

Access Arrangement Report

Attention:

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Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

From: Lydia Haigh, Senior Permissions Advisor, Hokitika Shared Service Centre

Applicant/Permit Holder: Reefton Gold Limited

Minerals Permit Number: EP 60950 – Glamorgan Wires Prospect

Permissions Record Numbers: 125884-AA & AEO1

The purpose of this Report is to provide a thorough analysis of the Access Arrangement Application within the context of the relevant legislation, statutory planning framework and actual and potential effects so that the Decision-Makers can consider the Application and make a decision as to whether it should be granted or declined.

1.0 Executive Summary

Reefton Gold Limited (RGL) (the applicant) is seeking an Access Arrangement (AA) to undertake exploration drilling and activities on Public Conservation Land (PCL) within Exploration Permit (EP) 60950 (Glamorgan Wires Prospect).

EP 60950 was granted to the applicant on 31 October 2023 for a term of 5 years for an area of 4,664 ha. However, RGL applied for an extension to the land area to the permit on 11 June 2024, which was granted on 04 December 2024 for a total of 14,964.8 ha.

EP 60950 is due to expire on 28 October 2028. Consequently, RGL proposes aligning the expiry of the AA term with the term of the Exploration Permit (EP) and any subsequent Extension of Duration, Appraisal Extension of Duration or Mining Permit to this permit. Since a variation would be required to change the conditions or term of the AA, the proposal is for a 5-year term or until the expiry of EP 60950, whichever is earlier. This would provide ample time to complete the current drilling programme alongside any extension to the EP that may be applied for by RGL.

EP 60950 is a Tier 1 permit and so the decision on whether or not to grant an initial AA lies with both the Minister for Resources and the Minister of Conservation. Approval of the Annual Work Programme (AWP) lies with the Minister of Conservation.

The application is for access to 9 drill/camp sites, a stage pump site (due to the distance from the actual pump site) and a helipad. The drill sites would be dual use, also acting as a campsite, therefore, there would be no requirement for a separate campsite. The actual pump site and laydown yard would

be located on adjacent forestry land not within PCL. The proposed drill/camp/pump sites would be 12m x 12m in size and the helipad 20m x 20m. The proposed drilling operations would affect a maximum combined area of approximately 0.18 ha. The Wires Loop Track helipad is a previously cleared area and does not require any further vegetation clearance. It was a previously approved landing site for 123034-AIR to transport Bioresarches staff while conducting ecological and archaeological surveys.

The avoidance and mitigation measures being proposed by the applicant in combination with special conditions in the draft AA would minimise most notable adverse effects on Conservation Values, except those associated with the vegetation clearance required in order to undertake the proposed activities. A review of the proposed activities, potential effects and safeguards available to be implemented has determined that the proposal is inconsistent with the Conservation Act 1987, the purpose for which the land is held by the Crown, at least in the short term, but likely to be consistent in the medium to long term.

In considering this application the Ministers' delegated decision makers must have regard to all matters set out in section 61(2) of the Crown Minerals Act (CMA) 1991. These include the legislation and policies, safeguards against any potential adverse effects, direct net economic and other benefits of the proposed activity in relation to which the Access Arrangements are sought and such other matters as the decision makers consider relevant. Safeguards in this case include all proposed mitigation measures and conditions that would be imposed through any AA document. The direct net economic and other benefits include company tax payments and employment of local staff. Other matters include compensation and requisite bonds and insurance.

Given the nature and scale of the activities and the ability for adverse effects to be managed by draft AA conditions, the proposed exploration drilling is not considered to be significant mining under 61C of the CMA. Public notification is therefore, not required under 61C(3) of the CMA. The decision under s61C is made by the Minister of Conservation or their delegate only and is not a joint decision.

This report recommends to the appropriate Ministers that the AA and AWP applications be approved and proposed exploration AA [Reefton Gold AA - 125884-AA Contract MBIE Final Version.docx](#) and AEO [Reefton Gold Limited, 125884-AA-AEO1.docx](#) be granted to Reefton Gold Limited, subject to the terms and conditions therein.

