Statement of Philippa Mary Fee

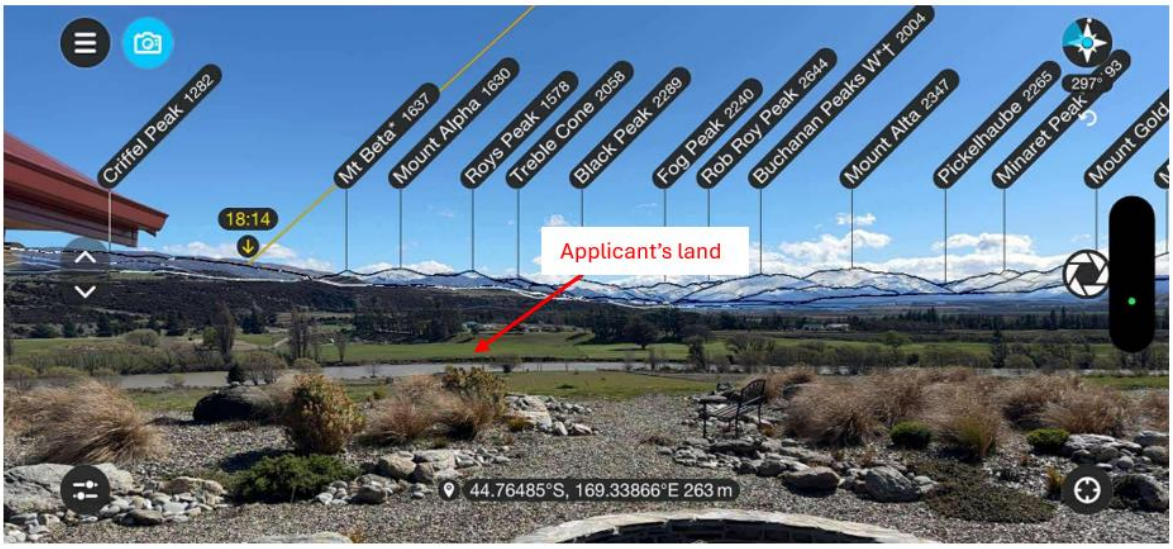
1. My husband (Roderick Harold Fee) and I are the owners of a lifestyle property at 79 River Ridge Road, Tarras. We oppose the application for resource consent to establish and operate a gold mining operation on the Applicant's property (DP 466676). We are the authors of submission 06. Our property lies east of the Applicant's property, across the Clutha River, and we will be directly affected by the proposed activity.

Personal background

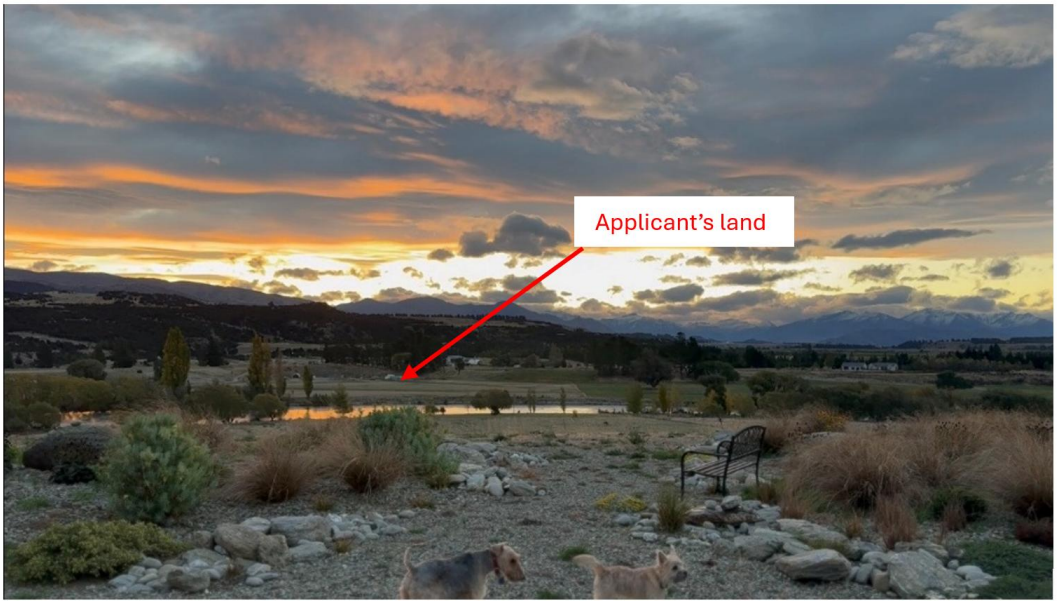
2. Rod and I were born in Christchurch (in 1959 and 1960 respectively). We have always loved the landscape of Central Otago. When we married in 1981, we honeymooned in the Queenstown and Wanaka area. We yearned to buy a property in the area, telling ourselves that maybe we would be lucky enough one day to afford it. What we loved (and still love) most about the area is the mountains, the 'big sky', the lakes, and the rivers.

