such as at panel conferences, wānanga, expert conferences on cultural values, and site visits.²¹

In addition to Manawhenua being invited to participate in the process, there are also various provisions in the FTAA which direct decision makers to consider Treaty settlements and other specific arrangements in the process of making decisions around Fast-track projects including:

- section 7: an obligation relating to Treaty settlements and recognised customary rights;

²⁰ Fast-track Approvals Act 2024: Panel Conveners Practice and Procedure Guidance (22 July 2025) at page 9.

²¹ At page 19.

- section 16: pertains to the effect of Treaty settlements and other obligations on decision making;
- section 18: requires a report to be generated that sets out the Treaty settlements and other obligations;
- section 82: sets out the effect of Treaty settlements and other obligations on decision making; and
- section 84: sets out conditions relating to Treaty settlements and recognized customary rights.

In recognition of the potential for applications under the Fast-track Act to affect Māori rohe, whenua, and whānaunga connections to a broad range of Tiriti interests, the Ministry for the Environment has created Te Poka Pū Māori online hub for iwi Māori, which they say recognises the Crown's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Fast-track Act to ensure accessible information is provided to iwi/Māori with genuine intent and respect for Māori rakatirataka.

4.4 Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The position and interests of Ōtākou are informed by Te Tiriti, on the basis that Te Tiriti:

- is a founding constitutional document for New Zealand;
- is the primary nexus between tikaka Māori and the laws of England, which today form the laws of New Zealand; and
- guaranteed for Māori tino rakatirataka, the unqualified exercise of chieftainship, over lands, villages, and all their property and treasures.

There are many New Zealand laws which have referred to the principles of the Treaty. The first law to do so was the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, which established the Waitangi Tribunal. Principles have been used as a means of reconciling the differences between the texts, being Te Tiriti (the Māori version), and the Treaty (the English version). In 1983 the Waitangi Tribunal said, *'The spirit of the Treaty transcends the sum total of its component written words and puts literal or narrow interpretations out of place.'* Although recognising that the principles evolve over time and vary depending on the context and issues at play, the following principles are relevant (both procedurally and substantively) and are engaged here.

4.4.1 Rakatirataka

This can be referenced directly with Article 2 of the Treaty and includes ideas and values around sovereignty, leadership, autonomy, and self-determination, as discussed above. Within this are concepts around stewardship and looking after others (in this case that includes both members of Ōtākou and wider New Zealand) along with ensuring well-being.

4.4.2 The Principle of Partnership

This requires that the Crown work together with iwi, and within that owe each other duties of fair conduct and good faith, including through the Crown respecting Manawhenua interests. This is not consultation but rather 'co-operation' in light of the obligation of good faith and partnership to each other.

4.4.3 The Principles of Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit

These reflect the equal status of the Treaty Partners and including an obligation to enable Māori wellbeing. This is important as the agreed arrangements between Ōtākou and Southern Link partners will provide for the wellbeing of Manawhenua and the wider population of New Zealand.

4.4.4 A duty to make informed decision

Any Crown agent, in exercising their statutory functions, is under a duty to make fully informed decisions. In this instance it is essential that the perspectives of Taiari Rūnaka are properly explored and understood, which is the purpose of this TIA. In light of this principle, this document and the wider position of Ōtākou must be respected and understood, and this TIA should therefore be treated with respect.

4.4.5 The Principle of active protection

This principle is a positive obligation on the Crown to protect Māori interests. It includes a duty on the Crown to protect Māori rakatirataka. We emphasise that:

- Enabling Ōtākou is central to the principle of active protection;
- Ōtākou views are expressed in this document and must be carefully considered and understood by the decision-maker.

The discussion above is not intended to be exhaustive.

The next part of this TIA sets out the impacts of the proposed inland port – both beneficial and adverse – that have been identified by Manawhenua.

PART 4

Chapter 5: Assessment of the cultural impacts

5.1 Introduction

In the last two decades, Kāi Tahu have become more vocal in seeking greater recognition of its cultural beliefs, values, and practices. This increased recognition of is not intended to threaten the existing economy and bring development to a halt. Rather Kāi Tahu fear that a failure to recognise their customary and Te Tiriti rights will constrain their autonomy and ultimately could destroy many of the foundations of the culture and identity. Kāi Tahu, as rakatira and kaitiaki, are obligated to identify the effects (positive and negative) of a proposed development on their cultural, beliefs, values and practices.

This part of the TIA assesses the cultural impacts of the proposed Southern Link Inland Port development. The assessment draws upon the cultural interests documented in Part 2, the legal and Treaty context established in Part 3, and the analysis of the technical reports submitted with the Fast Track application.

The assessment framework recognises that cultural effects extend beyond impacts on discrete physical sites. As established in Parts 2 and 3, the cultural values of whakapapa, rakatirataka, mana, kaitiakitaka, manaakitaka, and whānau ora form an interconnected fabric through which environmental changes translate into effects on Manawhenua. This assessment therefore evaluates impacts both in terms of specific cultural interests and the broader values framework.

In undertaking this assessment, we have reviewed the following technical reports (both drafts and updated reports):

- Freshwater Ecological Impact Assessment (e3Scientific Ltd, November 2025);
- Terrestrial Ecology Report;
- Landscape and Visual Assessment;
- Stormwater Management Plan;
- Noise Assessment;
- Lighting Assessment;
- Water Supply report;
- Roding and Earthworks Assessment;
- Wastewater Report;
- Integrated Traffic Assessment;
- Contaminated land; and
- Economic Report.

CAVEATS

1. The purpose of this section is to identify issues of concern to whanau. It does not identify mitigation initiatives, consent conditions or management plans which are still in discussion with the runaka. Submissions from the runaka, as part of the Fast Track application process, will address their perspective on the adequacy of the package of mitigations to address the issues raised in this section.

2. It is important to note that this TIA was prepared independently of knowing the other permissions, consents, or licences that the applicant is seeking. The impacts identified and issues raised must therefore be understood as impacts and issues relevant to all other permissions being sought by the applicants.

5.2 The proposed development

The proposed development involves the establishment of a 40-hectare inland port and logistics hub at 270-292 Dukes Road North, North Taieri. The site is bounded by Dukes Road North to the north, the Taieri Branch railway and Stedman Road to the west, and Whakaehu (Silver Stream) to the south. The key physical changes include:

- Conversion of 40 hectares of rural land to impervious surfaces (warehouses, hardstand areas, and roading);
- Construction of a large stormwater retention pond (approximately 250m x 100m x 4m depth);
- Discharge of treated stormwater to Whakaehu at approximately 257,600 m³/year (equivalent to 3.7% of median annual flow);
- Decreased traffic movements through Dunedin and a corresponding increase in traffic through Mosgiel;
- Investigation and potential remediation of HAIL sites (historic sheep dip, vehicle workshop, army barracks, railway line)
- A new rail siding off the Taieri Branch Line to enable loading, unloading and operation of a rail freight shuttle service to Port Chalmers and the wider rail network;
- Approximately 80,000 m² of high stud warehousing (chilled and ambient);
- Truck canopy and unloading areas;
- A 5 ha container depot facility enabling the inspection, cleaning, upgrading and repair of containers including for food grade repacking;
- Up to 5 ha of container terminal for storage of full containers including refrigerated containers;
- Break bulk storage facilities;
- Road widening;
- Ancillary activities to support the above including earthworks, construction of the rail siding, site access, internal roadways and parking, hardstand areas, truck waiting areas, onsite road network, three waters infrastructure, flood mitigation, landscaping, buildings for storage, administration and maintenance facilities, and associated infrastructure and works including measures necessary to manage stormwater and stabilise the site.

5.3 Linking the impact assessment to discussion of cultural interests.

This chapter assesses the impact of the inland port on:

- Ara tawhito (trails)
- Mahika Kai
- Wahi tupuna (including ikoa tawhito)
- Kāika Nohoaka (settlement/camping sites)

- Wai Māori (freshwater areas)
- Kōrero tuku iho
- Taoka species

Protecting remaining taoka that are essential for preserving the beliefs, values and practices of whānau, and where feasible seeking opportunities to restore degraded wāhi taoka is a priority for Manawhenua. This aspiration has influenced how Ōtākou has assessed this proposal.

5.4 Structuring the assessment of impacts

We have used two criteria to help assess the significance of the impacts from the perspective of Manawhenua:

- Sensitivity of a taoka or value to change; and
- Scale of impact as perceived by whānau.

5.4.1 Sensitivity

When identifying the significance of a taoka, it is essential, where changes are being assessed, to understand the contribution that the attributes of that taoka and its setting make towards the significance of taoka. Thus, in determining the nature and level of effect upon a taoka by the development, its sensitivity to changes to its attributes setting need to be considered.

Taoka with very high or high sensitivity may be vulnerable to any changes that affect their attributes or settings and even slight changes may erode their key characteristics or the ability of their settings to contribute to the understanding, appreciation or experience of them by Ōtākou whānau. Taoka where sensitivity to changes to their setting is lower may be able to accommodate greater changes to their settings without key characteristics or attributes being eroded. The criteria used for establishing a relative sensitivity for a taoka to changes to its attributes or setting are detailed in Table 3

Table 3: Scoring sensitivity

Very high	The setting is crucial to an understanding and experience of the taoka, should be regarded as very high sensitivity to change to its setting. This is particularly relevant where setting or elements of make a crucial and essential direct contribution to significance.
High	The setting is major to an understanding and experience of the taoka, should be regarded as high sensitivity to change to its setting. This is particularly relevant where setting or elements contribute substantially to significance.
Medium	The setting makes a moderate contribution to an understanding and experience of the taoka, should be regarded as having medium sensitivity to change to its setting. This could be where a where setting or elements contribute to significance but its value is derived equally from other characteristics.
Low	The setting makes some contribution to an understanding and experience of the taoka, should be regarded as having low sensitivity to change to its setting. This could be where the value of a taoka is derived mainly from other characteristics.
Negligible	Where the setting makes minimal contribution to an understanding and experience of the taoka, it should be regarded as having negligible sensitivity to change to its setting.

5.4.2 Scale of impact

Determining the scale of any likely impacts includes consideration of the nature of the activities proposed during the construction and operational phases of the revised development. Changes could potentially include ground disturbance, instream disturbance, habitat changes, loss of access, visual change, vibration, smell, dust, traffic movements etc. Effects may be beneficial or adverse, and may be short term, long term or permanent. Where adverse effects on cultural interests are possible, the scale of impact may be reduced through measures to prevent, reduce and/or, where possible, offset these effects. The scale of any effects has been assessed using professional judgment of Ōtākou representatives and their advisers, with reference to the criteria set out in Table 4

Table 4: Scoring scale of impact

High benefit	The revised development would considerably enhance the cultural significance of the affected taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it.
Medium benefit	The revised development would enhance – to a clearly discernible extent - the cultural significance of the affected taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it
Low benefit	The revised development would enhance – to a minor extent - the cultural significance of the affected taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it
Very low benefit	The revised development would enhance – to a very minor extent - the cultural significance of the affected taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it
Neutral / none	The revised development would not affect the cultural significance of a taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it
Very low adverse	The revised development would erode – to a very minor extent - the cultural significance of the affected taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it
Low Adverse	The revised development would erode – to a minor extent - the cultural significance of the affected taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it
Medium adverse	The revised development would erode – to a clearly discernible extent - the cultural significance of the affected taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it
High adverse	The revised development would considerably erode the cultural significance of the affected taoka / site or the ability to understand, appreciate or experience it.
Unknown	There was insufficient information for a rating to be given

5.5 Assessment of Cultural Impacts

For each interest described in Part 2, we identify the nature and magnitude of potential effects, consider the findings of relevant technical reports, and assess whether proposed mitigation measures adequately address cultural concerns. We start with a description of potential benefits.

5.5.1 Benefits of the North Taieri Hub.

Honouring the “no more reclamation” commitment – Te Runanga o Otakou acknowledges that the development of the inland port and the growth around the North Taieri site will enable Port Otago to continue to honour its commitment that there will be no more reclamation in Otago Harbour.

Otakou kaumatua advised 8% of Otago Harbour has been reclaimed since 1862. The Otago Harbour Study Draft Issues and Options Report (1990) refers to 370 hectares (about 888 acres) having been reclaimed. Since 1990 another few hectares have been reclaimed related to the Port Chalmers wharfage and log storage, as well as widening of the Otago Peninsula road involving something like 6 hectares.

Of great concern culturally, the effects of reclamation on the harbour and related ecosystems have not been fully assessed, much of the area reclaimed being intertidal and kohanga, rocky reef in some cases.

Recognition of the harbour as a key taonga for Dunedin City The commitment to no more reclamation and the reconfiguration of port activities means that there is an opportunity for the harbour environment to once again become the key taonga for Dunedin City.

Economic transformation and employment: The Mosgiel-Taiari Community Board chairman Andrew Simms described the project as one of Dunedin's most exciting economic development opportunities for many years, noting there are large tracts of flat industrial land available close to the North Taiari location and he would expect to see new enterprises emerge quickly.

Reduced road freight and emissions: The Southern Link Logistics Park was expected to remove 19,000 truck movements from Dunedin streets every year, moving freight from Port Chalmers to Mosgiel by rail. This shift from road to rail aligns with climate mitigation objectives while reducing pressure on State Highway 88 to Port Chalmers.

Industrial clustering effects: Fonterra and Silver Fern Farms already operate next to the proposed logistics park site, and it can be expected that several other significant players will also relocate to the area once the inland port is established.

Regional supply chain resilience: Freight volumes from Central and South Otago are forecast to grow 30–40% over the next decade, driven by seasonal peaks in forestry and dairy exports. A well-designed inland port could buffer seasonal export peaks that currently strain Port Chalmers' container storage capacity.

Economic and Regional Development Benefits - The applicants describe this as a \$200M development opportunity funded by the private sector, with direct positive impact on the region's economy. The project is presented as a critical piece of regional infrastructure – one that is needed to keep lower South Island exports flowing and the southern economy healthy.

Traffic and Road Congestion Reduction - A key selling point is the shift from road to rail freight. The Port Otago rail siding already supports 60 percent of all containers transported through the terminal, taking 43,000 truck trips off Dunedin's roads last year with a further 19,000 to come when the inland port is in operation.

The project claims it will keep jobs in Mosgiel and Dunedin while achieving that reduction of over 19,000 truck movements annually from Dunedin city streets on to rail.

Infrastructure Catalyst Effects - The applicants suggest the development could trigger wider improvements. Growth in Mosgiel over the past decade has already put pressure on infrastructure that was designed decades ago and clearly isn't fit for today. The Southern Link Logistics Park could be a catalyst to fix this, for example

- getting a new State Highway bypass built; and
- progressing the stormwater and wastewater upgrades.