2.0 Summary of Proposal

Information about the Applicant:

Reefton Gold Limited (RGL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rua Gold Limited. Reefton Gold Limited (RGL/the Applicant) originally secured EP 60950 at Glamorgan Wires Prospect (north of the Wentworth Valley) in 2023. On 11 June 2024 they applied to extend the land within the EP from 4,664 ha to 14,964.8 ha, and this was approved on 04 December 2024.

The application was received from RGL on 02 April 2026 for a new AA to undertake exploration drilling at 9 different drill/camp sites across approximately 0.18 ha of Tairua Forest Conservation Area and Coromandel Forest Park. An additional water pump site and laydown yard are proposed on land owned by Rayonier Matariki Forests, and are mentioned for completeness, but do not form part of this AA application. Further information was requested on 07 May 2026 and received on 12 May 2026.

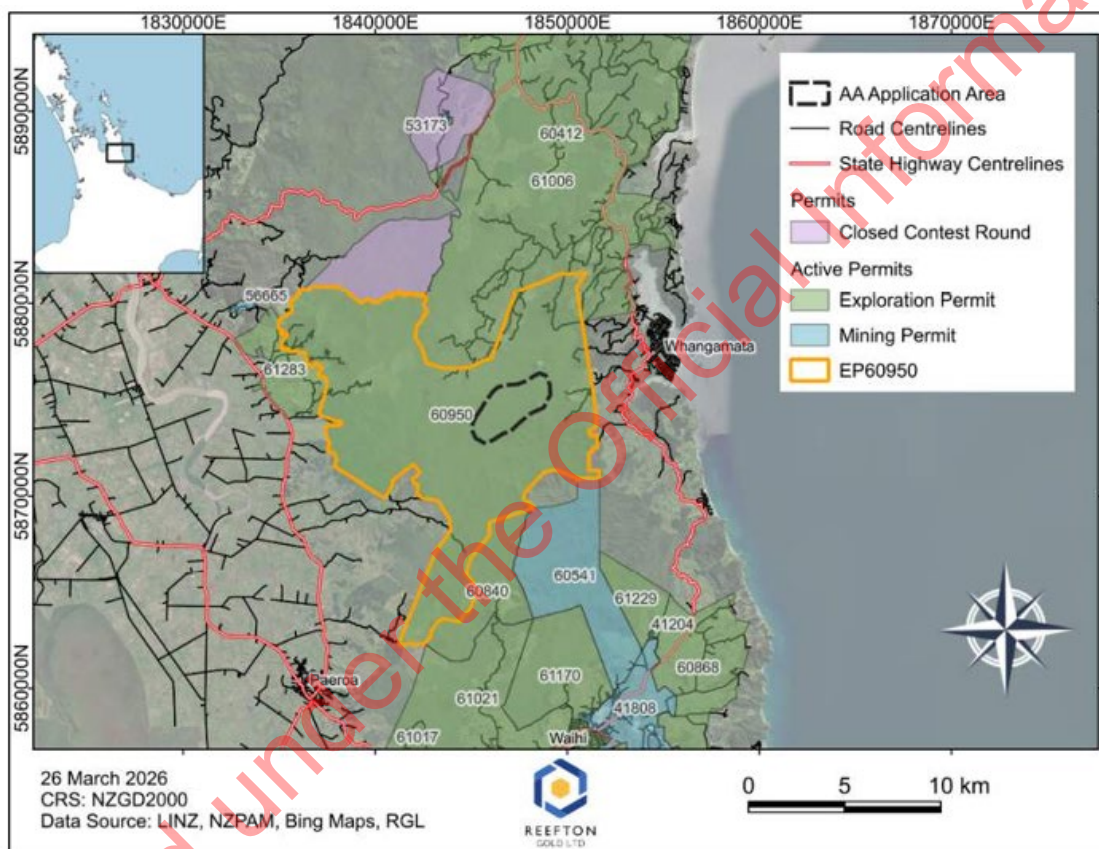
Term sought:

RGL proposes aligning the expiry of the AA term with the term of the Exploration Permit (EP) and any subsequent Extension of Duration, Appraisal Extension of Duration or Mining Permit to this permit. Since a variation would be required to change the conditions or term of the AA, a 5-year term is recommended. This would provide ample time to complete the current drilling programme alongside any extension to the EP that may be applied for by RGL.