3. Rod and I built our lives in Auckland. We both practiced law and had a family of two girls. Rod retired from the practice of law in the mid-1990s, choosing a career in teaching and writing. I continued to practice law and still do so.

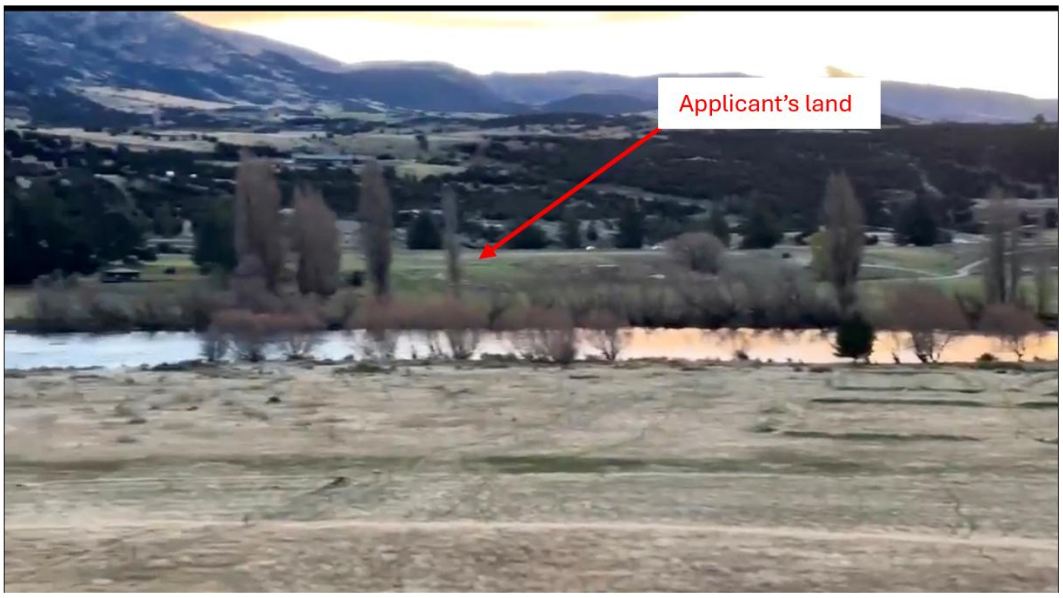
4. We often holidayed in the Central Otago area. On one of those breaks, we chanced upon the property at 79 River Ridge Road. At that time, it was rabbit infested and entirely undeveloped – not even fenced. But what drew us instantly to the property was the exceptional outlook over the Clutha River, the Queensbury Hills, and the mountains beyond.







5. The Applicant's property across the road was one of many rural properties which bordered the river. It was peaceful and idyllic. There were few properties built in the vicinity at that time.



6. We pondered the purchase but did not commit until about a year later, when we showed the section to our younger daughter, who instantly fell in love with it. Her enthusiasm was enough to overcome any hesitation I had.

Ownership and development

7. We bought the property in 2014 and spent many holidays there, with only a very basic caravan as accommodation. Later we put up a safari tent and an outdoor toilet and shower. We thought running water and a flushable toilet was a luxury! Our family (Rod and I, our daughters, their partners and dogs) holidayed on the property, in these very basic facilities, year upon year. We didn't mind the chilling cold or the searing heat. For us it was a time of feeling connected with the land, the mountains and the river.

8. In 2019 we built a three-bedroom home and developed the site substantially. We built a workroom and bunk room block, a tractor storage shed, and improved the road down to the river. We have cleared the property gorse and blackberries, and other weeds, including on the terrace adjoining the Clutha River.

