



Te Tai o Poutini PLAN

A combined district plan for the West Coast

Prepared for: Te Tai o Poutini Plan Committee
Prepared by: Lois Easton, Principal Planner
Date: Monday 22nd September 2025
Subject: Summary of Mineral Extraction Hearings Recommendations Report for Information

SUMMARY

This report contains a brief summary of the key changes recommended to the Mineral Extraction recommendation report from the Te Tai o Poutini Plan Hearings Panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information is received.
2. That the contents of this report are noted.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Independent Hearing Panel has heard submissions and provided Recommendations Report to the Committee in relation to Te Tai o Poutini Plan (TTPP), Variation 1 and Variation 2. These reports are comprehensive and include a summary of the information provided by the submitters, the responses of the s42A reporting officer, the rationale of the panel in relation to these matters and their recommendations on the submissions and changes to the TTPP.
2. This report provides a brief summary of the hearing panel's recommendations report in relation to the Mineral Extraction topic.

MINERAL EXTRACTION RECOMMENDATION REPORT

3. The Mineral Extraction topic addressed 1216 submissions and 865 further submissions. This was a significant topic in terms of public submissions with a large number of lay submitters attending the hearing as well as infrastructure, mining and environmental interests.
4. The recommendation report provides the recommendations on:
 - Mineral Extraction Zone
 - Buller Coalfield Zone
 - Mineral Extraction Policy and Rules in the Rural Zones
 - Mineral Extraction Policy and Rules in the Open Space and Recreation Zones
5. During the course of the hearing the Hearings Panel ordered expert witness conferencing of the planners appearing at the hearing and a joint witness statement was prepared. In addition, substantial amounts of additional information about the authorisations for each of the mineral extraction zones was sought and provided to the Hearings Panel. Submitters were then invited and took the opportunity to provide further comment on this.
6. The Hearing Commissioner recommendations for this topic vary quite significantly from the s42A report recommendations of the reporting planner. It is clear from the report that the Commissioners familiarised themselves with the information used to develop the Plan provisions and the s32 report analysis and therefore their recommendations are largely consistent with the approach and original intent of the provisions.
7. While the recommendations do recommend an overall increase in stringency for the mineral extraction topic, it should be recognised that the notified Plan provisions were the least restrictive for mineral extraction anywhere in the country and that even with the recommended amendments, this is still likely to be the case.

Mineral Extraction Zone Recommendations

8. There are a significant number of recommended amendments to this chapter. This follows from a core fundamental recommendation from the Hearing Panel that the focus of the zone should be ongoing mineral extraction operations, not short-term mining. This was the intent of the zone when the Plan provisions were developed, with the zone being made up of coal and hard rock gold mining sites, along with quarries, however close to the proposed Plan being finalised, the then TTPP Committee added alluvial gold and mineral sands mining sites into the zone.
9. As was advised to the Committee by the TTPP Planning staff at the time of this decision, including mineral sands and alluvial gold mining sites in the zone creates significant problems. The rules were drafted to support the ongoing operation of existing authorised long term mining operations, and are very enabling of this, and very restrictive of other activities as a result.
10. Many submitters associated with alluvial gold and mineral sands mining sought that the range of activities allowed in the zone be expanded so that once their mining activities were complete, they could use the land for alternative uses. The Hearing Panel do not recommend this.
11. In order to retain the very enabling provisions for mining in the zone, they consider it inappropriate to provide for more non-mining activities. Instead, they have recommended that the alluvial gold and mineral sand mining sites are rezoned as General Rural Zone, as this zone both provides for mining as an expected activity, and has an appropriate rule

framework to allow other activities to occur without the need for rezoning, once the mining operation is complete.