Therefore, the recommended term would be 5 years or the expiry of EP 60950, whichever is earlier.

The EP area is shown in Figure 1 below by the yellow boundary.

Figure 1: EP 60950

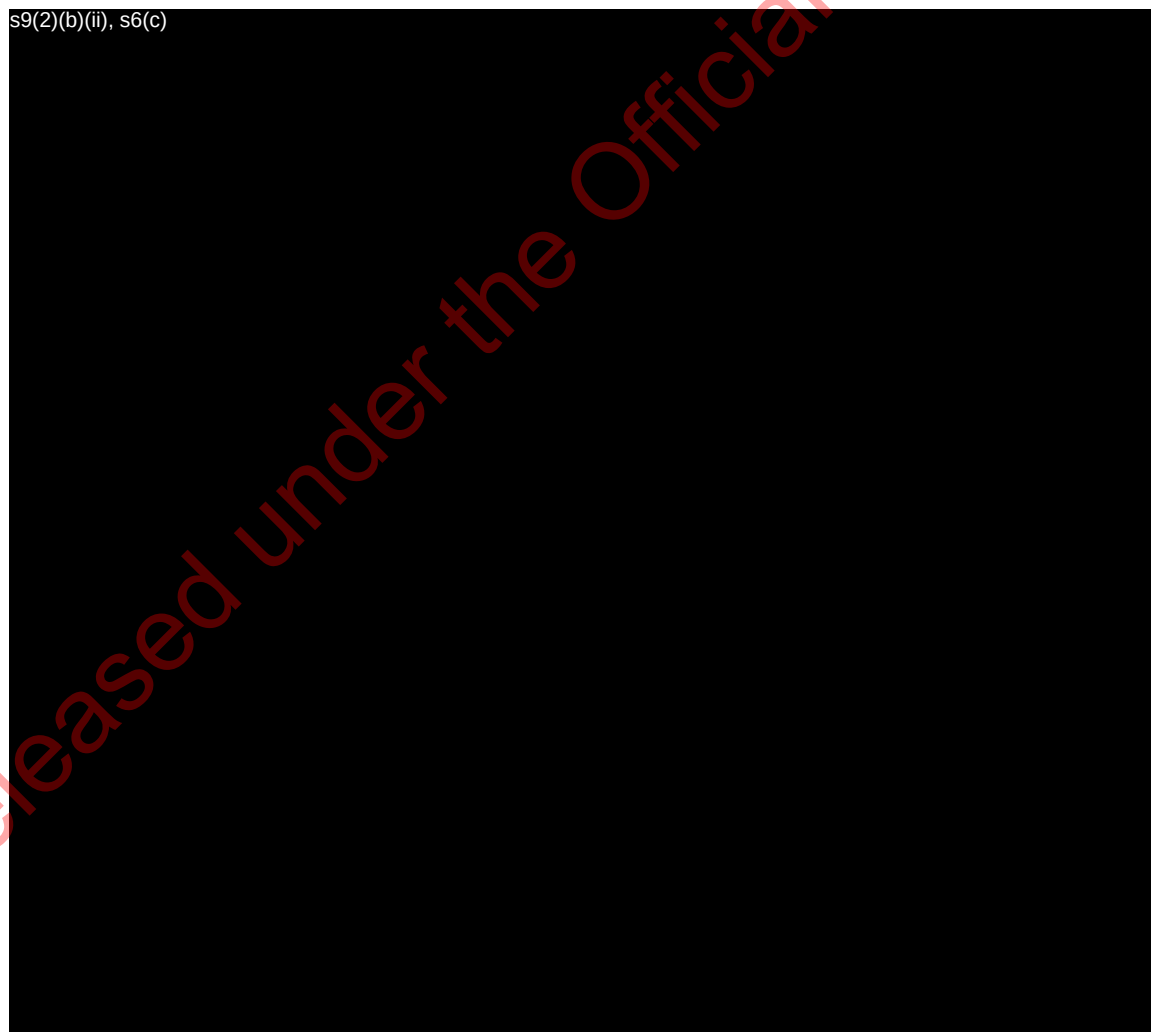


The specific drill/camp site, stage pump and helipad locations are provided in the following table and mapping.