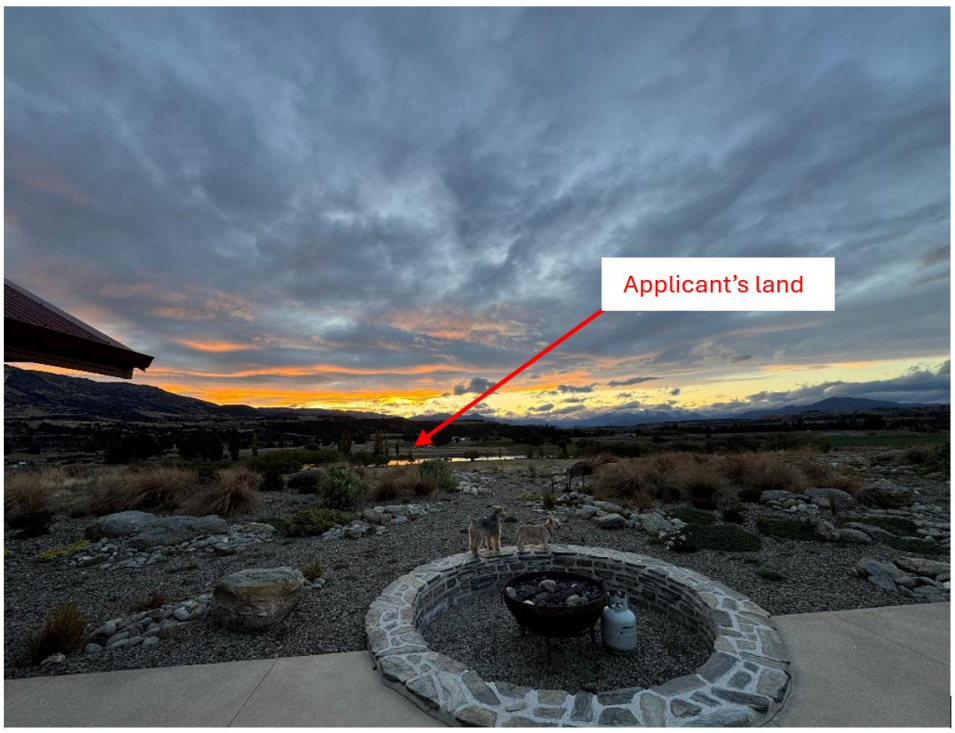
9. We designed the home around the view of the river and the mountains. Our bedroom overlooks the view of the river, Queensbury Hill, and the mountains towards the Aspiring National Park, as does the main living area. The home was deliberately designed so that it has a wide concrete deck all around, so that we can make the most of the view and take shelter from the prevailing wind. The main outdoor seating areas are on the western side of the property, overlooking the Clutha River and the Queensbury Hills. We built a fire pit around which we sit, toasting marshmallows and looking at the view with family and friends. We also

installed a glass pergola structure to the southern end of the property, again so that we could look at the view sheltered from the wind.