Port Capacity and Supply Chain Benefits - The project addresses a lack of landside infrastructure to hold a buffer stock of empty containers and full export containers ready for shipping at Port Chalmers. The consolidation would also free up 4 hectares of industrial Dunedin land for development.

Private ownership - The site was privately acquired by Dynes Group and Port Otago, at no cost to the city, and the development leverages the existing KiwiRail infrastructure, which alleviates the need for big capital expenditure from central or local government.

Assessment: The development of the hub will provide a range of benefits to the Otago region, including the Taieri Plains where the inland hub is to be located.

5.5.2 Impacts on Wāhi Tupuna (Cultural Landscape)

The draft Landscape Assessment explicitly stated that “there has been no cultural values report prepared” and relies solely on the Ngāi Tahu Atlas to assume cultural values exist. The final report was significantly amended.

The final report includes a dedicated “Cultural landscape context” section (pp. 6–10) that identifies and describes the key wāhi tūpuna features from the TIA: the Matamata narrative and associated placenames (Wai-pōtaka, Te Konika o Matamata, Te Korikori o Matamata, Pukemakamaka & Turimakamaka), Mauka Atua and its tōpuni status, Whakaehu, the Taieri River, Whakaraupuka Pā, and Lakes Waipouri and Waihola. The report also includes a feature-by-feature effects table (pp. 28–29) that assesses effects on each of these named places individually.

The final report explicitly draws on the TIA as a source and correctly defers to Manawhenua on cultural landscape effects assessment.

We also note that section 9.6.2 of the Construction Management Plan includes accidental discovery protocols with explicit obligations to notify iwi, enable tikanga, and protect koiwi tangata. This is one area where the CMP does acknowledge the role of Manawhenua.

Matamata Narrative and Cultural Placenames - The proposed development site lies within the cultural landscape inscribed by the Matamata narrative. As documented in Part 2, Whakaehu and surrounding plains bear placenames that record the movements of the taniwha: Wai-pōtaka, Te Konika o Matamata, and Te Korikori o Matamata. The transformation of 40 hectares of rural land into an industrial logistics hub will permanently alter the character of 40ha within the wider North Taieri landscape.

While the physical placenames themselves may not be directly affected, the industrial development will continue a transformation that over the last 150 years has created a fundamental disconnect between the names and the landscape they describe. The depression where Mosgiel now stands (Te Konika o Matamata - the Crawling of Matamata) was formed as the taniwha traversed this landscape.

Taoka affected: Wahi tupuna

Values affected: Whānau Ora, Manaakitaka

Component of scheme	Sensitivity / scale	Comment/Issue(s) raised
1. The proposed development will alter views from the site toward Mauka Atua through the introduction of large-scale warehouse structures and associated infrastructure.	Sensitivity High Scale Low	The development does not directly affect the mountain itself. But a large scale development has the potential to diminish the experiential quality of the cultural landscape for those utilising the area around the proposed hub.
2. The site is described as “rural paddocks used for grazing and cropping” with “no particularly recognized landscape significance.”	Sensitivity High Scale Medium	The site lies within landscape features shaped by Matamata. Industrial transformation of this land physically alters places woven into the whakapapa of mana whenua.

3. Stormwater discharges	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	Two stormwater ponds (12,715m²) will be netted to discourage birds due to airport proximity. Outfalls discharge to Silver Stream. Stormwater from 40ha of industrial land (oils, heavy metals, sediments) discharging to Whakaehu is of concern. The Landscape Assessment does not address this at all. The updated landscape report does now reference the Stormwater Assessment and the Freshwater Ecological Impact Assessment, and notes the mitigation chain (catchpits, gross pollutant traps, vegetated attenuation pond, rock-lined discharge channels). However, this is framed through the lens of natural character effects rather than cultural effects. The report concludes effects on water quality will be "low, or less than minor" based on the freshwater ecology report — but the core concern of Otakou is that the ecological assessment uses ecological metrics only and contains no cultural assessment. The landscape report doesn't bridge that gap.
4. An outfall structure will be constructed within the stream margin	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	Outfall construction and ongoing stormwater discharge directly threatens habitat. This is a significant cultural impact but its impacts on the riverscape is not assessed.
5. Recommends "natural character enhancement" through indigenous planting and weed removal	Sensitivity High Scale Low	Ecological mitigation is not equivalent to cultural mitigation. Enhancement must be designed with Manawhenua to address cultural values, not just ecological ones. The final report still frames riparian planting primarily as natural character/ecological enhancement that "may align with Manawhenua values" — the position of Otakou is that ecological mitigation is not equivalent to cultural mitigation and that enhancement must be designed with Manawhenua.
6. The site is described as "rural paddocks used for grazing and cropping" with "no particularly recognized landscape significance." The landscape assessment rates effects on rural character as "adverse / moderate-high".	Sensitivity High Scale Medium	The site lies within landscape features shaped by Matamata. Industrial transformation of this land physically alters places woven into the whakapapa of mana whenua. Cultural landscape values are not assessed at all. "Rural character" is a Eurocentric framing that ignores the Indigenous cultural landscape. While the final report has added the cultural landscape context section, the effects assessment still centres on "rural character" as the primary value being affected — it rates physical effects as "adverse / moderate" against rural character values, then defers to Manawhenua on cultural landscape effects. Otakou believes this framing risks undervaluing the cultural significance of the landscape transformation.
7. Visual effects assessed from Taiari Plains lookout (3.8km) as "adverse / low-moderate" – no mention of Mauka Atua	Sensitivity High Scale Low	Viewshafts TO and FROM Mauka Atua have profound cultural significance. The final landscape report still rates this viewpoint at adverse / low-moderate and notes that "views of the hills surrounding the Taiari Plain will not be impacted due to the elevation of the viewpoint." In the effects on cultural landscape section, the report states that "viewshafts from the roads to the culturally significant hill forms will not be particularly impacted" and that the development "will not block views toward Mauka Atua from the Taiari Plains Lookout."
8 Overall development	Sensitivity High Scale Medium	There remains a risk of disconnection between names and landscape
9. Eucalyptus shelterbelt on eastern boundary	Sensitivity High Scale	Exotic species afford no cultural value. They provide a screening benefit only. The final landscape report still proposes eucalyptus planting along the Stedman Road end of the Silver Stream bank (Appendix B, Section 4: Eucalyptus cordata, E. gunnii, E. rodwayi). The report acknowledges the eucalyptus as

	Low	"the exception" to the otherwise indigenous planting palette but justifies it on the basis of scale and screening function, extending the existing eucalyptus line. Otakou' position on this remains unaddressed.
10. Proposed mitigations	Sensitivity High Scale Medium	The proposed mitigations, while positive in intent, are framed around ecological and amenity outcomes rather than considering cultural restoration. Significant enhancement is required to address cultural values, including co-design with Manawhenua, species of cultural significance, cultural monitoring, and interpretation. The criticism from Otakou is that the proposed mitigations are "framed around ecological and amenity outcomes rather than considering cultural restoration" and that "significant enhancement is required to address cultural values, including co-design with Manawhenua, species of cultural significance, cultural monitoring, and interpretation." The final landscape report has improved its plant selection — the Dukes Road boundary planting list (Appendix B, Section 2) includes many of the culturally significant species identified in the TIA (akeake, harakeke, kahikatea, kanuka, manuka, mingimingi, tōtara, kōwhai, māhoe, ti kouka). This is a tangible response. But the report does not propose cultural monitoring, cultural interpretation (such as pou or signage acknowledging the Matamata narrative), or co-design with Manawhenua for the planting programme. The report's language — "may align with Manawhenua interests" — remains aspirational rather than committed.
11. Potential impact of lighting on wildlife²² See Appendix A. Assessment of Effects Matrix of the Lighting Report	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	Mitigating the impacts of lighting on taoka species within the proximity of the inland port is important. The draft report mentioned the need for lighting to take into consideration "Australian National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife" when designing the lighting at the inland port. This is shown below: <i>"Notwithstanding this, it is proposed that the exterior lighting be designed in line with the best practice guidance from the Australian National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife, as described above in section 4.1.4.1 of this report. On this basis, and noting that lighting does not interact with the freshwater ecological pathways identified in the FEclA, residual ecological effects of lighting are assessed as no greater than minor."</i> The final landscape report addresses night lighting primarily as a visual amenity issue (noting exceedances of District Plan lux standards) rather than engaging with effects on taoka species. The report doesn't discuss lighting effects on birds, kanakana, or other taoka species — though this sits more naturally in the ecological assessment, the landscape report's natural character assessment could have acknowledged it. Ōtākou note no bird assessment was undertaken but it is proposed that this be a condition of consent.
12. Proposed mitigations are implemented ²³	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	The lighting assessment has suggested a range of mitigation measures to be incorporated into the lighting design. Once these are implemented the assessment states the impacts from lighting will be "no greater than minor"²⁴.

²² Pederson Read (16 December 2025) - PORT OTAGO INLAND PORT APPLICATION ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS (LIGHTING). Pg12

²³ Pederson Read (16 December 2025) - PORT OTAGO INLAND PORT APPLICATION ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS (LIGHTING). Executive summary, iii

²⁴ Pederson Read (16 December 2025) - PORT OTAGO INLAND PORT APPLICATION ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS (LIGHTING). Executive summary, iii

13. Further consultation with lighting designer ²⁵	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	The lighting assessment has stated that the lighting design is preliminary and consultation need to continue with a lighting designer.
---	--	--

Assessment: The expansion of industrial activity into a rural area compounds the already significant modification of the North Taiari-Mosgiel landscape. This assessment reflects the permanent transformation of land within the Matamata cultural landscape, effects on Whakaehu and its taoka species, disruption to the relationship with Mauka Atua, and cumulative impacts on cultural values that have already experienced significant historical loss. This effect cannot be fully mitigated but may be partially offset through design measures and cultural recognition which are the subject of ongoing discussion.

5.5.3 Impacts on Wai (Water) and Mauri

The proposed development has the potential to affect the mauri of Whakaehu through multiple pathways:

Wastewater discharge - Wastewater from the proposed inland port poses risks to Whakaehu, which is a tributary feeding into the wider Taiari system.

Key concerns include contaminant loading from stormwater runoff across extensive hardstand areas, potential infiltration affecting groundwater that feeds the stream, and cumulative effects on water quality downstream. Even with treatment systems, the scale of industrial activity—truck movements, fuel storage, container handling—introduces risks from hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and sediment.

For Ngāi Tahu, degradation of wai māori fundamentally undermines the ability to exercise kaitiakitanga and maintain the cultural relationship with freshwater that underpins mahika kai. The health of Whakaehu connects directly to downstream receiving environments, meaning localised impacts have broader implications for the Taiari catchment's ecological and cultural integrity.

Stormwater discharge - The conversion of 40 hectares to impervious surfaces will generate stormwater runoff. This will represent an alteration to the natural flow regime of the Whakaehu. The ecological report identifies potential impacts including:

- Changes to flow patterns during storm events
- Introduction of contaminants including heavy metals, hydrocarbons, and sediments from industrial operations
- Temperature changes from heated runoff crossing large areas of pavement and roofing; and
- Potential reduction in dissolved oxygen levels

The ecological report proposes mitigation through a large stormwater retention pond with treatment systems. However, from a cultural perspective, even treated stormwater discharge represents an ongoing alteration to the natural state of the waterway. The mauri of water encompasses the waterway's capacity to sustain life and fulfil its natural functions.

Sediment During Construction - Earthworks during the construction phase pose significant risk of sediment discharge to Whakaehu. The ecological report rates the potential impact of earthworks on freshwater ecology as HIGH without mitigation. Sediment can smother spawning habitat, reduce water

²⁵ Pederson Read (16 December 2025) - PORT OTAGO INLAND PORT APPLICATION ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS (LIGHTING). Pg14

clarity, and affect the feeding and breeding success of taoka species. The May-November spawning period for native fish species is identified as a critical period when in-stream works should be avoided.

Contaminated Land - The presence of HAIL sites²⁶ on the property (historic sheep dip, vehicle workshop, army barracks, railway line) presents risks of contaminant mobilisation during earthworks. From a cultural perspective, the discharge of legacy contaminants to Whakaehu would represent a significant harm to mauri that must be avoided. The Detail Site Investigation Report has been finalised and section 8 is relevant to this issue. It is proposed to remove all of the contamination on site, prior to development. Otakou also note that a Construction Management Plan and a Remediation Plan have now been completed which address the measures to be taken to ensure contamination is removed in an appropriate way

Water extraction to supply water to the hub - The assessment draws upon the Stantec water supply report (December 2025). The development proposes two distinct water supply schemes to service the 43-hectare logistics hub on the Taiari Plains:

- Potable Water Supply Scheme: Two connections to the DCC water network (Dukes Road North and Stedman Road), a booster pump station, and a ring main around the site perimeter.
- Non-Potable Water Supply Scheme: One connection to DCC network, rainwater collection from rooftops, three storage reservoirs (approximately 1,245m³ total), and separate pump stations for normal operations and firefighting.

The development will demand water from the DCC network under fire recovery scenarios, with normal operations requiring approximately 60m³ per day for potable use plus variable non-potable demands depending on rainfall.

Cumulative Effects on Waipouri-Waihola System - Whakaehu is a tributary of the Taiari-Waipouri River system, and its waters flow directly into the lower catchment that includes the Waipouri-Waihola wetland complex - a waterbody the Crown has formally recognised as significant to Kāi Tahu through Schedule 70 of the NTCSA 1998. The TIA must assess the inland port's impacts in the context of this downstream statutory recognition. Any degradation of water quality, flow regimes, or contaminant loads in Whakaehu will manifest downstream.

The existing degradation documented in the ecological report (macroinvertebrate indices below National Bottom Line at Taiari Depot) indicates that the receiving environment has limited assimilative capacity. Cumulative effects of the proposed discharge, combined with existing pressures, may push the system further from a state capable of sustaining cultural practices.