12. The alluvial gold and mineral sands Mineral Extraction Zone sites that are recommended to be rezoned as General Rural Zone are:
 - MINZ 1 – Barrytown
 - MINZ 2 – Dunganville
 - MINZ 5 – Kumeru Greenstone
 - MINZ 9 – Ianthe Forest
 - MINZ 11 – Rimu Channel
 - MINZ 12 – Ross Gold Fields
13. Alongside this rezoning to remove alluvial gold and mineral sands sites, the Hearing Panel recommend other amendments to the zone so that the zone boundaries reflect the extent of authorised long-term mining and quarrying activity as follows:
 - MINZ 8 Camelback Quarry – increase the area of MINZ to include all quarrying activity
 - MINZ 10 Okuru Quarry - increase the area of MINZ to include all quarrying activity
 - MINZ 14 Giles Creek – reduce the area of MINZ to only include the area covered by mining authorisations
 - MINZ 16 Karamea Lime Quarry - increase the area of MINZ to include all quarrying activity
 - MINZ 17 Karamea Quarry – rezone General Rural Zone
 - MINZ 22 Te Kuha – rezone General Rural Zone
14. All other mineral extraction zones (i.e. MINZ 3 Inchbonnie Quarry, MINZ 4 Kiwi Quarry, MINZ 6 Paparoa Coalfield, MINZ 7 Stillwater, MINZ 13 Echo, MINZ 15 Grey Valley Distribution Centre, MINZ 18 Mai Mai Siding, MINZ 19 New Creek, MINZ 20 Reefton Distribution Centre, MINZ 21 Snowy River Goldmine) are recommended to be retained as per the notified Plan.
15. In terms of the Objectives and Policies, the Hearing Panel recommend amendments which support this overall intent and direction of the zone, and key changes are:
 - Amending MINZ – O2 to refer to “manages” rather than “minimises” adverse effects on the environment
 - Amending MINZ – P1 so that it is clear the zone is intended for “discrete, long term” mineral extraction activities
 - Amending MINZ – P3 in relation to post mining rehabilitation to be clearer on the outcome (enabling future land uses)
 - Amending MINZ – P4 to replace “impacts” with “adverse effects” and include natural character as a consideration in the policy
 - Deleting MINZ – P5 in relation to significant biodiversity areas as that is dealt with in the ECO topic
 - Amending MINZ – P6 (now P5) to be consistent with how Poutini Ngāi Tahu values and pounamu are dealt with in other parts of the TTPP
 - Amending MINZ – P7 (now P6) to replace “minimise” with “maintain”
16. In terms of the Rules, the most significant change recommended is that new mineral extraction activities in the zone should be a Restricted Discretionary rather than Controlled Activity. The Hearing Panel have taken the view that while the zone is intended to enable mineral extraction, the Councils should still have the ability to decline consent should the adverse environmental effects be unable to be addressed through applying the effects management hierarchy.
17. The Hearing Panel also recommend the following amendments:
 - MINZ- R1 - Simplifying the rule for Permitted Mineral Prospecting and Mineral Exploration and replacing two standards around earthworks with just a requirement that the activity be setback from any site boundary with another zone
 - MINZ – R2 Deleting the Permitted Activity for lawfully established mineral extraction. The Hearing Panel have taken the view that this rule is pointless, as the activity is already authorised so there is not a need for this rule.
 - MINZ – R3 Adding Mineral Processing to the Permitted Activity for ancillary activities and simplifying the rule (and making it significantly less stringent) by deleting

requirements for maximum building height, a requirement for a bond, maximum vehicle movements and dust standards.

- MINZ – R6 Amending this rule to only deal with Mineral Prospecting and Exploration, to refer to not being undertaken in an SNA and to simplify and reduce the matters of control
- MINZ – R7 Amending this to be the main escalation rule from Permitted Activities – covering Mineral Prospecting, Exploration, Extraction, Ancillary Activities and Processing.
- MINZ – R10 (now R9) -Amending this “catch all” rule to be Discretionary rather than Non-complying, to align with the approach recommended to this across the rest of the TTPP.

Buller Coalfield Zone Recommendations

18. In terms of zone boundaries, some minor amendments to the zone in relation to the Stockton and Denniston Plateaux are recommended – these appear to be largely agreed with Bathurst Resources. The most significant change is the recommendation to rezone the Te Kuha as General Rural Zone. This is because the mine does not have any existing authorisations (having been declined by the High Court). However, the zone recommendation of General Rural (rather than Open Space) recognises the potential for future mining operations in this location.
19. The recommendations for the Buller Coalfield Zone in relation to the Objectives, Policies and Rules are very similar to those outlined above for the Mineral Extraction Zone. The only significant difference is that the Hearing Panel have not recommended any change to the “catch all” rule which remains non-complying. They have considered that given the scale of mining in this zone, it can be expected to continue well beyond the life of the plan and other activities not provided for are likely to be inappropriate.