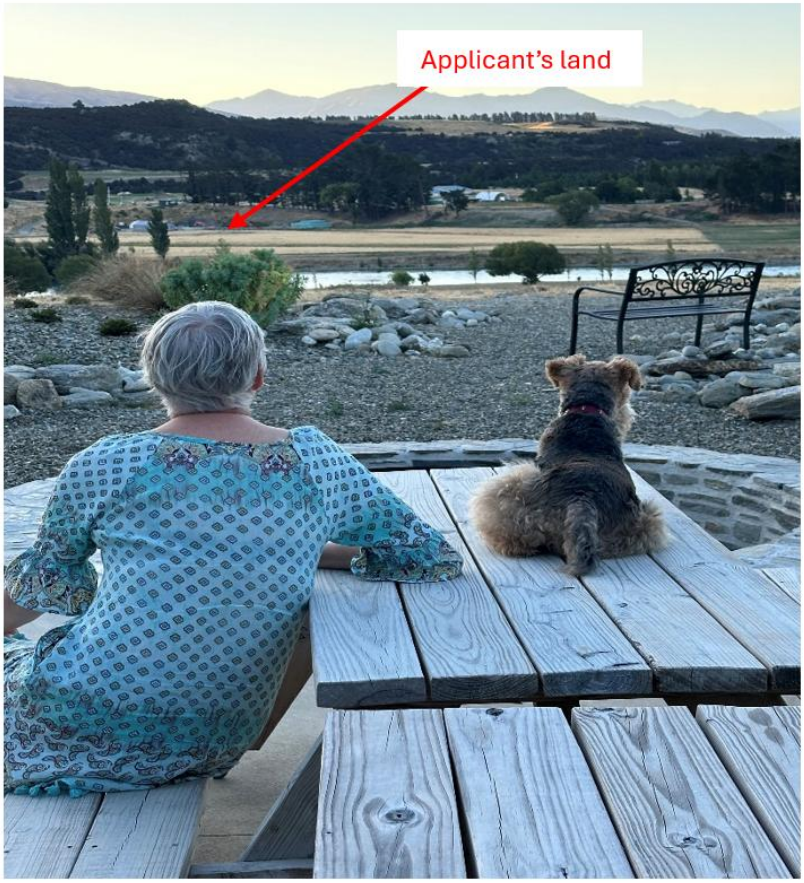


All windows oriented to the applicant's property





The fire pit





Inside the glass pergola

10. The safari tent was constructed on a wooden platform on the highest point of the property with an elevated view of the river and mountains. When the tent blew down in a storm recently, we replaced it with a wooden structure. It is still under construction at the moment, but when finished will be self-contained accommodation, including a kitchen and bathroom. A spa pool is located on the deck. The view from there is spectacular.

11. By the installation of rabbit proof fencing and hunting we totally eradicated rabbits. This made a huge difference to the quality of the pasture, which has now become lush paddocks for grazing one of our neighbours' sheep, horses and our (beloved) pet donkeys. The neighbours look after the donkeys when we're not at the property. In return, we allow them to graze their stock, including on the terrace by the river.

12. The trees planted by our neighbours and by us mean that we are woken to the sound of birds. Recently, we have been delighted to see a large flock of quail now reside at our property. Watching and listening to them is a morning pleasure.

13. High winds, especially from the northwest, are an issue. The spring to summer months are the worst and this coincides with the dryest time of the year. Over the summer months it is not uncommon for there to be daily winds in excess of 20 kms per hour for sustained periods. The prevailing wind over this period is from the West to Northwest. When we are down there, we keep a daily eye on the wind, as it very much determines our activities for the day.

How we use the property

14. The property is a respite for us from the stressful urban life we lead in Auckland. It was particularly valued during COVID. I was able to work remotely. It was a 'godsend' to be able to leave the stress of Auckland, which was dealing with the strictures of the global pandemic, to come down to our property and enjoy normal life.

15. Our practice is to come down to Tarras many times a year for extended periods of at least a week at the time. We use the property in all seasons. The outdoor fireplace in the glass pergola, the fire pit, and the spa (all looking down to the river) have been specifically designed to enable us to be outside in winter and summer.

16. I estimate that, since our building our house, we have on average come down every six weeks or so for a week at a time. When we come down during the year, I will typically continue to work remotely from the house, which enables us to come more often and stay longer. Over Christmas / New Year, we bring our two dogs with us and stay for at least a month. Our daughters and their partners join us over this time also. Over Easter our stay lasts approximately two weeks..

17. In addition, our property is used frequently by our extended family and friends It is particularly busy during the ski season, but it is used throughout the year. With the bunk rooms and the tent, the property can sleep up to 20 people. This was perfect when my daughter hosted a large number of friends for her 30th birthday party. We have hosted Rod's two writing groups twice (10 people each time), and his book club (8 people). I have also hosted the partners of my legal practice. It has been really valuable for our sense of community to be able to offer this to our extended circle, and everyone who visits tells us how much they love it.



Rod's writing group



My daughter's 30th birthday

18. Our pace of life down there is relaxed and attuned to the weather, the river, our dogs, and our donkeys. I walk to the river, usually daily, to give the dogs exercise and to feel connected to the river and the land. We frequently have picnics by the river. We have cleared the area of gorse and blackberries, so that it can be a relaxed place to sit at the day's end.

19. One of the joys of owning the property has been the ability to connect to a rural community. We are the only ones in the neighbourhood who do not live there permanently. There are three neighbours whose properties are similarly located to ours (in relation to the glacial terrace) and are also oriented to the Clutha River and the Applicant's property. Our connection with our neighbours is something that is, in our experience, truly unique to the rural way of life. We love popping round to one another's houses (mostly in the early evenings) to enjoy a drink or two in the last couple of hours of sun. We help each other out in many ways, and on an almost daily basis. Our tractor is used to mow the grass for the neighbourhood. Our neighbours have our permission to walk their dogs down to the river, and one of our neighbours does so regularly. One of our neighbours, an avid horse rider and breeder, looks after our donkeys. She grazes her horses and sheep on the terrace adjacent to the river. This grazing is one of the reasons why the quality of the pasture has significantly improved



Impact of the gold mining operation

20. Rod and I are extremely concerned at the prospect of a gold mining operation across the river from our property, as it will fundamentally alter the environment which attracted us to this property and to the Tarras area. The tranquil rural setting has informed every aspect of the property's development and our use as a family. The effects of the proposed use on noise levels, dust generation, light pollution, and our enjoyment of the outdoor spaces would be significant for the duration of its operation.