Figure 2: Table of coordinates

Site Name	Easting (NZTM)	Northing (NZTM)	Elevation (m a.s.l.)		
Drill/Camp Sites					
Sutcliff Target					
GLA001	s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)		338		
GLA002			387		
GLA003			462		
Southwest Target					
GLA004			378		
GLA005			418		
GLA006			450		
Wires Ridge Target					
GLA007			337		
GLA008			375		
GLA009			405		
Stage Pump (if required)					
Stage Pump Site			195		
Helicopter Landing Site					
Wires Loop Track Helipad			370		

Figure 3: Proposed drill/campsites and helipad locations:

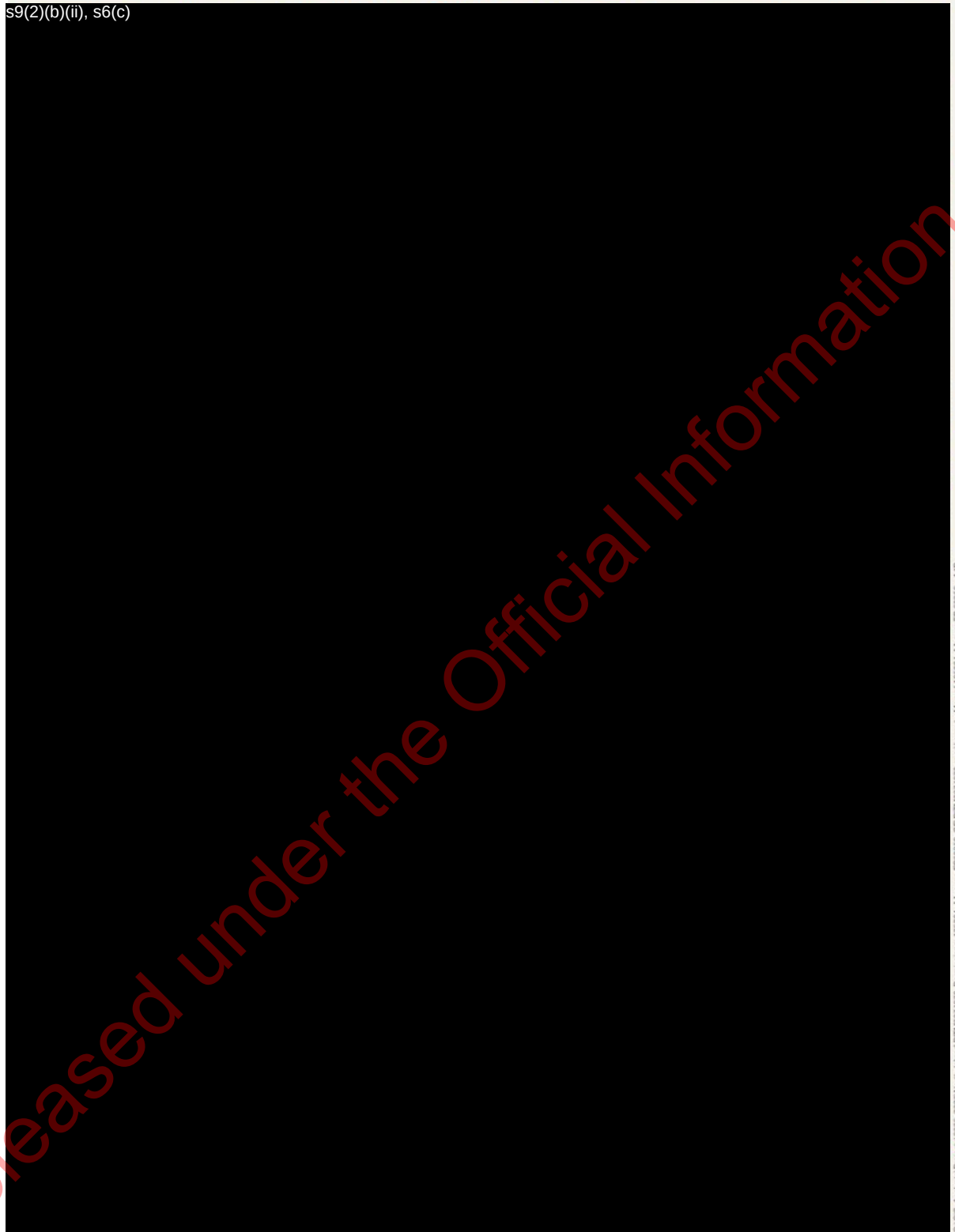


Exploration Permit:	60950
Area:	14,964.8 ha
District Council:	Thames-Coromandel District Council
Regional Council:	Waikato Regional Council
Legal Description of Permit Area:	Area of land illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 5: AA Area

s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Access Arrangement Holder: **Reefton Gold Ltd**
Exploration Permit Number: **60950**
Permission Number: **125884-AA**
Location ID: **108205**
Access Arrangement Area: **0.1840 ha**

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

This map is to inform and may be unsuitable for other purposes e.g. engineering, surveying, navigation | 1:30,000 | Basemap: LINZ CC-BY. © Crown | Service layer credits: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment | July 2026

© GIS Analyst/Project/2025 2026/Name Island/PT/2024/272 Permissions 125884-AA over EP/60950 DE/PT/2024/272 area/Location Map of 125884-AA over EP/60950 - AUP

Exploration Method

Drilling would be by way of diamond drilling. Multiple holes may be drilled at each site for 1-2 months, operating 24/7 with two 12-hours shifts per day. Each diamond drill hole may take several weeks to complete depending on the depth, rock type, rock structure and whether the drill rig encounters any mechanical issues. Depending on the results of the initial hole at each site, RGL may re-use the site and drill the target repeatedly at varying angles to define the extent of the mineralisation.