²⁶ Hail stands for Hazardous activities and industries list

Wastewater

Taoka affected: Wai Maori

Values affected: Kaitiakitaka, Whānau Ora, Manaakitaka, Whānaukataka

Component of scheme	Sensitivity Scale	Comment/Issue(s) raised
14. Condition and capacity of the Mosgiel wastewater treatment network and Mosgiel WWTP ²⁷	Sensitivity High Scale Low	<i>Inflow and infiltration of stormwater into the wastewater network is a problem in Mosgiel, resulting in wastewater overflows that can enter private property and discharges of diluted wastewater to the Silver Stream (Whakaehu) in significant rainfall events.²⁸</i> <i>The DCC needs to upgrade wastewater pipes and the Mosgiel wastewater treatment plant to address this problem. These upgrades are required to improve the performance of the system, meet environmental outcomes, and service existing housing capacity. These upgrades are scheduled for the next 10 years.²⁹</i> <i>Other upgrades to pipes, wastewater storage capacity and the Mosgiel wastewater treatment plant will be required to support proposed future residential intensification areas. These upgrades are scheduled for the long term (10 to 30 years).³⁰</i> <i>The identification of the indicative location for an inland freight hub is intended to encourage stakeholders to carry out necessary investigations into the suitability and feasibility of the site and the options for best integrating it with the wider infrastructure network over time.³¹</i> There currently are issues within the Mosgiel wastewater network which the inland port will be connecting (Via Odilins place) to which ends up at the Mosgiel WWTP. There are plans for future upgrades of this network but there is no mention of consideration being made for the inland port. The DCC has indicated the inland port is unlikely to be able to connect to "Fortex line" which runs along Stedman Road and connects directly to Green Island wastewater plant. The Stedman Road or "Fortex line" avoids going through Mosgiel township. Ōtakou sought confirmation that the inland port wastewater contribution to the current Mosgiel WWTP and wastewater network will not have an impact on the current network which already has issues or that this has been considered by the DCC in their infrastructure upgrade planning alongside residential development. Since forwarding the draft TIA to SLPL the "DCC have confirmed that there is capacity in the wastewater network to accept the wastewater flow demand from the SLIP, however this would be subject to the following requirements: The first section of the DCC wastewater gravity network on Odilins Place, an existing DN150 pipe (approx. 130m long), would need to be upgraded or the proposed rising main would need to be extended to discharge downstream of the DN150 pipe, into manhole FSM08601. Limiting of trade waste flows in heavy rainfall events Efforts to reduce wet weather flow from the development. At the time of finalising of TIA, the options to resolve DCC requirements are being investigated. The preferred option will be finalised during detailed design. The intention is to work collaboratively with DCC to ensure that a solution is appropriately designed." (JD comments – March 26)

²⁷ Stantec New Zealand. Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme (18/12/2025), pg 4-5

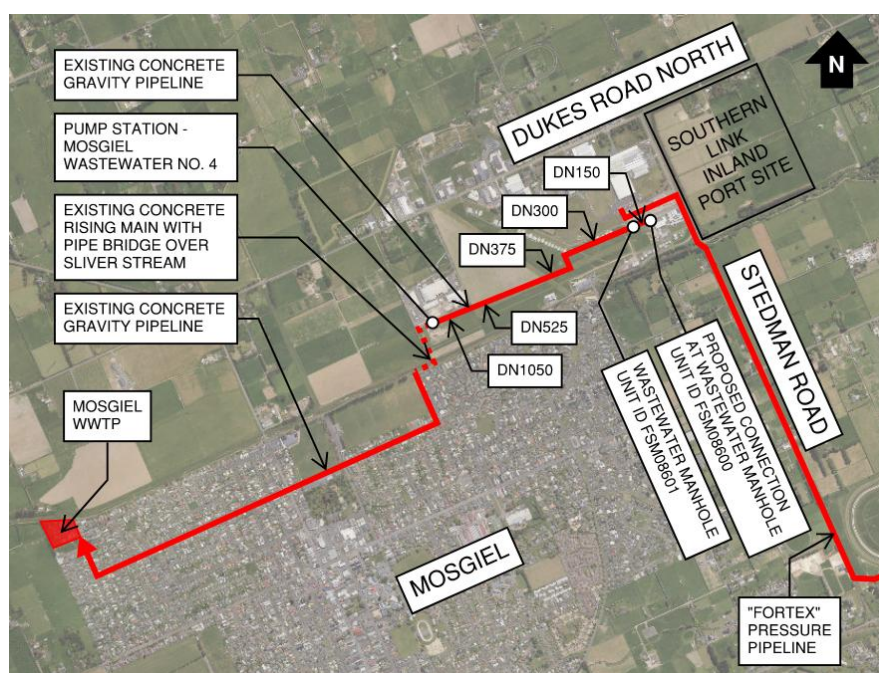
²⁸ DUNEDIN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024-2054 April 2024, pg 113

²⁹ DUNEDIN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024-2054 April 2024, pg 113

³⁰ DUNEDIN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024-2054 April 2024, pg 113

³¹ DUNEDIN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024-2054 April 2024, pg112

Figure 15 Existing wastewater infrastructure in the vicinity of the Southern Link Inland Port site



15. Signoff or response by DCC on proposed wastewater treatment system still to be received pg 7³²	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	Inland port meets the following regulatory requirements below: • Dunedin City Council (DCC) Dunedin Code of Subdivision and Development 2010 (DCSD 2010) • New Zealand Standard 4404:2010 Land Development and Subdivision Infrastructure (NZS 4404:2010) • Further information has been supplemented from the Watercare Auckland Code of Practice for Land Development and Subdivision 2021 • Dunedin City Council (DCC) Trade Waste Bylaw 2020 But there is no mention of a DCC response on the wastewater system. There is pre application advice mentioning wastewater as part of 3 waters but no mention of DCC response on the final system.³³ We note the updated Southern Link Inland Port Wastewater Report dated 20/02/2026 and the response to above concerns. (JD comments – March 26)” “At the time of writing, the options to resolve DCC requirements are being investigated. The preferred option will be finalised during detailed design. The intention is to work collaboratively with DCC to ensure that a solution acceptable to both DCC and the Applicant is agreed.”³⁴
16. Increased wastewater to Mosgiel WWTP which in turn sends this to Green island WWTP which then goes out	Sensitivity High Scale Low	Wastewater from the inland port will end up at the Green Island wastewater plant which goes out to sea or to the Green island landfill (sludge). Ōtākou sought confirmation that the increase in wastewater from the inland port which will in turn discharge via the Green Island WWTP outfall and via land on the Green Island landfill will not have a significant added impact on the receiving environment. They have since been advised -

³² Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme*, pg 7

³³ Dunedin City Council - DCC FEEDBACK FOLLOWING PRESENTATION. (Pre application advice). Karen Bain Associate Senior Planner, 20 February 2025

³⁴ Stantec New Zealand. () (20/2/2026). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Assessment*. Pg 10

to sea or via landfill (sludge) ³⁵		<i>"Please refer to the updated Southern Link Inland Port Wastewater Report dated 20/02/2026 (and the response to Item 14 above). DCC have confirmed that there is capacity in the wastewater network to accept the wastewater flow demand from the SLIP. This indicates that there is sufficient capacity within the DCC's currently consented limits at the treatment plant(s)." (JD comments – March 26)</i>
17.Container bay wash containments, issues and mitigations ³⁶	<i>Sensitivity</i> High <i>Scale</i> Low	The container bay wash will be connected to the wastewater system not the stormwater system. The container wash will lead to additional containments entering the wastewater system. Otakou note the response from the applicants that <i>Pretreatment will be provided to remove contaminants prior to discharging to the Mosgiel wastewater network.</i>" (JD comments – March 26) The issue is likely to be addressed if pretreatment removes containments prior to discharging into the Mosgiel wastewater network.
18. Still needing a decision re pre-treatment confirmation of wastewater using an UPT (universal pollutant trap) ³⁷	<i>Sensitivity</i> High <i>Scale</i> Medium	The inland port have proposed (or are "considering") using an UPT. The UPT does the following: <i>"UPTs capture both gross pollutants (i.e. large debris, litter, paint flakes) and fine pollutants (i.e. heavy metals and other chemical contaminants). Gross pollutants are trapped within an internal basket which can be periodically emptied using a sucker truck. Fine pollutants are captured downstream of the internal basket via an internal media filter followed by a membrane filter. The media within the filter is typically granulated activated carbon but can be changed to target specific contaminants within the wastewater."</i> If an UPT isn't used this could lead to these contaminants entering the Mosgiel WWTP or the Mosgiel wastewater network. It would be up to the Mosgiel WWTP or the Green Island WWTP to remove these contaminants. This would be an impact that could be avoided if using at UPT at the inland port. Ōtakou sought confirmation from the applicant about the final decision about the UPT. The updated Southern Link Inland Port Wastewater Report dated 20/02/2026 states . <i>Wastewater sampling from the existing container washbay at the Port Otago Port Chalmers Site will be utilised to identify and quantifying contaminants to confirm the design of the washbay pre-treatment is appropriate. This will be completed during the detailed design phase."</i> – JD comments (March 26) The issue could be addressed if a UPT is used (as a minimum in pretreatment). <i>"The wastewater scheme will include the following elements:</i> - <i>Container washbay pretreatment device (universal pollutant trap)." ³⁸</i> <i>"For this site, a universal pollutant trap (UPT) will be considered for the pre-treatment system."³⁹</i> <i>"The type and sizing of the UPT treatment system will be confirmed during the detailed design phase."⁴⁰</i>

³⁵ Wastewater treatment plants – Dunedin City Council website. Retrieved from <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/services/wastewater/wastewater-treatment-plants>

³⁶ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme*, pg 8

³⁷ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme*, pg 11

³⁸ Stantec New Zealand. (20/2/2026). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Assessment* , pg 2

³⁹ Stantec New Zealand. (20/2/2026). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Assessment.*, Pg 18

⁴⁰ Stantec New Zealand.(20/2/2026). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Assessment.* Pg 18

19. Incomplete description of sucker truck disposal of material from UPT ⁴¹	Sensitivity High Scale Low	Material from the UPT will be collected via a sucker truck and then disposed of. This material will contain both gross and fine pollutants. This material if not disposed of correctly could have an impact on any receiving environment including taoka species. Otakou believed that clarity was needed around how and where the material from the UPT will be disposed. SLPL have since advised that <i>“The material will be required to be disposed of at an approved facility which can accept this material. The sucker truck contractors are well versed in proper disposal.”</i> (JD comments – March 26)
20. Wastewater (system i.e. maintenance, wastewater itself via stormwater outlet to Whakaehu) monitoring at inland port ⁴²	Sensitivity High Scale Low	Monitoring the wastewater system itself (UPT maintenance, sucker truck collection and disposal etc) and the wastewater (via stormwater outlet into Silverstream) will assist in determining if the wastewater system is functioning correctly and that potential impacts on the Whakaehu are being avoided. Baseline monitoring has occurred by E3 in the Whakaehu as part of Stormwater monitoring. Wastewater and stormwater (included as overflow could go into stormwater system) should be monitored before entering Whakaehu. downstream and upstream of outlets. We note in the final freshwater ecology report that the monitoring recommendations are extended — adding heavy metals, PAH, and nutrient testing triggered by observed sediment; quarterly first-flush sampling through Stages 1 and 2; specific reporting requirements to ORC; and washpad/truckwash overland flow event monitoring. This is a meaningful improvement over the original three-year programme in the draft report. This comments is also relevant to impacts 27 and 37. We also note that SLPL have advised that “This will be addressed in the proposed conditions of consent.” (JD comments – March 26)
21. Implications of wastewater overflow into stormwater ponds ⁴³	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	The stormwater basin discharges to the Silverstream and the wastewater overflow goes into stormwater basin. Therefore, if wastewater overflow occurs it will end up in the Whakaehu. This could have an impact on the Whakaehu including taoka species and people who use Whakaehu. SLPL have since advised that <i>The system is sized so that wastewater (except as below) will not overflow to the Whakaehu.....The exception is the container washbay area, which is documented in Section 8.2.2 of the updated report. This overflow will not contain human waste and will only occur after a significant first flush (e.g., flows from the first 20-30 minutes of a 1% AEP RCP 8.5 2080-2100 storm). This first flush discharges into an attenuation tank that drains at a controlled rate to the wastewater system. ...The flow rate from this attenuation tank is controlled to ensure the wider wastewater network is not overloaded.”</i> (JD comments – March 26) There is still uncertainty though because we note <i>“Surcharged flows will follow the secondary stormwater flowpath through the site, which ultimately drains to the stormwater attenuation ponds. It should be assumed that flows which surcharge the container washbay wastewater system are untreated (i.e., have bypassed the pretreatment device). Therefore, there is a risk that surcharged flows from the container washbay introduce additional contaminants to stormwater runoff. This risk is considered low because there will be a significant first flush, which will contain residual contaminants from the container washbay surface, will be captured into the attenuation storage before overflow occurs.</i> <i>Furthermore, it is considered unlikely that operators will continue to wash containers in storm events above a 10% AEP storm, when the container washbay wastewater system is surcharging.”</i>⁴⁴

⁴¹ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme*, pg 11

⁴² Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg23

⁴³ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme*, pg 12

⁴⁴ Stantec New Zealand (20/2/2026). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Assessment*>Pg 19

22. Construction and connection to Mosgiel wastewater network uncertain⁴⁵⁴⁶	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	Any construction near the Whakaehu has to take care to prevent an impact on the waterway. The use of a trenchless method to connect to the Wastewater Rising Main at Odilins place could reduce the potential impact on the Whakaehu but care will still need to be taken and mitigations should be in place. There is no mention of how to deal with potential incidents from construction near the Silverstream. Within the “Southern Link Inland Port - Transportation, Geometrics, Grading and Earthworks report” Erosion and Sedimentation Control is mentioned along with reference to a future Erosion and sediment management plan and Construction Management plan. The adequacy of this plan needs to be assessed by Ōtākou. SLPL have since advised that <i>“An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) will be formulated during the subsequent design stages and must be reviewed and finalised by the construction Contractor. This EMP will need to be subject to approval by the Engineer to Contract/ Independent Certifier prior to commencement of site construction. The EMP will identify sensitive receptors and specify mitigation strategies to minimise or prevent impacts on the receiving environment. At present, a preliminary erosion and sediment control plan has been submitted as an overview of potential measures. Comprehensive evaluation of these controls will take place when the EMP is developed in later design phases.</i> From the perspective of Otakou, it is important to note 8.11.2. <i>Silver Stream Protection A dirty water protection bund will be constructed along the alignment of the Silver Stream to direct all overland flow to the SRP. The stormwater attenuation pond is sized for a fully developed site so will be large enough for the smaller volume of construction water run-off. This bund will provide a buffer against direct sheet flow to the stream.”⁴⁷</i>
23. Implications of many aspects of wastewater systems are linked to future design phases of project⁴⁸	Sensitivity High Scale Low	Many aspects of the wastewater treatment system will be confirmed at future stages. This has an impact on the ability of Ōtākou to assess the system's ability to mitigate potential impacts. Otakou note the updated advice from SLPL. However, Ōtākou want to be aware of any major design changes during the phases of the project. If these changes are significant enough to change the operation of the system which in turn may have an impact on cultural values a further discussion will be required.
24. During construction potential for Odour and Septicity⁴⁹	Sensitivity High Scale Low	The construction of the wastewater system has the potential to create odour and septicity issues. These could have an impact on the surrounding area during construction. There is no mention of the area which could be affected by this odour / septicity. Otakou was concerned that there was no mention in the draft report of potential mitigations if odour / septicity becomes an issue. Otakou note that SLPL have advised that this will be covered in the Environmental Management Plan” – JD comments – March 26)

⁴⁵ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme*, pg 12

⁴⁶ Stantec New Zealand (19/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port Transportation, Geometrics, Grading and Earthworks*, pg

