

GOING UNDERGROUND

IT'S NOT LIKE THE GOLD RUSH, MODERN GOLD MINING IS A TECHNICALLY ADVANCED AND SCIENTIFIC INDUSTRY.

When people think about gold mining, they often think of historic 'gold rushes' and other practices that no longer reflect the way the industry operates.

Gold mining is a long-term investment, from prospecting and exploration through to mining and processing (if a discovery is made) over what can be many decades.

This means operators like OceanaGold take a long-term view and are vitally connected to the communities in which they operate.

No new mine can be developed in New Zealand without a detailed and rigorous Resource Management Act hearing process at which all members of the community can have their say.

Were we to consider gold mining under conservation land at Wharekirauponga, it would have to be done in a way that meets the technical, cultural, social and environmental requirements of the area.

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Underground gold mining lets us tunnel into an area from many kilometres away and hundreds of metres below the surface, so there's no need for any mining effects on the surface other than a small number of ventilation holes.

OceanaGold is doing this at the Frasers Underground mine, which commenced in 2006 at Macraes, about 100kms north of Dunedin.

The Waihi operation has been mining underground since 2007, and underneath the town of Waihi since 2014, with nothing visible on the surface within the town.

To mine underground at Wharekirauponga we won't need processing or tailings storage facilities. Mined rock would be transported to existing facilities in Waihi for processing and storage of tailings and otherwise returned underground or stockpiled on private land.

WHAT THIS SHOULD MEAN AT WHAREKIRAUPONGA

- We have ruled out surface mining at this site.
- No tailings storage facility or processing plant on Conservation land
- Tunnelling into the resource from outside the conservation estate
- Carefully extracting the gold bearing ore – including options such as automated, electric and remotely-operated vehicles – enhancing efficient and safe operation
- Backfilling the mined spaces underground as we go to protect the stability of the ground above the workings
- The surface of the Conservation land remains undisturbed apart from a few small clearings for caps on ventilation shafts to allow air to flow through the mine, which are installed and then later removed by helicopter. Any surface area used for ventilation caps would be completely restored

We believe our approach, which rules out surface mining and enters underground from the land off the conservation estate, will work within the Government's 'no new mines on conservation land' policy, as we understand it.

