

BLAKELY WALLACE ASSOCIATES

PO Box 121, Arrowtown, New Zealand
Contact 027 8460 452, Email blakelywallace@gmail.com

MEMO

TO: **Marian Weaver, Waitaki District Council**
FROM: **Philip Blakely**
SUBJECT: **MACRAES PHASE 4 EXPANSION: STAGE 3 - LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT
PEER REVIEW**
DATE: May 2024

Introduction

This memo peer reviews the landscape and visual assessment of the Macraes Phase 4 Proposal ('MP4') project information provided by Oceania Gold Ltd (NZ) (OceanaGold) specifically the MP4 Project.

The project falls within the jurisdiction of the Waitaki District Council (WDC) and Dunedin City Council (DCC), and the Otago Regional Council (ORC). The peer review applies to the affected areas within both local Councils.

The review is a desktop review. No site visit was undertaken.

Project Details

It is stated the MP4 project includes the following scope:

Open Pit Extensions & FTSF Project scope changes' PowerPoint presentation dated 9 August 2023, along with the MP4 Overview plan (Figure 1). The Overview plan shows the location and extent of the individual components of the 'Proposal' which are split across four above-ground 'Project Sites'. These being from north to south; the Coronation Mine Stage 6 extension (CO6), the Innes Mills stage 8-10 pit extension (IM), the Frasers Tailings Storage Facility (FTSF) and the Golden Bar Mine Stage 2 extension (GB2). A detailed description of the project is included in the Assessment of Environmental Effects (Mitchell Daysh, 2023).

Peer Review Outline

The information reviewed includes:

- i) The landscape and visual assessment provided by Meg Back Senior Landscape Architect WSP Christchurch
- ii) Oceanagold Macraes Phase 4 Project Resource Consent Application and Assessment of Environmental Effects (the AEE provided by Mitchell Daysh 2023).
- iii) Appendix 27b -WSP (2023) LVA Viewpoint Plans, Photographs and Visual Simulations.

Peer Review Outline

The peer review applies the following analysis to assess the robustness and appropriateness of the conclusions in the landscape and visual assessment.

- *Is the methodology, including the use of best practice guidelines, adopted to assess landscape and visual effects appropriate, and the methodology clearly outlined?*
- *Is the information provided on the works, sufficient and are the assumptions made reasonable?*
- *Is the description of the landscape, and the receiving environment thorough?*
- *Are the potential landscape and visual issues and effects adequately defined?*
- *Does the assessment outline the relevant and appropriate viewpoints?
Is the visual assessment methodology sound and are the visual simulations reasonable?*
- *Does the application assess the extension against the relevant statutory guidelines (that are relevant to Landscape and Visual Effects Matters)?*
- *Do I agree with the overall effects rating and the scale of the effects?*
- *Is the design and/or mitigation explored, and any further mitigation suggested appropriate and sufficient?*
- *Are the conclusions reasonable and sound?*

Peer Review

Assessment methodology

The assessment is based on the NZILA Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 2022. The methodology is clearly outlined. The assessment is robust, and best practice.

Information provided on the application and works and assumptions.

The information provided is generally sufficient and the assumptions are well considered and reasonable. Each project has been described under:

- Project location
- Project description and components

Description of landscape and receiving environment.

The description of the immediate landscape and wider landscape context is comprehensive and clearly described.

Potential landscape and visual issues and effects

The report has defined the potential landscape and visual issues and effects adequately.

Viewpoints and visual simulations.

The Zones of Theoretical Mapping (ZTM mapping) method used are described including the limitations of the methodology and of the visual simulations. It is stated that several of the same viewpoints that were previously used for MP3 are used for MP4. The viewpoints and visual simulations while useful appear minimal for the scale of the extension sought. Without undertaking a site visit it is not possible to determine where additional visual simulations would be useful. However it is recommended that comment be obtained from the applicant as to why there are not more simulations especially of distant views. The Longsdale Road Stockyards visual simulation is the only distant view provided. The Zones of Theoretical Visibility Map shows there are many locations where the rock stacks will be visible from distant views.

It is noted that there is no 'After' for Viewpoint 2 Golden Point Observation Point. Is there a reason for this?

Relevant statutory Provisions

The report describes the proposal as follows:

'The Proposal, located across four separate Project Sites will bring further mining activity to the Macraes Flat area. This will be contained within the broader Macraes Operation sites. Most of the Proposal is within Waitaki District where much of it 'sits' within the MDC Macraes Mining Zone. A small area is within DCC's High Country Rural Zone'.

In 4.2 there is a heading referring to the Waitaki Landscape Study in which it is stated *'those aspects of the Waitaki Landscape Study that relate to the Macraes Operation are described at Section 3.4.3.1 of this assessment'.*

However Section 3.4.3.1 doesn't exist. There is also no mention of whether there are any Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Features that came out of the Landscape Study, included or affected by the proposed extension though the AEE documents states that there are no ONLs or ONFs affected.

With the exception of the above the peer review has accurately assessed the expansion of the mine against the relevant statutory guidelines for both Councils (that are relevant to Landscape and Visual Effects Matters).

Effects Rating

The 7-point Scale of Effects based on the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects *Te Tangi a te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2022)* has been applied to the proposal.

The effects ratings can be assessed from the extent of disturbance from previous stages and from the areas that have been rehabilitated. It is concluded that,

'on balance , any potential adverse landscape effects of the proposed Golden Bar WRS is 'Moderate' as it alters the skyline where it is located. For other aspects of the MP4 Proposal any potential adverse landscape effects will be Low'.

It is considered that this effects rating is fair. It is agreed the at worst 'Moderate' rating will be

confined to the Waste Rock Stacks (WRS's) to the Golden Bar WRS prior to its remediation.

Design and mitigation.

Design and mitigation have been clearly defined and as stated has proven on the ground to be effective in mitigating previously consented activity despite the massive alteration and disturbance during mining activity.

Conclusions

The conclusions in the assessment are considered fair and reasonable relative to the very large-scale earthworks of the project as a whole, and of the proposed extension.

It is agreed that the following summary in the conclusions is considered accurate and reasonable:

'While the mining activities involve large scale earthworks, they occur within a confined area in a large-scale landscape. It is this scale and the simple forms of the Macraes Flat landscape that means the mining activities are capable of being assimilated into the landscape, once rehabilitation is complete'.

The key findings of the landscape and visual assessment (5 bullet points) are considered fair in the context of the broader Macraes Operation sites. Proposed changes will be congruous with the mining context. It is accepted that any potential adverse landscape effects of the proposed Golden Bar WRS *'is Moderate and that for other aspects of the MP4 Proposal any potentially adverse landscape effects will be Low'.*

The conclusions on the overall cumulative landscape and visual effects in respect to expanding existing effects will be 'Low 'is also considered fair.

It is recommended that comment be obtained on why there are not more simulations especially of distance views. Also seek comment on the missing 'After' for Viewpoint 2 Golden Point Observation Point.

It is also recommended that clarification is obtained on whether there are any Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Features that came out of *the Waitaki Landscape Study*, affected by the proposed extension.

The conclusions on mitigation are also reasonable and it is agreed are *'proven to be effective in mitigating the potential effects of the existing WRS's'.*

Philip Blakely
Registered Landscape Architect
Blakely Wallace Associates

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Landscape Architecture, Resource Management, Rural, Residential, Commercial, Urban, Project & Contract Management, Streamlining
Consent Process, Conservation (Natural & Historic) Advice

