

Online submission

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Joint presentation	Yes
Trade competition	I could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.
Directly affected	N/A
Withhold contact details?	No

Submission points

Plan section	Provision	Support/oppose	Reasons	Decision sought
General Rural Zone	GRUZ - R3	Oppose in part	<p>I am writing to urge the committee to remove the Mineral Extraction Zone from the Barrytown Flats, and rezone it to General Rural. My submission discusses the all-round incompatibility of the large-scale mineral sands extraction and processing that attracts the interest of mining companies in this area, with the peaceful rural lifestyle enjoyed by residents and sensitive ecological areas on the Flats.</p> <p>Various iterations of mineral sands mining operations have been proposed on the Barrytown Flats over the years. In declining the most recent application in February 2022, the commissioners noted that:</p> <p>"There were several sensitive waterbodies around the site, including wetlands, swamps, creeks and springs, and the commissioners had concerns that the applicants did not offer them sufficient protection...In particular, the commissioners were concerned about the “cumulative adverse effects” on the tāiko or Westland petrel population from increased vehicle movements along SH6.” (https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/west-coast/127759462/west-coast-mineral-sand-mine-rejected-partly-over-fears-for-westland-petrel-colony)</p> <p>It’s important to note that proceeding with forcing mineral extraction upon the BarrytownThe TTPP plan in it’s current form limits a mine site to 3 hectares, but places no prohibition on how many 3 hectare blocks adjacent to each other can be mined. This leaves the whole area unprotected and forces significant industry on an unwilling rural community. This must be addressed community is in direct contravention of the West Coast’s own economic strategy Te Whanaketanga 2050.</p> <p>The plan states that “We are vulnerable to extreme weather events, sea-level rise and disruptions due to natural disasters” (Te Whanaketanga Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Strategy 2050 p.6). So siting mineral extraction operations on low lying, receding shoreline with a high water table with an existing vulnerability to saltwater incursion is short-term thinking in direct contradiction to a global trend to move infrastructure away from such areas. Indeed, the report hints at this when it states “Te Whanaketanga focuses us on a generational shift in our economy rather than short term or siloed thinking” (Ibid, p.4).</p> <p>“Active guardianship of our taonga and giving back to nature..We care for our people and place leaving our environment in a better state than we inherited it.” (Ibid pp9-10) The lagoons and wetlands, freshwater streams, drinking water, all the life-sustaining functions of the Flats region is, I would argue, a taonga that far supercedes the economic returns of, for example \$200 a tonne of garnet. vast amounts of sand will need to be quarried to make these ventures worthwhile. The BarrytownJV (now Tiga) mining application aimed to dig to a depth of 15 metres across it’s site. That is not protecting taonga. That is exploiting the natural environment, running roughshod over the objections of neighbours, and inviting destruction of freshwater resources.</p> <p>“Our strengths in protecting and restoring the natural environment are an opportunity to build a light footprint niche economy on the Coast that develops, incubates, and shares knowledge on conservation and biodiversity restoration...Actions - Develop an International Conservation and Biodiversity Restoration Centre of Excellence” (Ibid p.15).</p> <p>The existing Barrytown Flats economy already operates with a light footprint on a sensitive area. A conservation centre of excellence already exists there, in the form of Conservation Volunteers which has a large native plant nursery and ecological restoration site, developed over many years. The potential impact of dust residue, heavy traffic and noise pollution would have a profound impact on this significant business. Surely it makes more sense to develop and invest in an economy that is already meeting the needs of locals, is consistent with the aspirations of the economic strategy, and protects the wellbeing of the place and it’s people.</p> <p>Sustainable tourism businesses feel under threat, because should full-scale mineral extraction proceed, this area will no longer be attractive to tourists. Community disintegration is occurring as people sell or leave to escape the uncertainty and possible noise, dust, vibration and disruption.</p> <p>The heavy traffic generated by the scale of mineral extraction proposals alone gives reason to encourage protection of the general rural zoning of the Flats. The Coast Road is one of the world’s finest scenic drives, and is also tight and unstable in parts. The addition of increased volumes of heavy vehicles is incompatible with the existing condition of the road.</p> <p>There are concerning implications for the ecology and hydrology of this coastal ecosystem should mineral extraction proceed. Mineral sands mining requires the excavation of significant tonnes of sand, which logically invites seawater incursion into the groundwater and the land, especially if we look at projected sea level rises and increased storm surges in the foreseeable future. Such incursion would be irreparably harmful to the pockets of wetlands and lagoons along the foreshore and on the Flats. These sites provide vital food, flightpaths and breeding grounds for a number of threatened species such as the taiko. The sites would be easily disturbed by the activity of industrial machinery, water extraction, and potential seepage and leaching of byproduct toxins through tailings and settling ponds into the surrounding environment. Salt water incursion will also destroy the grass required for grazing stock.</p> <p>It also needs to be mentioned that some of the minerals in the extraction zone have a radioactive quality to them, for example thorium and monazite which are extracted as part of the mining process either for their own value, or as byproduct of the search for other minerals. These elements become concentrated in the process through gravity or magnetism, and overseas are often dispersed with the tailings. Given that not only are the Flats a delicate ecological area, but that families live on the properties on either side of the proposed MEZ - hang their washing, eat from their gardens, farm livestock, drink water from streams etc. - it would seem highly imprudent to disturb, concentrate and refine such minerals next to residential properties, even with a buffer zone.</p> <p>The Flats are notorious for strong prevailing winds from north, west and south, so the prospect of significant quantities of dust settling anywhere along the Flats should be of significant concern. The residue dust from ilmenite mining is said to resemble a talcum powder-like consistency. It is not hard to conclude that this would be very undesirable to have settling over the area and getting into the lagoon, the groundwater, and any of the ten streams that criss-cross the proposed MEZ. Not to mention the effect that would have on humans and livestock in the vicinity.</p> <p>Many of the families who live on the Barrytown Flats make their livings from the land and ecology of the area. Native plant nurseries, ecotourism operators, tourist accommodation, dairy farms and animal-oriented lifestyle blocks sit appropriately within the confines of this landscape,</p> <p>Protect Barrytown Flats with a General Rural zoning applied consistently across the Barrytown Flats.</p>	To rezone Barrytown Flats to General Rural instead of the proposed Mineral Extraction Zone

Documents included with submission

None