⁴⁷ Andy Pullar (Port Otago Ltd). (2026). *Southern Link Inland Port - DRAFT Construction Management Plan (CMP)*. Pg 35. (CHECK)

⁴⁸ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme*, pg 11

⁴⁹ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme*, pg 13

Stormwater

Taoka affected: Wai Maori

Values affected: Kaitiakitaka, Whānau Ora, Manaakitaka

25. Detailed design and engineering approval processes and final DCC approval.⁵⁰⁵¹	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	The stormwater management system to be implemented by the inland port still needs “further clarification” at the detailed design and engineering approval processes. The final design of the stormwater management system will determine the impact on the Whakaehu, Mosgiel and the receiving environment. <i>“Further modelling is required to confirm the event magnitudes, durations, and climate change scenarios for which separation and attenuation are feasible, ensuring that the external stormwater strategy remains robust and adaptable as the design progresses.”</i> The Inland port met with DCC at pre application (27 December 25) to discuss stormwater management. The DCC then provided advice and recommendations. Otakou sought an update on the decisions from the meeting and have been advised. <i>“Stantec conducted a meeting with DCC on 27 November 2025. The primary focus of this meeting was a review of methodology and discussions concerning strategic-level development. Section 1.6 (Preapplication Correspondence DCC) of the SLIP Stormwater Report has been revised to document this consultation. Further consultations are planned for forthcoming design phases to ensure compliance with the DCC Code of Subdivision and Development.” (JD comments – March 26)</i> <i>“A meeting with DCC was held on 28 January 2026 to discuss water and wastewater requirements. At the conclusion of the meeting, Stantec offered DCC the opportunity to review the current draft of the report; however, DCC indicated they preferred to wait until the report had been finalised.”⁵²</i> We also note from the final freshwater ecology report that it has added detail around rock-lining the attenuation pond outfall to minimise scour, planting the swale between the pond outlet and Whakaehu with native species, and directing washpad/truckwash water to trade waste. These partially respond to the concerns of Otakou about stormwater outlet design and erosion control. This update from the applicant is also relevant for impacts 26-30.
26. Stormwater management of the inland port sufficient to mitigate impact on Mosgiel township⁵³⁵⁴	Sensitivity High Scale Medium	Stormwater management within the inland port needs to consider its potential impact on the Silverstream and therefore Mosgiel township which is downstream. Mitigation of internal stormwater, external drainage and potential climate scenarios i.e. rainfall is important to reducing impacts on Mosgiel and the downstream receiving environment. This has been considered within the development of the stormwater management system which has considered both onsite and external / off site impacts. The stormwater system to be implemented includes the following: • Two main trunk pipelines, catchpits, manholes and direct connections carrying with capacity to pass the 10% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) design rainfall runoff. • Internal road network as the secondary overland flow path system to convey the 1%AEP design rainfall runoff. • Stormwater treatment systems to trap contaminants including litter, particulates and hydrocarbons, and remove them from site runoff. This includes proprietary traps and filter systems (Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) or Universal Pollutant Trap (UPT) devices). • A 25,000m³ stormwater attenuation pond to attenuate post-development site runoff down to pre-development discharge rates to protect the downstream receiving environment from potential erosion or flooding effects.

⁵⁰ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg 4-5

⁵¹ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg 29

⁵² Stantec New Zealand. (20/2/2026). *Southern Link Inland Port - Stormwater Assessment*. Pg 10.

⁵³ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg 7- 9

⁵⁴ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg 4

		• A primary stormwater outlet structure from the stormwater attenuation pond into the Silver Stream in the form of pipe or culvert, with a rock lined spillway to pass the over-design event flows from the site. The proposed external drainage scheme includes: • Diversion channels to the north and east of the Project site to direct external catchment runoff around the Project site as far as practicable, whilst allowing some water onto site to mitigate potential offsite effects in large flood events. Proposed mitigations for increased peak discharge and runoff volumes will include: • Primary stormwater pipeline network including direct stormwater drainage from building facilities, kerblines and road catchpits, manholes, and outlet structures to drain the 10% AEP (RCP8.5 2080-2100) rainfall runoff event into a proposed stormwater attenuation pond. • Secondary stormwater network flows along internal road networks to drain the 1% AEP rainfall runoff event to the proposed stormwater attenuation pond. • Proposed stormwater attenuation pond provides attenuation storage volumes at the southwest corner of the development for holding and throttling peak discharges up to the 1% AEP rainfall event. • At this preliminary stage of design, the attenuation pond will have two pipe outlets with controlled discharge into the Silver Stream from the pond throttling flows to the 10% AEP rainfall event. • Perimeter diversion bunding, channels and drainage Otakou note that they have been advised by the applicants “Confirming our consultants Stantec reviewed the impacts of the proposed development from both internal and external perspectives. We will assume that no additional comments are needed for this item.” (JD comments – March 26)
27. Monitoring of the Silverstream (see wastewater) ⁵⁵	Sensitivity High Scale Medium	The adequacy of monitoring of Whakaehu downstream and upstream of inland port needs to be agreed. SLPL have advised that this will be addressed in the consent conditions.
28. Stormwater outlet confirmation from stormwater basin and land treatment ^{56 57}	Sensitivity High Scale Low	Treatment of discharges from the stormwater basins over land is important alongside the proposed stormwater treatment. Within the Stantec report (Figure 3.3) it shows stormwater being discharged (Outlet 1) to the swale on Stedman Road while the Master plan concept shows the outlet straight into the Silverstream. This needs to be clarified. Depending on the outlet point this could have an impact on the ability of land treatment via the swale or the bank of the Silverstream. Discharging to the swale on Stedman Road may provide better opportunity for treatment land treatment before the discharge enters the Silverstream. It is currently proposed that a rock lined spillway will be used. A primary stormwater outlet structure from the stormwater attenuation pond into the Silver Stream in the form of pipe or culvert, with a rock lined spillway to pass the over-design event flows from the site.⁵⁸ Otakou note that “The anomaly has been addressed, so the master plan concept now matches Figure 3-3. in the updated Stormwater report. Upon review, we determined that discharging into the Schedule Drain is impractical and provides minimal treatment benefits due to limited green space between Whakaehu and the steep slope. Effective treatment requires a hydraulic retention time of nine minutes, which cannot be achieved by conveying the pond discharge to the Schedule Drain. Proposed treatment of internal stormwater, catchpits, GPT (filtration and sedimentation) flood attenuation basin (sedimentation) will be included in the detailed design” (JD comments – March 26)

⁵⁵ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg 23

⁵⁶ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg 14

⁵⁷ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg 27

⁵⁸ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*, pg 4

29. Erosion controls need to prevent impacts on the Silverstream from bank erosion and sediment discharges	Sensitivity High Scale Low	Protecting the Silverstream from bank erosion and sediment is important so that water quality is protected. The Silverstream has habitat for taoka species and the ability of people to continue to use the waterway safety is important. The potential of bank erosion and sediment has been determined as low when comparing predevelopment of post. <i>Post-development flow rates at the site are expected to closely replicate pre-development runoff, indicating a low increased risk of erosion compared to existing conditions.</i> Mitigations have been proposed if necessary. How, when and where these would be used isn't mentioned or how this will be determined. The assessment simply states: <i>This assessment will be validated during subsequent design phases; however, if necessary, appropriate erosion mitigation measures may include but not limited to the following:</i> • Impact basins • Rocked lined flumes or chutes • Gabian baskets • Rock bags Otakou note that an erosion and sediment control plan has been developed to safeguard Whakaehu throughout the construction process.
30. Spills, containments and treatment (filters, basin)⁵⁹	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	The inland port is planning a range of mechanisms to contain and treat the stormwater before it is discharged to the Whakaehu. Spills could be an issue depending on the amount and the type of material spilled. But it is important to note that the system isn't designed for large scale spill containment so its important spill response is carried out and that monitoring occurs to determine if there has been an impact on the Silverstream. <i>If a spill occurs on-site, the primary objective is to prevent contaminants from entering the stormwater system and ultimately discharging into the Silver Stream. Therefore, the site must implement rapid containment measures such as deploying spill kits, temporary bunding, and isolating the affected area. Again the proposal states these measures will be confirmed in future stages of design</i> <i>The stormwater network for the Southern Link Inland Port is designed to convey runoff to an attenuation basin, but these systems are not intended for large-scale spill containment.</i> Otakou note that this issue should be addressed in the future. <i>"It is acknowledged that a spill containment management plan must be developed. This plan will be formulated collaboratively with the site operators and will draw upon Port Otago's prevailing standard practices, as well as established protocols from other Inland Port facilities across New Zealand.</i> <i>Future design phases will include supplementary mitigation strategies at the pond outlets prior to discharge into Silver Stream. For example, in the event of a significant spill, the pipelines or attenuation pond and control manhole/outlet structure could be adapted to provide an isolation facility so that vacuum trucks may extract spill materials and contaminated water before it leaves the site.</i> <i>Other risk minimisation strategies are expected to be part of a site wide spill management plan – for example, discretionary selection of storage materials admitted to site, internal bunding measures around specific areas, staff training procedures, alarm system, actuated valves. These aspects would become part of the future detailed design phase of the development."</i> (JD comments – March 26)

⁵⁹ Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater*,pg 24, 25, 26, 28

Water supply - Taoka affected: Wai Maori

Values affected: Kaitiakitaka, Whānau Ora, Manaakitaka

31. Overall scheme	Sensitivity High Scale Unknown	The draft report identifies six groundwater monitoring piezometers associated with Consent 2004.225, used for monitoring leachate from the Closed North Taiari Landfill. This indicates existing contamination concerns in groundwater beneath and adjacent to the development site. The presence of these monitoring wells raises questions about: • The baseline groundwater quality and existing plume extent • How construction activities (bulk earthworks, piling) might affect contaminant migration pathways • The cumulative impact of adding industrial activities to an area with existing groundwater contamination • Whether the existing bores (Donnelly I44/0820 and Morris) draw from aquifers affected by landfill leachate This pre-existing contamination must be understood as part of the cumulative effects on groundwater resources. The updated Stantec report acknowledges the six piezometers and two bores, and confirms the piezometers will be retained but not used for supply. However, it still does not address the contamination pathway questions or cumulative groundwater effects
32. Extraction sites	Sensitivity High Scale High	The report notes: "There is a possibility of using the existing bores to supplement the non-potable water supply, but this will be considered at a later stage." Any future groundwater abstraction would require separate cultural assessment, as direct takes from groundwater engage Kāi Tahu interests differently from municipal supply connections. The updated report still states bore use will be "explored outside of the Fast-track process."
33. Water extraction scenarios	Sensitivity High Scale Low	The water supply report outlines four operating scenarios with different demand profiles from the DCC network: normal, construction, dry weather operations, fire recovery. While volumes are supplied via municipal infrastructure, they represent ongoing abstraction from regional water resources during a period when freshwater ecosystems in the Taiari catchment are under significant stress. The updated report now provides revised demand figures and confirms DCC has accepted Scenarios 1 (8.8 l/s normal operation) and 3 (10.8 l/s dry weather). However, DCC has raised concerns about Scenarios 2 (16.8 l/s construction) and 4 (22.8 l/s fire recovery), with solutions still being investigated. The report also notes daily volumes up to 880m³ under Scenario 4 — broadly consistent with the 860m³ figure. The concern of Oakou about ongoing abstraction from stressed regional water resources during a period of freshwater pressure in the Taiari catchment is not addressed at all by the Stantec report, which focuses purely on engineering capacity. Otakou have been advised that the reduction in the total quantum taken at other Port Otago sites will likely reduce so the quantum of water taken across all sites including the inland port site will see no overall increase. All water will be coming from the same source (Moun Grand) so a reduction from other sites will offset the supply needed at the inland port.
34. Firefighting	Sensitivity High Scale High	The firefighting requirements (175 L/s peak flow, 585m³ storage) reflect the Extra High Hazard classification of the warehouse buildings. The scale of these requirements indicates the intensity of industrial activities that will occur on the site, with associated risks of contamination events during fire emergencies when fire suppression water mixed with industrial materials could reach waterways. The updated report confirms the 175 l/s peak flow and 585m³ storage requirements for firefighting. It does not address what happens to fire suppression water mixed with industrial materials — the contamination risk to waterways during fire events that Otakou flags is not within the scope of this report

Assessment: The final Stantec report provides more detail on engineering design, confirms DCC acceptance for normal operating scenarios, and acknowledges outstanding issues with Scenarios 2 and 4. Without mitigation, the impacts on wai and mauri could be LOW - MED. The proposed mitigation measures may reduce this to a lower level, but residual effects remain. The ongoing discharge of treated stormwater and the fundamental alteration to the hydrology of the site represent permanent changes to the mauri of Whakaehu. Management plans are proposed to finalise some of the engineering designs and it is expected that management plans will be co-designed with runaka.

5.5.4 Impacts on Mahika Kai

Mahika kai encompasses food gathering, sources of food, and the traditions, customs and collection methods associated with these practices. The proposed development has the potential to affect mahika kai. A Freshwater Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecological report) was prepared by e3Scientific (November 2025).

The Ecological report does provide useful information that has informed the cultural impact assessment:

- Confirms presence of five taoka fish species, providing baseline data;
- Identifies existing degradation in Silver Stream, supporting the case for cautious approach;
- Proposes sediment and stormwater controls that, while insufficient, provide a starting point for enhanced conditions; and
- Acknowledges the Taiari flathead galaxias may be present, triggering precautionary consideration

But from a cultural perspective the following issues are of concern:

Habitat Degradation - The ecological report confirms the presence of tuna (longfin eel) and kanakana (lamprey) in Whakaehu - both primary mahika kai species. The health of these populations depends on habitat quality including water quality, flow regime, temperature, and substrate conditions.

Of particular concern is the existing decline in macroinvertebrate communities in the Whakaehu documented at Taiari Depot. Macroinvertebrates form the food base for tuna, kanakana and other mahika kai species. The below-National Bottom Line conditions indicate a food web under stress. Additional impacts from the proposed development, even if individually small, may contribute to a cumulative decline in the capacity of Whakaehu to sustain mahika kai populations.

Contamination Risk - The operation of an inland port and logistics hub introduces risks of contamination that could render mahika kai unsafe for consumption. Potential contaminants include:

- Hydrocarbons from vehicle operations, fuel storage, and maintenance activities;
- Heavy metals from brake dust, tyre wear, and industrial activities;
- Legacy contaminants from HAIL sites mobilised during earthworks; and
- Sediment carrying adsorbed contaminants.

While the stormwater treatment system is designed to reduce contaminant loads, the bioaccumulation of contaminants in long-lived species such as tuna means that even low-level chronic exposure can result in taoka species that are unsafe to harvest. This represents a fundamental harm to mahika kai - not merely a reduction in abundance, but a severance of the relationship between people and kai.

