

## Speaking Notes on MINZ and BCZ, Suzanne Hills, 28 May 2024

### Mineral Extraction Zone

#### **1. MINZ fails the special purpose zone test set out under the National Planning Standards (s8.3).**

*An additional special purpose zone must only be created when the proposed land use activities or anticipated outcomes of the additional zone meet all of the following criteria:*

*a. are significant to the district, region or country*

*b. are impractical to be managed through another zone*

*c. are impractical to be managed through a combination of spatial layers.*

Yet the plan demonstrates that mining can and will be managed through other zones, by proposing to manage it through the Rural Zone and the Open Space Zone. So it doesn't meet the NPS criteria of being *impractical to be managed through another zone*.

#### **2. Many MINZs fail the criteria in TTPP**

Many MINZs are either not a mine, have already been mined, have no permissions in place for mining, or are only being used for mining for a few years.

Yet MINZ preamble states: *covers areas where there are discrete, long term mineral extraction activities that are currently authorised* (by coal mining licences or RMA resource consents)

Example: MINZ on the Barrytown Flats does not meet the above criteria. It is not an area currently authorised under resource consents because they were declined by independent commissioners in Feb 2022. The TiGa consents granted in Apr 2024 are now under appeal at the EC. They are 12yr consents with TiGa stating they anticipate the mining to be completed within 4-6yrs, 4, 6 or even 12 yrs is hardly *long-term*. As it does not meet the MINZ criteria, it cannot be a MINZ and must remain as a Rural Zone in keeping with the surrounding rural zoned land.

To zone as a MINZ on the expectation that the RC application would be granted demonstrates the mineral extraction bias of the Plan. TiGa referred to the MINZ in their resource consent application and hearings which may have been a contributing factor in the consents being granted.

I oppose the numerous additional MINZs on the Barrytown Flats put forward by TiGa. It would be absurd to change a long standing rural zone with a thriving community to a MINZ simply because a corporate wishes it. Over recent decades, Council have permitted subdivision of farms into lifestyle blocks and small settlements. People have moved here on the clear understanding that the area is a quiet rural zone, not a zone of industrial scale mining and processing. You wouldn't re-zone as MINZ a council park in the middle of Greymouth just because minerals have been discovered under it and someone wants to dig them up.

#### **3. Emphasis on mineral extraction at the expense of other activities**

The creation and mapping of the MINZs have given undue weight to the mineral extraction industry. If a new zone of MINZ can be created, it is just as valid to create a new Conservation

and Biodiversity Restoration Zone – that would also provide jobs and economic benefits, including to nature tourism, and provides many co-benefits of reducing emissions, climate change adaptation and providing hope and action for our rangatahi. It is only because of our local leadership with their 20<sup>th</sup> century archaic thinking and many with vested interests in mining that we have MINZs.

#### **4. MINZ R2 and R3 create permanently permitted mining activity**

R2 and R3 create permanently permitted mining activity; enabling mining indefinitely without resource consents. The rules rely on a substantially less robust Mineral Extraction Management Plan. The lack of detail in Appendix 7 on Mineral Extraction Management Plans provides little reassurance regarding the complexity of the identification and management of adverse effects and compliance to higher level plans and policies. E.g Allowing adverse effects to be addressed by alternative mitigation measures such as biodiversity offsetting and environmental compensation (as stated in MIN-06 of the strategic directions) is inconsistent with the RPS and the NPS-IB.

All of the objectives, policies and rules detailed in the MINZ can and should be comprehensively dealt with by the resource consent process under the RMA through mineral extraction designated as a discretionary activity in appropriate existing zones.

The resource consent process is a robust, participatory and democratic good process to ensure land use and development decisions meet the sustainable management purpose of the RMA. This process should not be undermined; good process is a fundamental to uphold democracy and social cohesion.

Example: recent TiGa hearings: 357 submissions, 194 opposing. Many, many people spoke at the hearings. The community group CRRG made a significant contribution to the submission and hearing process with lay and expert evidence, and also sustained national media attention. This has achieved much more robust RC conditions of those initially proposed by the applicant.

The permanently permitted mining activity of the MINZ means we have pre-approved mining operations with questionable or lax checks and balances, no community participation, and no recourse of appeal to the EC which is sounding all very similar to the FTAB; yet look at the enormous opposition to this bill and the serious issues and consequences highlighted by 1000s individuals, groups and high level advisory positions of the parliamentary commissioner for the environment and the auditor general.

#### **5. PCL is zoned MINZ & BCZ**

Zoning PCL as MINZ or BCZ has no place and undermines the statutory protections of PCL contained in the Cons Act. PCL includes stewardship land with s25 stating: *be managed that its natural and historic resources are protected.*

It would be clearer if the MINZ maps had PCL overlays.

Much of the WC PCL stewardship land has a high conservation value, very little of it has a low or no conservation value; documented by the WC stewardship review in 2022. Some stewardship land is amongst the highest conservation value with very high and unique

ecological values. Example: Te Kuha PCL with values determined in the EC and the Denniston Plateau; yet both these areas are zoned MINZ or BCZ.

### **Buller Coalfield Zone**

As with the MINZ, zoning PCL as BCZ has no place. It should be zoned NOSZ with **new/expanded** coal mines a prohibited activity. Coal mining destroys PCL that is vital for nature, climate stability and our collective future.

New/expanded coal mines are not compatible with a safe climate – even the IEA states that. And those on the WC involve the double disaster of ecosystem destruction of high value conservation land along with the enormous carbon emissions from open cast mining, methane emissions released from methane seams and the carbon emissions when the coal is burnt; all contributing to cumulative climate breakdown.

Coal is not a scarce resource; including coking coal. Denniston and Te Kuha are precious & unique ecosystems and the very last place anyone should be digging up for coal.

The Plan needs to be consistent with the ZCA and enable the necessary and urgent step change to a low emission & sustainable regional economy with a clear pathway to decarbonisation. It's nowhere near enough to tinker at the edges with removing car parking spaces and enabling provisions on cycleways and renewable energy while choosing to ignore the emission elephant in the room: coal mining expansion and growth on PCL.

I finish with a quote from the IPCC report of March 2023: ***“The choices and actions implemented in this decade will have impacts now and for thousands of years”***