21. Noise travels easily across the valley. We can hear traffic on State Highway 6 as a distant background noise. As a constant steady sound, it is just part of the ambient noise, along with the birds and low-key rural activity. But the proposed mining activity will generate industrial noise that is qualitatively different from the existing ambient noise. Unlike distant highway traffic or bird sounds, the mining activity will generate intermittent mechanical and impact noises, such as excavators, truck movements, screening equipment, pumps and rock hitting rock. Such noise will be intrusive, noticeable, and impossible to ignore when using our outdoor living areas and river frontage. Not only would it disrupt our enjoyment of the outdoor, but we are concerned that it would also travel indoors. This would make it difficult to relax in the quiet inside, and also I would be concerned that it would disrupt my ability to work from the property (which involves many frequent phone and video calls) without intrusion.

22. We are also worried about the dust that the operation will generate. As noted earlier, this is a high-wind area. In summer the ground dries out completely. The mining operation will involve the stripping of topsoil, the forming of tracks for trucks and excavators, and the placing of dry tailings and stockpiles on the land. The prevailing wind will create a dust nuisance, reducing our ability to use the

outdoor living areas and the river terrace, especially in summer when we spend the greatest amount of time there.

23. We are also concerned that the visual amenity of the river and the adjacent fields will be spoiled by the mining operation.

24. We are not the only property in the area affected by the proposed activities. In particular, bordering our property to the north live Phillip James Everest and Anne-Christine Everest. Their property is similarly situated to the view of the Clutha River and the mountains to our own. Being permanent residents, they will particularly affected by the dust and noise created by the mine.

Proposed Conditions

25. I wish to comment on the applicant's proposed conditions.

26. As I understand it the applicant proposes limiting only the excavator and screen to 8am to 5pm. Unfortunately, this will do little to reduce the impact of the operation. As I have hopefully already conveyed above, our lifestyle at the property is about being on and enjoying the land and the view throughout the day. The running of the operation during most waking hours will completely undermine our ability to do this.

27. Moreover, the limitation only to the excavator and screen will mean that the trucks, excavators, pumps and other plant could operate in the evening, at night and on weekends and public holidays. This concerns us greatly. It will mean that there will be no respite from the noise, light and dust. It will mean that we cannot even enjoy peace and quiet in the evenings and weekends.

28. The Applicant proposes a noise limit of 55 dB LAeq (condition 8) which is more lenient than the District Plan standard, and it only applies within 20m of a dwelling. There is no night-time limit – the time when we value peace and quiet the most. Further, nothing limits noise on the lower terrace or by the river, an area which is very important for us to be able to use without disruption from the continuous / persistent noise of an industrial nature. Such noise would be inconsistent with the rural environment, and different in character, regularity and duration to noises which one can expect in this neighbourhood.

29. We are very concerned that, should the Applicant be given consent to operate the mine on the basis of a dust management plan, the Council ensure that the plan is strictly adhered to. If the plan is not complied with, we will be immediately affected. We have no certainty that the Applicant will comply with the plan, or

that the Council will be in a position to enforce the plan, yet we will be immediately affected.

30. We are also concerned that the commencement of the consent is tied to the approval of management plans, a process over which the affected neighbours have no control. This creates uncertainty, as to both commencement and duration of the adverse effects. We consider that affected landowners ought to have certainty concerning when the consented activity may begin, and when it must cease. The duration of the consent will run from the approval of four management plans.

Concluding comments

31. We fell in love with our property because of its tranquility, the beauty of its river setting, and the rural amenity. We built and developed it, over the course of many years, with the natural setting at the forefront of all our decisions. The proposed mining activity is entirely inconsistent with each of these values and would severely affect our enjoyment of the property for a potentially lengthy period. It has the potential not only to affect us, but also our community of neighbours and the friends and family who use the property too. We request the Council decline the application.

Philippa Mary Fee
29 October 2026