Treaty Obligations - As noted in Part 2, the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 recognises that traditional fisheries are of importance to Māori. Any development affecting waterways where tuna and kanakana are present engages these ongoing Crown Treaty obligations.

Component of scheme	Sensitivity Scale	Comment/Issue(s) raised
35. Discharges to Whakaehu	Sensitivity High Scale Medium	The ecological assessment proceeds on the implicit assumption that industrial development may discharge to waterways provided effects are "mitigated" to an acceptable level. This may conflict with cultural perspectives The Ecological report assesses water quality through the lens of ANZG (2018) default guideline values and National Bottom Lines, which are important but incomplete measures. These guidelines were not designed to assess cultural interests and do not capture the holistic health of a waterway as understood by Manawhenua. The final ecological report still assesses effects at the population level ("will fish survive?") rather than the food safety level which is essential when assessing mahika kai impacts. Section 8.11 of the Construction Management Plan provides a detailed erosion and sediment control framework, including staged sediment retention ponds, Whakaehu protection bunds, and clean-water diversion channels. Section 8.14 addresses Whakaehu works with seasonal avoidance (May–November) and restrictions on plant in the watercourse bed. Section 9.4 summarises the freshwater ecology mitigation including fish salvage provisions, quarterly water quality monitoring during Stages 1 and 2, and continuous temperature and dissolved oxygen monitoring post-pond establishment. These measures speak directly to the concern of Otakou about sediment risk during construction being previously rated HIGH, but now rated Medium.
36. The ecological report identifies four areas of potential contamination within the site (sheep dip, vehicle workshop, army barracks, railway corridor) but provides limited assessment of risks to Whakaehu	Sensitivity High Scale Low	From a cultural perspective, the following concerns arise: • Contaminant legacy: Historic sheep dips typically contain arsenic and organochlorines (DDT, dieldrin). These contaminants are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic to aquatic life. Mobilisation during earthworks poses a direct threat to taoka species and mahika kai safety. • Pathway to waterway: The Ecological report does not provide detailed pathway analysis showing how contaminants might migrate to Silver Stream during earthworks or through groundwater. • Food safety implications: If legacy contaminants enter the waterway and accumulate in fish tissue, mahika kai gathered from the area may be rendered unsafe for consumption. This intergenerational impact is not addressed. The freshwater ecology report now references the preliminary site investigation identifying the four HAIL areas and notes they'll be "considered in the proposed stormwater monitoring." A site investigation prior to earthworks is recommended. This is also relevant to impact 40. Otakou have been advised that management plans have prepared documenting how HAIL sites are to be remediated before the inland port is operational.
37. Proposed monitoring	Sensitivity High Scale Medium	Kaitiakitaka responsibilities extend across generations. A monitoring programme that terminates after three years (see Table 4) cannot provide the intergenerational oversight that mana whenua require to fulfil their duties to future generations. While the monitoring programme in the final ecological report has been expanded in scope, the timeframes (Stage 1 earthworks monitoring, two-summer temperature monitoring, quarterly sampling through Stage 2) still fall far short of the intergenerational oversight Otakou argues is needed for species like tuna that live 80+ years.

		In the final freshwater ecology report there is no provision for Manawhenua involvement in assessing waterway health or for applying cultural health indices alongside Western scientific measures.
--	--	---

Table 5: Proposed Monitoring Programme

Parameter	Ecological report Proposed	Cultural Values Concern
Stormwater quality	3 years	Insufficient to detect long-term trends or chronic effects on long-lived species like tuna (which live 80+ years)
Temperature/DO	2 summers	Does not capture inter-annual variability or climate change trajectory
Fish populations	Not proposed	No mechanism to detect population decline in taoka species over time
Cultural health indicators	Not proposed	No provision for mana whenua involvement in assessing waterway health through cultural lens
Kanakana larvae	Not proposed	No baseline or ongoing monitoring for this highly vulnerable life stage

We note in the final freshwater ecology report the two-summer continuous temperature monitoring with the 3°C/25°C thresholds remains in place, now with clearer specification of upstream and downstream locations.

Of concern, however, the monitoring programme still proposes no mechanism to detect population decline in taoka species over time. Macroinvertebrate surveys are included, but fish population monitoring is not.

The Construction Management Plan's monitoring provisions (section 9.4, 9.12) are also entirely framed around ecological parameters — macroinvertebrates, temperature, dissolved oxygen. There is no provision for cultural health assessment tools, no role for Manawhenua in water quality monitoring, and no mechanism for assessing the state of the mauri of Whakaehu.

38. Overall scheme	Sensitivity High Scale High	The Ecological report contains no assessment of mahika kai values or impacts on customary food gathering. This is a significant omission given: • The wetlands that historically stretched from Mosgiel to Waiholā, to which Whakaehu is connected, were historically described as "one of the most significant food baskets in the Otago region" • Industrial discharges may affect the safety of fish for human consumption, even if populations persist • The ability to gather mahika kai is central to Ngāi Tahu cultural identity and is protected under the Treaty settlement The ecological report's focus on population-level effects ("will fish survive?") misses the cultural dimension ("can fish be safely gathered and consumed as our tipuna did?"). A development that maintains fish populations but renders them unsuitable for mahika kai would represent a significant cultural impact not captured by the current assessment. The finalised freshwater report contains no references to mahika kai, customary food gathering, or food safety. Otakou wish to flag that a
--------------------	---	---

		development maintaining fish populations but rendering them unsuitable for consumption would be a significant cultural impact not captured by the ecological assessment. The final ecological report remains silent on this issue.
39. Overall scheme	Sensitivity High Scale High	The Ecological report notes that Whakaehu is already "highly modified" and macroinvertebrate communities are below the National Bottom Line at the Taiari Depot monitoring site. Adding industrial pressure to an already stressed system compounds existing degradation
40. Management of HAIL sites	Sensitivity High Scale Low	The Ecological report identifies four areas of potential contamination within the site (sheep dip, vehicle workshop, army barracks, railway corridor) but provides limited assessment of risks to Whakaehu. From a cultural perspective, the following concerns arise: • Contaminant legacy: Historic sheep dips typically contain arsenic and organochlorines (DDT, dieldrin). These contaminants are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic to aquatic life. Mobilisation during earthworks poses a direct threat to taoka species and mahika kai safety. • Pathway to waterway: The Ecological report does not provide detailed pathway analysis showing how contaminants might migrate from HAIL sites to Silver Stream during earthworks or through groundwater. • Food safety implications: If legacy contaminants enter the waterway and accumulate in fish tissue, mahika kai gathered from the area may be rendered unsafe for consumption. This intergenerational impact is not addressed We note that plans have been prepared for HAIL sites and they are to be remediated before the inland port becomes operational.

Assessment: The potential impacts on mahika kai are significant due to culturally important species being recorded in an already-stressed environment, most notably tuna and kanakana. While mitigation measures may reduce the magnitude of effects, the residual risk of habitat degradation and contamination represents an ongoing threat to mahika kai values. This contrasts with the ecological report that concludes that with proposed mitigation measures, residual effects on freshwater ecology will be "Low" and acceptable

5.5.5 Impacts on Taoka Species

The ecological report was initially limited to "Freshwater Ecological Impact Assessment" - and focused on fish, macroinvertebrates, and water quality. Terrestrial ecology (birds, vegetation, lizards, invertebrates) was therefore outside its scope. This meant the ecological report did not assess impacts on taoka bird species or taoka plant species in any substantive way. However, with respect to plants, this must be considered in the context of the site being a rural site with vegetation typical of a farmed landscape.

Birds:

- Birds are mentioned only in passing within the generic EIANZ methodology framework (noting that habitat "may provide an important food source for fish and/or birds" and "may play an important part in the lifecycle of a species e.g. breeding or spawning locations for bird or fish species")
- The bird threat classification reference (Robertson et al., 2021) appears only in the bibliography

- No bird survey was undertaken
- No assessment of bird species present or impacts on birds

Plants/Vegetation:

- Riparian vegetation is described briefly (willows, alder - introduced species)
- Native planting of *Carex secta* is proposed as mitigation for stormwater swales and streambanks (200m²)
- The plant threat classification reference (de Lange et al., 2012) appears in the bibliography
- No assessment of impacts on plant species

The freshwater ecological report documents six fish species present in Whakaehu at the Three Mile Hill site, of which 69% of individuals were exotic (brown trout). Six species present compares with an average fish species diversity of 2.5 species per site across all Taiari sites, and an Otago average of is lower 4.83 species per site.

The potential impacts on taoka species, like those listed for mahika kai, include:

- Habitat destruction and modification through changes to the riparian zone and flow regime
- Sediment impacts on spawning and feeding habitat
- Temperature changes affecting species with specific thermal requirements
- Contaminant exposure affecting survival and reproduction
- Disruption of wildlife corridors through landscape modification

The ecological report proposes mitigation including temperature monitoring thresholds (maximum 3°C increase, maximum 25°C absolute), dissolved oxygen standards (7-day mean >7 mg/L, 1-day minimum >5 mg/L), and avoidance of in-stream works during the May-November spawning period.

These thresholds are based on general ecological guidelines rather than specific requirements of taoka species. There is no evidence that these thresholds are protective of kanakana, which as Nationally Vulnerable species with specific habitat requirements, may be more sensitive to environmental change. Adaptive management provisions could then include cultural triggers and Manawhenua involvement in determining responses.

We note that section 9.3 of the Construction Management Plan includes seasonal vegetation clearance restrictions, pre-earthworks nesting surveys, lizard management plans, and wildlife permits, which partially address the taoka species concerns of Otakou.

41. Overall scheme	Sensitivity High Scale High	The Ecological report identifies the fish species present in Whakaehu, all of which are taoka species listed in the NTCSA 1998 or part of customary fisheries recognised in the Sealord settlement. While their presence is acknowledged, their treatment in the assessment is limited from a cultural perspective. We note that a terrestrial ecological report was prepared after receipt of the draft TIA.
--------------------	---	---

Table 6: Ecological Report Observations re Taoka Species

Species	Ecological report observation	Cultural concern
Taiari flathead galaxias	Detected via eDNA only. Treated with caution as eDNA may drift from upstream. Listed as "Nationally Vulnerable".	Species is endemic to the Taiari catchment—found nowhere else in the world. This status warrants precautionary approach rather than dismissal due to detection method. No targeted survey undertaken to confirm presence/absence. Significance to Ngāi Tahu as endemic taoka not addressed.
Tuna (Longfin eel)	Identified as "At Risk – Declining". Residual impact assessed as "Low". Mitigation limited to timing of in-stream works to avoid spawning period.	No acknowledgement of tuna as primary mahika kai species. "Low" residual impact assessment inadequate for species facing extinction.
Kanakana (Lamprey)	Identified as "Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable". Mitigation focuses on avoiding spawning period (August–November) for in-stream works.	A critical issue (and uncertainty) centres on Kanakana larvae (ammocoetes) that remain buried in soft stream sediments for up to four years, making them highly vulnerable to sediment disturbance throughout the year, not just during spawning. The ecological report's focus on spawning timing misses this sensitive life stage. No larval survey was undertaken. No sediment disturbance protocols to protect kanakana are proposed. We note that the final ecological report does not recommend a larval survey or sediment disturbance protocols for kanakana.
Īnanga (Whitebait)	Identified as "At Risk – Declining". Noted as present in survey. Limited specific mitigation proposed.	No assessment of potential cumulative effect on downstream habitats. Effects from stormwater on migration uncertain but not addressed. Cultural significance as Īnaka (whitebait) and importance of whitebaiting in Lower Taiari to Ngāi Tahu and community not acknowledged.
Giant kōkopu	Identified as "At Risk – Declining". Migration timing noted. Generic mitigation measures proposed.	No assessment of specific habitat requirements (deep pools, undercut banks, woody debris). No assessment of riparian habitat loss. Taoka status not acknowledged.

Assessment: The presence of threatened taoka species in an environment already showing signs of degradation creates an elevated risk. The proposed mitigation measures provide a foundation for protection but require strengthening to ensure they are responsive to cultural values and mātauranga.

5.5.6 Impacts on Nohoaka (Camping Sites)

As documented in Part 2, camping beside Whakaehu continues, particularly in the upper reaches around Whare Flat. While the proposed development site is not itself a nohoaka location, the development has potential to affect the broader system of seasonal occupation and resource gathering that nohoaka represent:

- Degradation of water quality may affect downstream camping sites, although it is highly unlikely to impact camping at Te Nohoaka o Takiaua;

- Reduced mahika kai availability may diminish the purpose and viability of seasonal camping; and
- Industrial activity adjacent to Whakaehu may affect the experience of whānau using walking trails and recreation areas

Assessment: The indirect effects on nohoaka values are considered LOW contingent on the effectiveness of water quality and mahika kai protection measures.

5.5.7 Impacts on Ara (Trails)

Contemporary walkways along Whakaehu maintain the fundamental relationship between people and the landscape established by traditional ara. The proposed development may affect these connections through:

- Temporary loss of access during construction;
- Degraded experience on walkways due to visual, noise, and air quality impacts from industrial operations;
- Potential opportunities for enhanced connectivity if new walking/cycling infrastructure is provided; and
- The old Māori Track is noted in the technical reports but not investigated. No assessment of its historical use, cultural significance, or whether the development affects this taoka.

We note that the "old Māori Track" running alongside Whakaehu (described in section 3.8) is mentioned in passing in the final landscape report as a District Plan wāhi tūpuna value for the Taiari River — but that report does not address the old Māori Track alongside Whakaehu or assess trail impacts directly.

Assessment: Impacts on ara are considered to be LOW, with potential for positive outcomes through design and access provisions.

5.5.8 Impacts on Cultural Values

As established in Part 2, the cultural values of whakapapa, rakatirataka, mana, kaitiakitaka, manaakitaka, and whānau ora are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The proposed development engages each of these values:

Whakapapa - The development has the potential to disrupt the connections between whānau and places that have been maintained across generations. The transformation of rural land into industrial development, and the ongoing effects on Whakaehu, may diminish the capacity of this landscape to sustain the intergenerational transfer of mātauraka and the place-based experiences that define identity.

Rakatirataka - The Fast Track consenting pathway presents both opportunities and risks for rakatirataka. On one hand, the statutory requirements for iwi engagement and consideration of Treaty settlements create space for Manawhenua influence. On the other hand, the accelerated timeframes may limit the depth of engagement possible. The preparation of this TIA reflects the exercise of rakatirataka in assessing and responding to the proposal by Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou. The Southern Link Inland Port proposal raises significant concerns for the future exercise of rakatirataka by Ngāi Tahu across several interconnected dimensions.

