

Before the Waikato Regional
and Hauraki District Councils

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**)

In the matter of An application for resource consents to extend the Waihi Gold Mine via underground and open pit mining methods known as Project Martha

By **Oceana Gold (New Zealand) Limited**
Applicant

Statement of evidence of Donna Fisher for Oceana Gold (New Zealand) Limited

29 October 2018

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Introduction

- 1 My name is Donna Fisher. I work as the Company Liaison Officer (**CLO**) for OGNZL's Waihi Operation.
- 2 I have lived in Waihi and surrounds for over 42 years and I call myself a local.
- 3 I have worked at the Waihi mine site since 1995, first as an Environmental Technician for seven years and then in to my current role as CLO for the past 16 years.
- 4 I have been asked to describe what the role of CLO entails, and the sorts of activities I get involved in. I have chosen to do this by telling a story as to what a typical day might look like.
- 5 As a preliminary point, I make the comment that my experience as an Environmental Technician for seven years has given me a good background in environmental monitoring with issues such as dust, vibration and noise. This has helped me understand the results when a complaint of this type is received. I can then relay these results to staff and explanations to a complainant in non-technical language. This knowledge and experience is important in the role because, more times than I can remember, issues have arisen because the mine has not explained things to people in ways they can understand.

A Typical Day

- 6 A typical day for me starts at 7am. On arrival to work I check the 0800 WAIHIGOLD after hours answerphone and contact the security hut to see if they have received any after-hours calls. If they have, I get back to the person who has called and work through whatever the issue is.
- 7 I then report any complaints and mitigating actions from the previous day to my manager, before finding out where we are blasting underground that day and relaying that to the community.
- 8 I currently text 29 residents, email five (including Waihi East School) and phone one resident. Information about blast times is also posted on our website.
- 9 Some days I may have to relay information to residents of any activities that may be occurring in their neighbourhood. This can take the form of door knocking or phoning depending on the activity. For example, we always advise residents of upcoming activities such as nearby drilling rig installation.

- 10 Using a drilling rig installation as an example, I would walk around the neighbourhood letting people know when the rig would be installed, what the hours of work would be, and how long the rig will be in that location. If people have questions I provide answers – either straight away (if I know the answer), or I will find the appropriate person who does have the answer and get back to the resident.
- 11 I leave a note in letterboxes of those people who are not home, and everyone is given my business card or a fridge magnet with the 0800 WAIHIGOLD community engagement line number on it so they can contact me at any time if they have any questions or concerns and I will sort these out for them.
- 12 I am responsible for setting up meetings and liaising with a number of different people on behalf of the Company. These meetings occur quite frequently. Some of these include:
 - private landowners to gain access for exploration activities
 - Iwi groups with an interest in the Waihi area
 - property purchases
 - affected residents
- 13 I manage the Community Engagement Line. This is a useful tool for the local community to contact me directly to discuss concerns and find out information. I have this phone with me 24 hours a day, but it is shared amongst External Affairs staff on weekends and if I am unavailable for any reason.
- 14 Currently we get a lot of people coming into the office or phoning that are carrying out due diligence on properties they are looking to purchase, wanting to know if there are any mining activities planned or located in the area they are interested in.
- 15 Because OGNZL owns quite a number of houses around Waihi we also get a lot of calls from people needing rental accommodation and I help to house people in need as much as possible.
- 16 At present we are only carrying out underground mining, so most complaints received are related to vibration. When the pit is operating, we will get complaints and comments about dust and noise as well.
- 17 Focussing on vibration as an example, on receipt of a complaint, the caller is given the blast results if requested and the call is logged into the complaints database. It is then discussed at the morning management meeting. Complaints can be useful tools for mining engineers to determine how next to carry out a blast in that area by using the complaint as a guide to effects felt at the surface. For this reason, I encourage people to contact me.

- 18 We do from time to time receive complaints from people who believe blast vibration has caused damage to their property. These complaints are investigated in depth, first with a visit from myself and a company representative who is a qualified builder. A report is prepared and sent to the property owner. I then liaise with that resident to guide them through the next steps in the process if they do not agree with the company's findings.
- 19 On occasion we have voluntarily fixed things for people even though the damage reported was not caused by any mining activities.
- 20 I provide all complaints and concerns received in a six-monthly report to the Hauraki District Council and Waikato Regional Council.
- 21 The latest report given to these regulatory authorities was for the period January – June 2018.
- 22 In that period, seventy-four complaints were received from 21 separate locations from the Correnso underground operation. Of these, 38 came from one location, all in relation to underground blasting. This made up 51% of all complaints received.
- 23 I am always keeping an eye on elderly or infirm residents and I visit these people to check how they are. If a resident is worried about blasting I have often sat with them during a blast event to reassure them.
- 24 There are a lot of lonely people in the community and a visit to them and just a cup of tea and a chat can make such a difference to them.
- 25 I attend the Community Network meetings at the Waihi Resource Centre on a regular basis. These meetings are a useful tool for staying informed on what services are available to help people in need and I have often pointed these services out to various residents.
- 26 Because of my job and I suppose to a certain extent my nature, I get emotionally attached to people and sometimes their families. I form long term relationships with them and for some reason I have a special connection to older people and because of this visit them in hospital - I tend to go to a lot of funerals.
- 27 On a cheerier note I have in the past been invited to special milestone events in people's lives which is nice. I also have baked cakes and given flowers to people when it is their birthday – just because.
- 28 We also keep an eye out for people living in cold houses and who for one reason or another cannot afford to purchase firewood to keep their house warm and dry over the chilly winter months. We supply a lot of firewood to those people. I organise for it to be delivered and when necessary will get the boys to stack the

wood for the person. This service is very well received, and I get a lot of great feedback from residents.

- 29 I am the first person to admit that we don't always get everything right. Sometimes we let our community down because we haven't communicated well, or because we make a mistake. While we will always get complaints, and there will always be things we need to work on and improve, I am proud of the way the company tries to work with the community. For me, this is not just a job, and I hope that the work that I and others in the company do contributes a some way to making Waihi the community it is.

Donna Fisher

29 October 2018