

Media Release
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“Leave Schedule 4 Alone,” says mining company

Coromandel’s active mining and exploration company, Newmont Waihi Gold (NWG) is telling the government to leave Schedule 4 land exactly where it is – under protection from open pit mining and exploration – for now.

The company has written a submission on the government’s discussion paper which reviews the mineral potential of land currently administered by the Department of Conservation. The Minister of Energy and Resources and the Minister of Conservation jointly propose that some areas of land in the Coromandel Peninsula, currently within Schedule 4, be removed from Schedule 4 status.

NWG proposes these areas remain in Schedule 4 while the government carries out an accurate assessment of the conservation value of land in the Coromandel Peninsula as well as proving the mineral potential of those areas. Where low conservation value land and high mineralogy meet, then and only then should there be a discussion, on a case by case basis, about more detailed exploration drilling.

“NWG considers that there are some classes of Conservation land that are absolutely sacrosanct and should never be considered for mining irrespective of its mineral potential,” the company submission states.

Conversely there is low value land currently included in Schedule 4, such as areas of scrubby exotic pines that have been subject to logging. Consideration should be given to removing this low value land from Schedule 4 to provide for any identified mineral potential. However, these low value lands of Schedule 4 cannot be properly explored due to the present restrictions on land clearance. If low value land, matched to mineral potential were to be removed from Schedule 4, an application for an access arrangement would still need to be assessed under the Crown Minerals Act and is likely to be subject to conditions reflective of the conservation value of the land.

Any proposals would be subject to the rigours of the Resource Management Act (RMA) processes and in some cases the scrutiny of an Environment Court hearing.

Newmont also supports the initiative of establishing a contestable conservation fund and suggests the fund should support community-identified conservation projects as part of the local working party process. Further, the access fee paid by a mining company should remain for use in conservation projects. Support is also provided for the proposal for joint decision making between the Minister of Conservation and Minister of Energy and Resources.

Newmont reiterates that its exploration programme targets high-grade gold deposits in low-value conservation areas that would be feasible to mine using underground methods with a small footprint. Should a mineable ore body be located the ore would be transported to Waihi’s existing mill for processing.

To read the full submission please see www.marthamine.co.nz or www.anotherview.co.nz

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