- Constraints on decision-making authority over lands and waters in their takiwa- The port's development would fundamentally alter the character of the Taiari Plain, limiting Ngāi Tahu capacity to exercise rakatirataka over future land use decisions. Once industrial infrastructure of this scale is established, it creates path dependencies that constrain subsequent choices.
- Hydrological implications for mahika kai - The Taiari catchment's waterways support mahika kai practices central to Kāi Tahu cultural identity and customary rights affirmed through the Settlement Act. Port operations—including stormwater management, potential contaminant pathways, and altered drainage patterns—could compromise water quality and habitat connectivity. Degraded mahika kai undermines the material basis through which rakatirataka is practically expressed, transforming rights from living practices into historical grievances.
- Erosion of adaptation flexibility - Climate projections indicate the Taiari Plain faces increasing flood risk and groundwater challenges. Locking in major infrastructure reduces the adaptive capacity available to Kāi Tahu for responding to environmental change on their terms. Rakatirataka includes the authority to determine how communities adapt—whether through managed retreat, restoration, or transformation. The port would foreclose options that future generations might otherwise exercise.
- Precedent effects on co-governance - How this proposal proceeds will signal whether Treaty partnership genuinely shapes significant development decisions or merely provides a consultation checkbox. A process that proceeds without substantive Kāi Tahu consent weakens the precedent for meaningful co-governance across other domains where rakatirataka should apply.

Kaitiakitaka - Kaitiakitaka is an inherited obligation to maintain the mauri of te taiao. The proposed development places additional stress on a system already showing signs of degradation. The fulfilment of kaitiakitaka obligations requires that Manawhenua have an ongoing role in monitoring, adaptive management, and decision-making throughout the life of the development. The Southern Link Hub could create substantial constraints on future spatial planning across the Taiari Plain, establishing infrastructure and land use patterns that would shape development trajectories for generations.

- Major logistics infrastructure generates powerful gravitational pull on subsequent development. Once operational, the hub would attract freight-dependent industries, warehousing, and service providers seeking proximity advantages. This accumulation would progressively industrialise surrounding land, converting what remains predominantly agricultural and rural-residential into an expanding logistics precinct. Spatial planning would increasingly respond to the hub's operational requirements rather than community or environmental aspirations.
- Transport network reconfiguration - The hub necessitates significant roading upgrades—both those explicitly proposed and the incremental expansions that follow. Heavy vehicle movements would reshape traffic patterns across the plain, creating pressure for road widening, intersection upgrades, and potentially new arterial connections. These transport corridors become de facto development spines, channelling growth along routes optimised for freight rather than community connectivity or environmental sensitivity. The resulting network would embed assumptions about movement and access that persist long after alternative visions may become desirable.
- Foreclosure of alternative futures - The Taiari Plain currently retains unusual flexibility for a peri-urban landscape. Its productive soils, flood-adapted ecosystems, and relatively intact rural

character support multiple possible futures—from enhanced food production under climate pressures to wetland restoration and carbon sequestration, to planned residential growth that respects environmental constraints. The hub could eliminate some of these alternatives, committing the plain to an industrial-logistics trajectory that cannot easily be reversed.

- **Undermining integrated catchment management** - Effective spatial planning on the Taiari requires treating the plain as an integrated hydrological and ecological system. The hub fragments this coherence, introducing hard infrastructure into a landscape that may benefit from soft, adaptive responses to flooding, groundwater, and drainage. Future planning would contend with the challenge of managing environmental flows around immovable industrial assets.
- **Limiting climate adaptation pathways** - Perhaps most significantly, the hub may constrain how spatial planning can respond to climate change. The Taiari faces compounding risks—sea level rise affecting the lower plain, intensified rainfall increasing flood frequency, and changing groundwater dynamics. Adaptation options that might otherwise remain available—managed retreat from flood-prone areas, room for rivers, reconfigured drainage networks—become impractical when major infrastructure occupies key locations. Spatial planning loses the flexibility to respond proportionately to emerging climate realities.
- **Displacement of planning authority** - Large infrastructure projects shift the locus of planning power. Decisions that might otherwise rest with local communities and territorial authorities become influenced by the commercial imperatives of port operators, logistics companies, and central government agencies with stakes in freight efficiency. The hub's operational requirements would increasingly frame what spatial planning can and cannot contemplate, subtly displacing community-led visioning processes.

We note that the Construction Management Plan's roles and responsibilities table (section 4) makes no provision for a Manawhenua representative, cultural advisor, or kaitiaki monitors. The fortnightly project meetings (section 4.4) invite SLPL, contractors, sub-contractors, and environmental SQEPs — but not Manawhenua.

Mana - Mana is reflected in the health of their taiao. Development activities that degrade water quality, diminish taoka species populations, or compromise mahika kai cause environmental harm that, in turn, diminishes the mana of both the landscape and Manawhenua whose identity and standing are interwoven with it.

Manaakitaka - Manaakitaka depends upon healthy waterways, accessible mahika kai, and a cultural landscape that reflects the kaitiakitanga of Kāi Tahu. The proposed development has the potential to affect each of these foundations. The capacity of Manawhenua to fulfil obligations of care and hospitality toward whānau, communities and visitors may be compromised if the environmental foundations of manaakitaka are degraded.

Whānau Ora - The health and wellbeing of Kāi Tahu whānau is directly connected to the health of waterways, land, and ecosystems. Beyond the environmental effects discussed above, the operation of an inland port introduces potential impacts on air quality (diesel emissions, dust), noise, traffic, and amenity that may affect the wellbeing of whānau, particularly tamariki and kaumātua.

- **Economic benefits** - The port could create employment opportunities both during construction and operation, including logistics, warehousing, and transport jobs. It could attract related businesses and potentially boost the local economy. Whānau may benefit from these

opportunities. However, property values in the township might fluctuate - potentially declining near the port due to negative amenities, or increasing if economic opportunities are perceived as valuable.

- Social and cultural adverse impacts - The increased heavy vehicle movements would affect road safety and create noise disturbances, particularly problematic if operating 24/7. Community amenity could be significantly reduced through visual impacts, light pollution, and general industrial character.
- Infrastructure impacts - Local road networks will need upgrading to handle heavy freight volumes. There would be increased demand on water, sewerage, and power infrastructure. Emergency services might face additional demands, and there could be cumulative effects if combined with other developments in the area.

Noise

We note that the Construction Management Plan addresses construction noise limits (NZS 6803:1999), broadband reversing alarms, and specific requirements to minimise noise and lighting near the Stream Edge and Buffer zone (sections 8.4, 8.5, 9.8, 9.9).

Component of scheme	Sensitivity / scale	Comment/Issue(s) raised
42. Noise from trains at night will exceed guidelines at brief periods ⁶⁰	Sensitivity Medium Scale Very low	We note the shift from overnight to daytime rail movements as it significantly reduces the noise and disruption profile.
43. Future implications for residential development near railway line	Sensitivity Medium Scale Medium	Further residential developments in the area surrounding the railway line could be impacted from the rail movements to and from the inland port.

Traffic

The final Stantec Integrated Transport Assessment is a substantially more complete document than Otakou had access to when preparing the draft TIA.

- the intersection design gap is closed;
- the freight movement analysis is detailed;
- crash data is comprehensive; and
- the traffic volume projections are staged.

From a technical transport engineering perspective, most of the factual gaps have been filled. What remains unaddressed are the cultural framing issues Otakou have identified — the inadequacy of proportional traffic metrics when the existing baseline is already contested by whānau, the road safety concerns viewed through a lens of community wellbeing rather than crash statistics alone, and the downstream effects on community use of Stedman Road and Wingatui Road for recreation access.

⁶⁰ Marshall Day Acoustics Memo Mm 002, dated 3 December 2025, pg 1 and 6.

Component of scheme	Sensitivity / scale	Comment/Issue(s) raised
44.. Increase in heavy vehicle movements on Gordon Road (Main street of Mosgiel township) and Dukes Road North	Sensitivity High Scale High	Once the Logistics Park is fully developed it will see an increase of truck movements along SH87 (Gordon Road) which is the main road within the Mosgiel township. It states this will see an increase per day in about 150 movements but they have stated this will not have a noticeable effect on road network. This in show below: <i>However, as future stages of the logistics park will accommodate the existing Strathallan container depot activities and other freight operators, there will be a gradual increase in truck volumes on Gordon Road. At full development of the site, heavy vehicle movement volumes on Gordon Road could increase by up to 39,000 movements per annum compared with the current situation. This represents an average daily increase of about 150 heavy vehicle movements per day. Since Gordon Road currently carries over 15,000 vehicles per day, this increase will not contribute to a noticeable effect of the operation of the road network.</i>⁶¹ <i>"The Logistics Park will consolidate multiple freight handling facilities on one site which will remove truck movements from the local road network in central Dunedin but will create an additional demand for truck movements on SH87 to access the park from SH1."</i>⁶² <i>"At full development, the Logistics Park is expected to generate about 230 truck movements per day at the site entrance and about 150 truck movements per day on SH87."</i>⁶³ The main street (Gordon Road) of Mosgiel Township contains many business (including Woolworths Supermarket, many small to medium businesses) and community infrastructure (including Te Puna o Whakaehu – new Mosgiel Pool, entrance to Memorial park sportsground). Also, where Gordon Road meets Gladstone Road North this intersection can be busy at peak times as it can act as a bottleneck for traffic entering and exiting Mosgiel. The logistics park will have its entrance on to Dukes Road North. This will lead to an increase in vehicle movements as well. As shown below: <i>"Following full development of the Logistics Park, average daily heavy vehicle volumes on Dukes Road North close to the site entrance could increase by about 230 vpd."</i>⁶⁴ This will also see upgrades required along Dukes Road North from Stedman Road to Logistics Park entrance to accommodate this volume of heavy vehicles. This is shown below: <i>"The section of Dukes Road North between Stedman Road and the Logistics Park entrance location is currently formed to rural road standard and will need upgrading to accommodate the higher volume of heavy vehicles that will use the road. It is recommended that the carriageway is widened and that provision for a right turn bay is made. A concept design of an entry road into the proposed freight hub shows</i>

⁶¹ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Executive summary, IV

⁶² Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 42

⁶³ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 42

⁶⁴ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 43

		road widening on the southern side to accommodate the inclusion of a full right-turn bay.”⁶⁵ Within the Integrated Transport Assessment there is an appendix heading for the “Appendix E Dukes Road North Intersection Design”⁶⁶. There is no more information here except for the heading. It also mentions within the Integrated Transport Assessment that the increase in truck volumes along Gordon Road could reduce if freight services are established to the south. As shown below: <i>“Truck volumes using Gordon Road (SH87) will increase by about 150 per day when the Logistics Park is fully developed. This would reduce if train freight services are established to and from the south.”</i>⁶⁷ This assessment of truck numbers fails to recognise that whānau in Mosgiel may not accept the current level of trucks going through Mosgiel, so the extra number becomes irrelevant in terms of assessing impact. We note that in the updated Integrated Transport Assessment has substantially strengthened its evidence base here. Section 5 contains detailed per-site freight movement breakdowns for all five Dynes/Icon operating sites, and Section 7 provides staged truck volume projections through Tables 7-2 to 7-5. The core conclusion remains the same — around 150 additional HCV movements per day on SH87 at full development, characterised as about 1% of existing traffic. Critically, the previously empty "Appendix E Dukes Road North Intersection Design" that we originally flagged has been replaced by a full Appendix C with actual engineering drawings showing the road widening and right-turn bay configuration. That was a significant gap in the earlier version and it's now closed. However, the concern is that whānau may not accept the current level of trucks through Mosgiel — making the "only 1% more" framing culturally inadequate. The ITA still frames the impact purely in proportional traffic engineering terms.
45. Road safety impacts from increase in heavy truck movements along Gordon Road	Sensitivity High Scale High	With the increase in heavy vehicle movements along Gordon Road, the type of vehicles (heavy) and this being the main street of Mosgiel there is potential for increased risk of crashes which could cause serious or fatal injuries. This is shown below: <i>“One of the concerns with the development of the freight hub is truck movements on Gordon Road (SH87) to access the Site. Within Mosgiel, SH87 has been formed to an urban standard with on-street parking permitted on each side of the road and wide footpaths. As part of the state highway network, Gordon Road is expected to provide for freight movement and also represents the only practical route for freight between SH1 and the Mosgiel industrial area on Dukes Road North. The primary safety concern with heavy vehicle movements within an urban centre is the increased risk of a crash involving a vulnerable road user because of the more restricted visibility available to truck drivers. Any crashes involving vulnerable road users have a greater likelihood of causing serious or fatal injuries.”</i>⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 43

⁶⁶ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. E-14

⁶⁷ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 47

⁶⁸ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 43

		The updated Integrated Transport Assessment now has a dedicated Section 6 with five-year crash analysis (2020–2024), Personal and Collective Risk mapping from NZTA MegaMaps, and a filtered analysis of HCV-involved crashes (Table 8-1 — three non-injury crashes). It notes no crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists with heavy vehicles in the period and argues that through-traffic (not turning) represents lower crash risk. This is a more robust evidence base than was available previously. That said, the assessment still does not engage with the cultural dimension of road safety risk — the concern Otakou raises about how increased HCV exposure affects the sense of safety and wellbeing for whānau using the main street of their township, including tamariki and kaumātua.
46. Road safety issues on Stedman Rd and Wingatui Road - Increase in use of roads from Logistics park staff traveling to and from work	Sensitivity High Scale High	With the development of the Logistics Park there will be an increase in movement of staff to and from there worksite. There is mention of the need for upgrades to footpaths and a new pedestrian crossing which will require Kiwirail approval. This is shown below: <i>“The most practical route will be via Wingatui Road and the southern end of Stedman Road. New footpaths on Stedman Road and Dukes Road North east of Stedman Road would be required to separate pedestrian movement from vehicle movements. A new section of footpath on Dukes Road North to connect with the site entrance will require a new pedestrian level crossing adjacent to the existing road level crossing. This will require Kiwirail approval.”⁶⁹</i> <i>“Since there are no footpaths on the southern section of Stedman Road, providing for safe pedestrian movements would require a new path. This would improve safety and the attractiveness of walking as a travel mode for any workers based in the wider industrial area. The path network on Dukes Road North would need to be extended from Stedman Road to the main entrance to the Logistics Park to meet active travel demands for workers based in the Logistics Park. It is considered that safe access for active mode users can be provided to the Site and that the Site itself can also appropriately provide for such provisions.”⁷⁰</i> These roads (Wingatui Road and Stedman Road) are also used by the community. The walking track / cycleway along the Silverstream ends at Wingatui Rd Bridge (carpark). A parking area / Entry point to Silverstream is also located along Stedman Road near the railway bridge (this area connects to a Silverstream walking track upstream). The parking area / entry point to Whakaehu is noted within the Integrated Transport Assessment. As shown below: <i>“There is an existing unpaved, informal path under the rail line (Figure 9-1 and Figure 9-2) which could provide access to the southern side of the site. This option has been discounted because it would lead directly into operational areas of the Logistics Park which would create a high risk for pedestrian or cycle movement.”⁷¹</i> We note from the Integrated Transport Assessment includes section 8.5 which discusses active modes and SLPL's commitment to working