Open Space and Recreation Zones Recommendations

20. This recommendations report addresses the submissions on the policy OSRZ – P14, and the rules OSZ – R11, OSZ – R19 and OSZ – R22.
21. In terms of policy OSRZ – P14 they recommend this is amended to specifically provide for Mineral Prospecting and Mineral Exploration and to redraft the Policy to replace the reference to open space and recreation values with reference to scheduled areas and significant ecological areas. This does not impact stringency but makes the policy intent clearer.
22. In relation to OSZ – R11 which is the Permitted Activity for mineral prospecting and exploration, the Hearing Panel recommend this be simplified and redrafted in a similar way to other zones, with the addition of a maximum amount of excavation of material of 5000m² in any calendar year.
23. In relation to OSZ – R19 which is the main rule for Mineral Extraction the commissioners have recommended that this be a Discretionary rather than Restricted Discretionary Activity. Their main rationale for this is that the rule had so many matters of discretion (14) that the rule is effectively a Discretionary Activity in all but name – the information required to support the resource consent would be similar in both circumstances and so the impact on consent applicants in terms of cost difference is not likely to be significant.

Rural Zones Recommendations

24. This recommendations report addresses the submissions on Objective RURZ – O5, policies RURZ – P18 to RURZ – P25 , and the rules for mineral prospecting and extraction in the General Rural, Rural Lifestyle and Settlement Zones.
25. In terms of Objective RURZ – O5 significant redrafting is proposed. This explicitly identifies the activities (mineral prospecting, mineral exploration and mineral extraction), replaces “minimises” with “manages” in relation to adverse effects and makes other changes principally of clarification of intent.
26. In terms of the policies, many of the changes recommended are similar to other zones – including mineral prospecting and mineral exploration in RURZ – P18, RURZ – P22 and RURZ – P23 and replacing “minimises impacts” with “manage adverse effects” in RURZ – P19.

27. Policy RURZ – P20 specifically deals with farm quarries and is recommended to be amended to recognise significant ecological values should be protected and biodiversity values retained.
28. Policy RURZ – P24 which relates to the potential for additional sites to be added to the zone is recommended to be deleted. The Hearing Panel considers that adding to the zone would be done by Plan Change and therefore will be assessed on its merits at the time.

General Rural Zone, Rural Lifestyle and Settlement Zone Rules Recommendations

29. Many of the recommendations for the rules are consistent with the Open Space Zone – specifically:
 - Simplifying the Permitted Activity for Mineral Prospecting and Mineral Exploration with the addition of a maximum amount of excavation of material of 5000m² in any calendar year.
 - Making mineral extraction activity that is not Permitted a Discretionary rather than Restricted Discretionary Activity.
30. The Hearing Panel also has recommended retaining the Permitted Activity for small scale mining (less than 20,000m³/year) in the General Rural Zone with some changes to address submitter concerns around impacts on neighbouring sites.
31. In relation to Rule GRUZ – R18 it is recommended to delete the reference to previously mined locations in Schedule 10 from the Rule – and delete Schedule 10 (which is empty) itself. This part of the rule was an idea from the draft Plan, but the information to support the rule and the schedule was not able to be developed. This rule is also recommended as a Restricted Discretionary rather than Controlled Activity in order to enable the Councils the option of declining consent. The matters of assessment are reduced and simplified.

Appendix Seven: Mineral Extraction Management Plan Requirements Recommendations

32. The Hearings Panel recommend significant amendment to this appendix. These were informed by the planner expert witness caucusing and the joint witness statement produced through this process.

Schedule Nine: Lawfully Established Mineral Extraction and Processing Areas Recommendations

33. The Hearing Panel recommend that this schedule be deleted as it is not referred to in any plan provision (objective, policy or rule) and is therefore unnecessary.

NEXT STEPS

34. This report provides an overview of the Mineral Extraction recommendations report from the Independent Hearings Panel for the TTPP. A separate report on this agenda outlines the process and recommendations around adopting the recommendations from the reports.