⁶⁹ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 44

⁷⁰ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 45

⁷¹ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 45

		collaboratively with DCC Transport on footpath provision from Stedman Road to the site entrance. There's a notable shift from the earlier version of the report that we quoted in our draft TIA: the earlier document mentioned needing a "new pedestrian level crossing adjacent to the existing road level crossing" requiring KiwiRail approval. The updated ITA instead discusses a footpath crossing an "egress-only driveway" controlled by a security barrier, characterising the conflict risk as "negligible." The need for a pedestrian rail crossing appears to have been designed out or dropped. But the point Otakou raise about community use of these roads — the Whakaehu walking track access off Wingatui Road, the parking area near the Stedman Road railway bridge — is acknowledged in the ITA's description of the informal path under the rail line (Section 9.2.1), but the broader community recreation impact is not assessed.
47. Railway crossings safety improvements	Sensitivity Medium Scale Low	The inland port will lead to additional rail movements on the rail network. These rail movements will likely be at night and consist of two additional movement which could increase to two in the long term. This is shown below: <i>"The operation of the additional rail services to service the logistics hub is expected to involve two train movements per day, one in each direction between Port Chalmers and the site. Kiwirail have indicated that the rail network has ample capacity for this. It is understood that the train movements will typically be scheduled overnight to reduce the effects on the road network."</i>⁷² <i>"The operation of the additional rail services to service the logistics hub is expected to require two train movements per day initially with the potential for this to increase to four in the long term."</i>⁷³ There will be an impact on some of the railway's crossings within the area. This will be caused by increase in rail movements and from traffic increases from those using the inland port. This is shown below: <i>" This will have a small effect on Mosgiel road users on Factory Road and Gladstone Road as trains traverse the level crossings. Although the existing number of train movements is low (10 per day) and traffic volumes on these roads are also low, this will result in some increase delay for a small number of road users. The Logistics Park will not increase the number of train movements at the Dukes Road level crossing but there will be a higher volume of traffic using the crossing."</i>⁷⁴ With the increase in use of the railway crossings within Mosgiel it may require further consultation with Kiwirail and a more detailed assessment to determine with any safety improvements are required. This is shown below: <i>"Overall, since there will be greater use of the rail level crossings within the Mosgiel area generally either due to more trains or more vehicles, it will be necessary to consult with Kiwirail to confirm whether a more detailed Level Crossing Safety Impact Assessment (LCSIA) is required</i>

⁷² Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 44

⁷³ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 44

⁷⁴ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 44

		<i>at each of the crossings to determine whether any safety improvements are necessary.”⁷⁵</i> There's a significant change in the stated timing of rail movements. The final Integrated Transport Assessment now states that "SLPL has advised that train movements will occur during daytime operating hours." Section 8.6 quantifies the effect — about 90 seconds per crossing closure, affecting approximately 6 vehicles on Factory Road and 3 on Gladstone Road during peak periods, with average delay changes of less than one second per road user. The updated report concludes that "changes in the safety rating scores is not sufficient to warrant alterations to the existing level crossing infrastructure." However, Otakou's point about the need for an LCSIA (Level Crossing Safety Impact Assessment) in consultation with KiwiRail — which was flagged in the earlier transport document itself — is not explicitly resolved. The updated ITA frames this as "understood" rather than confirmed through a formal assessment. Otakou also noted the potential for long-term increase to four rail movements per day; the updated ITA only discusses two.
--	--	--

5.6 Cumulative Effects Assessment

The proposed development must be assessed in the context of cumulative effects on the Taiari system. The Lower Taiari Plain has already experienced significant cultural loss:

- The draining of lakes and wetlands - losses that Manawhenua will grieve forever
- Channelisation and modification of waterways including Whakaehu
- Ongoing decline in water quality and macroinvertebrate communities (below National Bottom Line at Taiari Depot)
- Decline in mahika kai populations including longfin tuna (At Risk-Declining) and kanakana (Nationally Vulnerable)
- Industrial development already present adjacent to the site

The proposed inland port adds to these cumulative pressures. While the FEclA concludes that residual effects with mitigation would be LOW (less than minor), this assessment is based on ecological criteria and does not fully account for:

- The cultural significance of avoiding further degradation of an already-compromised system;
- The precautionary approach required when taoka species are present;
- The downstream effects on the Taiari Waipouri system; and
- The intergenerational timeframe over which cultural effects accumulate.

Assessment: The cumulative effects on cultural values are considered to be LOW - MODERATE. While individual impacts may be mitigated to varying degrees, the fundamental transformation of the 40ha of an already modified landscape and ongoing pressures on ecological systems represent a permanent change in the capacity of this place to sustain cultural values.

⁷⁵ Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. Pg 44

5.7 What is missing from the assessments

A consideration that potentially impacts rakatirataka, kaitiakitaka, whānau ora, and manaakitaka is how and to what extent the inland port development could constrain the development of Taiari climate change adaptation plans.

The concept of restricting future adaptation due to “locking-in” infrastructure - The risk of lock-in, where infrastructure investments made today limit future flexibility. Large-scale, capital-intensive developments with 50–100 year design lives can effectively “freeze” land use patterns, drainage systems, and transport corridors in ways that may prove problematic as climate impacts intensify.

1. Flood Protection Prioritisation - Once a nationally significant freight hub is operational, the political and economic decisions around flood protection could shift dramatically. If a flood bank fails, it could inundate thousands of hectares of settlements, highly productive agricultural land and possibly even Dunedin International Airport. Adding a major inland port to the list of protected assets may create even stronger imperatives to defend the existing flood scheme in the upper valley rather than consider alternatives. This matters because some climate adaptation pathways for the Taiari might involve:

- Allowing certain areas to flood more frequently as natural detention;
- Relocating flood storage ponds or expanding ponding areas;
- Managed realignment of flood defences; and
- Strategic retreat from the most vulnerable zones

A freight hub generating significant employment and export revenue becomes politically “too important to flood,” potentially requiring ever-larger investments in hard engineering defences rather than more flexible, nature-based solutions.

2. Drainage Infrastructure Lock-In - Whakaehu is a significant tributary of the Lower Taiari River which has been modified by engineering works to provide flood protection to the lower Taiari. The Southern Link development will be designed with adequate drainage infrastructure—culverts, pumps, stormwater detention—designed around current conditions and near-term projections. For Taiari residents, this could mean drainage priorities increasingly oriented toward protecting industrial assets rather than residential areas, particularly if ratepayer funds are limited.
3. Transport Corridor Constraints - The Mosgiel-Taiari Community Board offered conditional support on the basis that the heavy traffic bypass for Mosgiel was dealt with at the same time, but NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi has already signalled it does not support funding a heavy traffic bypass. If the inland port proceeds without the bypass, Mosgiel's main street becomes even more embedded as a freight corridor. This constrains adaptation options that could involve:
 - Redesigning Gordon Road for pedestrian safety and urban amenity
 - Creating green corridors for urban stormwater management

- Enabling residential intensification in Mosgiel as part of climate-driven population shifts

The community risks becoming hostage to freight movements it didn't choose, with limited ability to reshape its urban form in response to changing conditions.

4. Land Use Zoning Rigidity - There are large tracts of flat industrial land available close to the North Taieri location for the inland port, and it can be expected that several other significant players will also relocate to the area once the inland port is established.

Industrial zoning once established, is difficult to reverse. The clustering effect around the port could see progressive conversion of rural and semi-rural land to industrial use. This reduces:

- Available land for managed retreat of residential development from high-risk zones;
- Agricultural buffer areas that might otherwise absorb flood waters;
- Green space for nature-based adaptation solutions; and
- Community options for relocating amenities or services away from flood hazard areas

5. Insurance and Property Value Dynamics - A major industrial development could distort local property markets in ways that complicate household-level adaptation. If the inland port succeeds, nearby residential areas may see property values rise due to employment proximity—even if flood risk is simultaneously increasing. This risks creating perverse incentives:

- Homeowners have financial reasons to stay in increasingly risky locations;
- Higher property values make buyout schemes more expensive for councils; and
- The "winners" from development (property value gains) may not be the same households as the "losers".

Conversely, if the port intensifies traffic or industrial nuisance, some residential areas may see values fall, trapping lower-income households in high-risk locations without the capital to relocate.

6. Groundwater and Aquifer Impacts - Large-scale industrial development typically involves significant impervious surfaces (hardstand, roofing, roads) that alter groundwater recharge patterns. For Taieri residents this could constrain adaptation options that depend on maintaining aquifer health—such as drought resilience or managing soil moisture during increasingly variable rainfall.
7. Rail Corridor Inflexibility - The loan from the Regional Infrastructure Fund to Southern Link Property and KiwiRail would allow a three-track rail-siding to be built, connecting Port Chalmers to the Mosgiel hub.

Rail infrastructure is among the most inflexible of all—it cannot be easily moved, and the corridor it occupies becomes effectively permanent. Water ponding has occurred behind the Taiari Gorge Railway during flood events. Expanding rail infrastructure in flood-prone areas risks creating:

- Barriers to flood flow that may exacerbate ponding elsewhere;
- Corridors that must be defended at all costs, regardless of broader adaptation logic; and
- Fixed assets that constrain future realignment of flood defences

Perhaps most importantly, the constraints on adaptation will not fall evenly across the community. Those with fewer resources to adapt independently may find their options most constrained:

- Renters in areas subject to increased flood risk or traffic impacts;
- Lower-income homeowners unable to afford flood-proofing or relocation;
- Elderly residents with limited mobility or capacity to advocate for their interests; and
- Manawhenua whose relationship with the Taiari awa may be affected by decisions made to protect industrial assets

Those who benefit from the development may be better positioned to adapt:

- Business owners and employees with stable incomes from port-related work
- Property owners in areas that benefit from industrial activity without bearing flood costs
- Logistics companies with the capital to adapt their operations

This lopsidedness — where the benefits of development accrue to some while the adaptation constraints fall on others—is a concern for Ōtākou.

Assessment: While climate adaptation planning is primarily a role for local government, it must be recognised that the inland port will have flow on impacts. It is essential the Ōtakou is an active partner in future discussions with local government about planning for climate change for the future of the Taiari Plain.

5.8 Identifying effects of major significance

We use a matrix to combine sensitivity and scale of impact to assign a level of significance. The matrix is set out below as Table 7.

Table 7: A Matrix integrating sensitivity and scale of impact ratings

Scale of impact	Sensitivity of taoka / value			
	Very high	High	Medium	Low
High benefit	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
Medium benefit	Major	Moderate	Minor	Very minor
Low benefit	Moderate	Minor	Very minor	Very minor
Very low benefit	Minor	Very minor	Negligible	Negligible
Neutral / none	Neutral / nil	Neutral / nil	Neutral / nil	Neutral / nil
Very low adverse	Minor	Very minor	Negligible	Negligible
Low Adverse	Moderate	Minor	Very minor	Very minor
Medium adverse	Major	Moderate	Minor	Very minor
High adverse	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor

In Table 8 we take each of the impacts identified in the tables in section 5.5 above and assign them a level of significance

Table 8: Identifying the significance of impacts

Scale of impact	Sensitivity of taoka / value			
	Very high	High	Medium	Low
High benefit	Benefits are described in section 5.5.1			
Medium benefit				
Low benefit				
Very low benefit				
Neutral / none				
Very low adverse			Negligible 42	
Low Adverse		Minor 1, 5, 7, 9, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 28, 29, 33, 36, 40, 43	Very minor 47	
Medium adverse		Moderate 2, 6, 8, 10, 18, 26, 27, 35, 37		
High adverse		Major 32, 34, 38, 39, 41, 44, 45, 46		

Impacts that are not assessed as the scale is classed as “Unknown” are – 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15, 21, 22, 25, 30, 31⁷⁶

5.9 Proposed Mitigation

The technical reports all propose a suite of mitigation measures to address ecological impacts. The analysis in Table 9 examines whether the mitigation measures proposed for the Southern Link Inland Port development adequately protect the cultural values and address the issues identified in the Treaty Impact Assessment (TIA). The proposed development involves transforming approximately 40 hectares of rural land on the Lower Taieri into an industrial freight hub.

Overall, the proposed mitigation measures address many technical and environmental concerns through conventional engineering solutions. However, the mitigation package contains significant gaps when assessed against the cultural values, Treaty settlement obligations, and the recognition of rakatirataka and kaitiakitaka that the TIA identifies as central to Ngāi Tahu interests in this rohe.

The fundamental concern articulated in this TIA — that ecological mitigation does not equate to cultural acceptability —is not adequately addressed by the current mitigation framework. While technical measures may reduce environmental harm, they do not restore, enhance, or protect the mauri of Whakaehu, the mahika kai practices of whānau, or the intergenerational responsibilities that flow from whakapapa to this whenua.

Table 9: Summary of Mitigation Adequacy by Cultural Value Domain

Cultural Value Domain	Adequacy Rating	Key Gap
Wāhi Tupuna	Partially Adequate	Limited recognition of cultural narratives and some named places
Wai Māori	Partially Adequate	Ecological metrics only; no cultural assessment
Mahika Kai	Partially Adequate	No kanakana protection; no mahika kai practice assessment
Whānau Ora	Partially Adequate	Assumptions about traffic movements in Mosgiel challenged.
Treaty Partnership	Partially adequate	No governance framework is in place but discussions between the partners are occurring.

5.9.1 Wāhi Tupuna

Chapter 3 identifies this landscape as imbued with the narrative of the taniwha Matamata, whose search for his master Te Rakitauneke created the Whakaehu (Silverstream). Named places including Wai-pōtaka, Te Konika o Matamata, Te Korikori o Matamata, Pukemakamaka and Turimakamaka carry cultural significance. Mauka Atua (Saddle Hill) holds statutory protection as a

⁷⁶ To reiterate, the uncertainty arises because a number of design decisions are still to be finalised.

tōpuni site under Schedule 84 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (NTCSA). The TIA rates landscape impacts as HIGH sensitivity and HIGH scale.

Adequacy Assessment

The updated landscape report has clearly been revised in response to the draft TIA.

Section 5.5.2 of this TIA identifies the wāhi tūpuna impact as high sensitivity / high scale overall, concluding that the effect "cannot be fully mitigated but may be partially offset through design measures and cultural recognition." The landscape report's overall conclusion — adverse / moderate (more than minor) — is calibrated against rural character values, not cultural landscape values. Moore explicitly defers to mana whenua on cultural effects, which is appropriate from a professional standpoint, but it means the landscape report does not actually rate effects on wāhi tūpuna at all. The concern of Otakou is that this deferral, combined with the "moderate" rural character rating, risks understating the overall significance of landscape effects when the application is assessed by the Expert Panel under the Fast Track Act.

The inclusion of the cultural landscape context and feature-by-feature effects table is a substantial improvement. However, several wāhi tūpuna identified in the TIA remain unaddressed, and the fundamental critique — that visual/aesthetic mitigation cannot address the cultural harm of transforming ancestral landscape — is acknowledged but not resolved within the landscape assessment framework — hence the mitigation adequacy rating of partially adequate.

5.9.2. Wai Māori (Freshwater)

The TIA identifies the mauri (life force) of Whakaehu as central to cultural values. Whakaehu flows to the Taieri-Waipōuri system.

Key concerns identified:

- Stormwater: 257,600m³/year runoff (3.7% of Whakaehu median annual flow)
- Contaminants: heavy metals, hydrocarbons, sediments from 40ha industrial surfaces
- HAIL sites present: sheep dip, vehicle workshop, army barracks, railway line
- TIA explicitly states: "even treated stormwater represents ongoing alteration to natural state"
- Construction sediment risk rated HIGH without mitigation

Adequacy Assessment

PARTIALLY ADEQUATE FOR ECOLOGICAL OUTCOMES; INADEQUATE FOR CULTURAL OUTCOMES. The stormwater treatment plan represents good engineering practice and will reduce contaminant loads. However, several gaps exist:

1. Health of the waterway not addressed: The mitigation focuses entirely on reducing harm rather than protecting or restoring the health of Whakaehu. No mechanism exists for Manawhenua to assess the state of Whakaehu.
2. UPTs are essential: The most effective treatment technology (Universal Pollutant Traps) is described as "optional." Given the TIA's rating for construction sediment risk and the already-degraded receiving environment (below National Bottom Line), UPTs should be mandatory.

3. Cumulative Effects: The mitigation does not address the TIA's concern about cumulative effects on an already-stressed system. Adding treated stormwater to a waterway already below ecological thresholds cannot be fully mitigated by treatment alone.
4. No Cultural Monitoring Framework: Monitoring is limited to ecological parameters (macroinvertebrates, temperature, dissolved oxygen). No provision exists for Ngāi Tahu cultural health assessment tools or for manawhenua participation in monitoring.

5.9.3. Mahika Kai and Taoka Species

The TIA identifies 40 taoka species in the Taiari catchment protected under Schedule 97 of NTCSA 1998. Tuna (longfin eel) is classified as at-risk, and kanakana (lamprey) populations are declining. Whakaehu has the highest fish diversity in the catchment (6 species recorded).

Adequacy Assessment

The final freshwater ecological report still concludes that residual effects with mitigation are "Low" or "less than minor" — exactly the conclusion Otakou challenged as being based on ecological criteria that don't account for cultural significance, the precautionary approach, or intergenerational timeframes.

The final report does include incremental technical improvements — better erosion controls, expanded water quality parameters, and more structured reporting to ORC. But they don't engage with the fundamental critique at the heart of Chapter 5 of the TIA: that the ecological assessment framework itself is insufficient because it was not designed to assess cultural interests, doesn't capture the holistic health of the waterway as understood by Manawhenua, and doesn't account for the Treaty settlement obligations that attach to these species and this catchment. The gap between what Otakou seeks and what the freshwater report provides remains significant.

PARTIALLY ADEQUATE. The spawning period avoidance and fish salvage measures are appropriate. However, critical gaps remain:

1. Kanakana Habitat: Despite the TIA identifying direct threat to kanakana habitat from outfall construction, no specific kanakana habitat protection or enhancement measures are proposed. This is a significant omission given kanakana's cultural importance and declining populations.
2. Gathering: The mitigation focuses on species survival rather than mahika kai practice. No assessment of how the development affects the ability of whānau to continue customary harvest. No offset or enhancement of mahika kai opportunities elsewhere in the catchment.
3. Riparian Planting Scale: The riparian planting is modest relative to the 40ha development footprint. No net gain principle is articulated.
4. Monitoring Gaps: Monitoring is limited to ecological indicators. No monitoring of taoka species populations specifically. No assessment of mahika kai values or cultural harvest indicators.
5. Treaty Settlement Obligations: This TIA identifies that Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 obligations are engaged. The mitigation package does not demonstrate how these obligations are being met.

5.9.4. Whānau Ora (Community Wellbeing)

The TIA identifies concerns about traffic (truck movements through Mosgiel), noise impacts on rural residential receivers, and lighting impacts on dark sky values and wildlife.

Adequacy Assessment

PARTIALLY ADEQUATE. The lighting mitigation is comprehensive and represents best practice for dark sky and wildlife protection. Traffic improvements will benefit Dunedin. The road-to-rail modal shift is a positive outcome. We must also note that whānau may benefit through employment etc.

Remaining concerns:

- The traffic assessment assumes that the increased traffic in Mosgiel will be acceptable. Traffic was the main issue raised when preparing the TIA.
- Removal of acoustic bund at Stage 3 may expose receivers to increased noise as operations expand
- Rail movement restrictions noted as "potential consent conditions" rather than committed mitigation

5.9.5 Treaty Partnership and Rakatirataka

We must start by acknowledging the relationship between Port Otago and the runaka. But the port represents new infrastructure, in a new location, with new partners.

The TIA identifies the need for recognition of rakatirataka (chiefly authority) and kaitiakitaka (guardianship obligations) as fundamental to appropriate development in this takiwa.

The Construction Management Plan treats Manawhenua as one stakeholder among many rather than as the Treaty partner with rakatirataka, provides no role for cultural monitoring or governance, and frames all management actions through Western environmental management paradigms.

Adequacy Assessment -

PARTIALLY ADEQUATE. This represents a significant gap in the mitigation framework. The absence of structural recognition of Manawhenua roles undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of all other mitigation measures.

5.9.6. Conclusions

The mitigation measures represent a conventional engineering response to development impacts. While many measures reflect current best practice for environmental management, the package is **not adequate** to protect the cultural values and address the issues identified in this Treaty Impact Assessment.

The fundamental shortcoming is the treatment of cultural impacts as an extension of environmental impacts. This TIA explicitly states that ecological mitigation does not equate to cultural mitigation. The current mitigation framework does not operationalize this distinction.

Table 10: Adequacy of Mitigation

Value Domain	Technical Mitigation	Cultural Mitigation	Overall Assessment
Wāhi Tupuna	Adequate	Inadequate	Partially Adequate
Wai Māori	Adequate (if UPTs mandatory)	Inadequate	Partially Adequate
Mahika Kai	Partially Adequate	Inadequate	Partially Adequate
Whānau Ora	Adequate	Not addressed	Partially Adequate
Treaty Partnership	-	-	Partially adequate

5.11 Conclusion

The proposed Southern Link Inland Port will result in cultural impacts across multiple areas including wāhi tupuna, wai, mahika kai, taoka species, and the broader cultural values of whakapapa, rakatirataka, mana, kaitiakitaka, manaakitaka, and whānau ora.

The mitigation measures proposed in the reports are comprehensive and provide a foundation for managing effects. However, from a cultural perspective, these measures require enhancement.

The acceptability of the proposal to Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou will ultimately depend on:

- The final decisions of the Southern Link Partners especially with respect to the design of wastewater and stormwater systems.
- The commitment of Southern Link partners to implement a full suite of proposed and additional mitigation measures;
- The incorporation of appropriate conditions into any consent granted;
- The establishment of genuine partnership arrangements for the ongoing management of cultural effects;
- Recognition that this assessment represents the position of Manawhenua at a point in time, and that the TIA is a living document that may be updated as discussions progress

This TIA has been prepared to assist Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou in exercising their rakatirataka in relation to the proposed development. The assessment reflects the cultural values, interests, and associations documented in Part 2, evaluated within the Treaty and legal framework established in Part 3. Any development proposal must genuinely engage with these cultural values and recognise the rakatirataka of Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou.

We acknowledge that at the time of finalising this TIA, discussions are continuing between SLPL and Manawhenua.

Glossary

Ahi kaa	Continued occupation according to traditional law of Māori tenure ('keeping the fires burning').
Ara Tawhito	Ancient Trails.
Atua	God, supernatural being.
Galaxias	Native fish species.
Hapū	Sub-tribe, extended whānau.
Heritage Order	provision made within a district plan to give effect to a requirement made by a heritage protection authority under s.189 or s.189A of the RMA-91.
Hikoi	Journey.
Hui	Meeting, assembly.
Inanga/Inaka	A variety of whitebait; also a variety of pounamu.
Iwi	Tribes.
Iwi authority	The authority which represents an iwi and which is recognised by that iwi as having the authority to do so.
Kai Tahu	Descendants of Tahu, the tribe.
Kāi Tahu ki Otago	The four Papatipu Rūnaka and associated whānau and rūpū of the Otago Region.
Kai Tahu Whānui	The collective of the individuals who descend from one or more of the of the five primary hapū of Kai Tahu, Kāti Mamoe and Waitaha.
Kāika/Kainga nohoaka	Place of residence.
Kaitiaki	Guardian.
Kaitiakitaka	The exercise of customary custodianship, in a manner that incorporates spiritual matters, by tangata whenua who hold Manawhenua status for particular area or resource.
Kanohi ki te Kanohi	Eye to eye or face to face.
Karakia	Prayer, incantation.
Kaumatua	Respected elder.
Kawanataka	Governance.
Kawenata	Covenant.
Ki Uta Ki Tai	Mountains to the Sea.
Koiwi Takata	Human skeletal remains.
Kōrero tuku iho	Discussion of creation
Mahika Kai	Places where food is produced or procured.
Mana	Authority, prestige, influence.
Mana Whenua	Customary authority or rakatirataka exercised by an iwi or hapū in an identified area.
Manaaki	Show kindness to, look after, entertain.
Manawhenua	Those who exercise customary authority or rakatirataka.
Marae	Courtyard, meeting place for tangata whenua.
Matauraka Maori	Maori knowledge
Mauri	Essential life force or principle; a metaphysical quality inherent in all things both animate and inanimate. (Kai Tahu Fresh Water Policy)
Mauka	Mountain.
Mokopuna	Grandchild, descendant.
Papatipu Rūnaka	Traditional Rūnaka.
Papatuanuku	Earth mother.
Pou	Post.
Pūrākau	Stories.
Rakatira	Chief.
Rakatirataka	Chieftanship, decision-making rights.
Rohe	Boundary.
Rōpū	Group.

Rūnaka	Local representative group or community system of representation.
Takaroa	Deity of the sea.
Takata	Person.
Takatawhenua	The iwi or hapū that holds mana whenua in a particular area.
Takiwā	Area, region, district.
Taoka	Treasure.
Taoka Tuku Iho	Treasure handed down from the ancestors.
Tapu	Sacred.
Te Ao Tūroa	The natural environment.
Tiaki	Guardianship.
Tikaka	Lore and custom.
Tikaka	Customary values and practices.
Tino Rakatirataka	Full chiefly authority.
Tupuna/tipuna	Ancestor.
Turangawaewae	Place of belonging through ancestral rights linked to land, place to stand.
Wahi Ingoa	Placenames.
Wāhi Taoka	Resources, places and sites treasured by Manawhenua.
Wāhi Tapu	Places sacred to tangata whenua.
Wairua	Life principle, spirit.
Wananga	Customary learning method.
Wai maori	Water in a river, stream, lake, pond, wetland, estuary or aquifer, or any part thereof, including land water margins, beds and banks which the mauri of the waterway is reliant on.
Whakapapa	Genealogy.
Whakatauki	Proverb, saying.
Whānau	Family.
Whānau ora	The health and wellbeing of families
Whānui	Large, extended, broad.
Whenua	Land.

Reference list

Beattie J.H. (1994). *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Māori*: The Otago University Museum Ethnological Project, 1920. Anderson A (ed) University of Otago Press in association with Otago Museum.

Dunedin City Council (April 2024) *Dunedin Future Development Strategy 2024-2054*

Dunedin City Council - DCC feedback following presentation. (Pre application advice). Karen Bain Associate Senior Planner, 20 February 2025

Dunedin City Council *Wastewater treatment plants* Retrieved from <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/services/wastewater/wastewater-treatment-plants>

E3 Scientific, 2025, *Southern Link Inland Port, Freshwater Ecological Impact Assessment A* report prepared for Southern Link Partners.

Ellison, M *Cultural Narrative Taiari College* prepared for Aukaha Ltd

Ellison, M *Cultural Narrative Fairfield School* prepared for Aukaha Ltd

Goldsmith, M (June 2023) *Climate Change Impacts And Risks Taiari River Catchment A* compilation of current research to support local decision making, GHC Consulting. A report prepared for the Department of Conservation

Jolly D. (2018). *The potential of Cultural Impact Assessment: How far have we come?* (Impact Connector 5). NZAIA. <https://www.nzaia.org.nz/dyanna-jolly.html>

Kai Tahu Ki Otago Ltd (2005) *Kai Tahu Ki Otago Natural Resource Management Plan*.

Marshall Day Acoustics Memo Mm 002, dated 3 December 2025

Moora Mike (7 January 2026) *Proposed Southern Link Inland Port, Mosgiel Landscape and Natural Character Effects Assessment A* report prepared for Southern Link Partners.

Otago Daily Times “Name for new Mosgiel Pool announced” Friday, 27 January 2023

Otago Regional Council *Taiari / Taiari FMU* accessed from orc.govt.nz

Pederson Read (16 December 2025) - *Port Otago Inland Port Application Assessment Of Environmental Effects (Lighting)*. A report prepared for Southern Link Partners.

Ruckstuhl, K., Thompson-Fawcett, M., and H. Rae 2014. *Māori and mining: Indigenous perspectives on reconceptualising and contextualising the social license to operate*. Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal 32(4): 304-314.

Ryder and Tocher (2020). *Review of Values, Freshwater Restoration Programmes and Research Needs Within the Taiari Catchment* A report for the Department of Conservation

Shortland E. (1852) *The Southern Districts of New Zealand*. Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London.

Shortland E. (1974) *The Southern Districts of New Zealand* (Reprint)

Stantec (18/12/2025) *Southern Link Inland Port - Wastewater Scheme A* report prepared for Southern Link Partners.

Stantec New Zealand (19/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port Transportation, Geometrics, Grading and Earthworks* A report prepared for Southern Link Partners.

Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025). *Southern Link Inland Port – Stormwater* A report prepared for Southern Link Partners.

Stantec New Zealand (18/12/2025) *Southern Link Inland Port: Non-Potable and Potable Water Schemes* A report prepared for Southern Link Partners.

Stantec New Zealand. (19 December 2025). *Southern Link Logistics Park - Integrated Transport Assessment*. A report prepared for Southern Link Partners.

Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu (1999) *Freshwater Policy Statement*
Waitangi Tribunal (1991) *Kai Tahu Report*. Brooker & Friend, Wellington

Legislation and cases cited

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998

Resource Management Act 1991

Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996

Ngāti Kuku Hapū Trust v Environmental Protection Agency [2025]

NZHC 2046.[2001] ELHNZ 428 at [453].

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 *Panel Conveners Practice and Procedure Guidance* (22 July 2025)