Damage to the ground cover adjacent to the drill site would be minimised by marking the area with flagging tape (to be removed after drilling) and personnel would be advised to minimise disturbance beyond each site.

The platforms would generally be constructed above ground, and the majority of the re-growth will be relatively undisturbed. No new vegetation adjacent to the sites would be cleared. On completion of drilling the platform may be dismantled and flown to the next location, dependent on whether the site will be reused.

Figure 6: Example drill/camp /pump platforms



Machinery and Equipment

The applicant would use the following:

- Up to 2 x diesel powered skid mounted helicopter portable drill rigs. Handheld or motorised augers, or wacker samplers may also be used.
- A drill/camp/pump platform constructed from big logs and other timber.
- Drill site - up to 4 x 360L double skin, self-bunded diesel fuel tanks, 2 x mechanical pumps, 1 x 20 KVA generator, 1 x 1000 L IBC water tank, 1 x Solid Recovery Unit, drilling equipment including rods, casing, drill bits etc.
- At the pump site – 2 x 360 L double skin, self-bunded diesel fuel tanks, 2 x mechanical diesel pumps, 1 x 20 KVA generator, 1 x holding tank and associated hoses.
- At the camp site – 1 x 3,560 L double skin, self-bunded fuel tanks diesel fuel tanks, 1 x 20 KVA generator, buildings and camp equipment.
- Fire extinguishers, spill kits, jerrycans, drilling fluid etc.

Plant and equipment to be used for exploration would be as far as practicable, clean and free of any exotic weed and seed material prior to entry onto the land.

Fuel, Lubricants and Water Management

Biodegradable lubricants are mixed with water (drilling fluid) and pumped down the hole. The drilling fluid lubricates the hole and picks up drill cuttings (rock around the outside of the hole that is ground down to generate the core sample) as it is recirculated back to the surface. The drilling fluid and cuttings are directed so the cuttings settle to the bottom of the tank, and the drilling fluid is pumped back down the hole. At the completion of the hole the drill cuttings are dug out of the bottom of the tanks and bagged. The bags are flown out for disposal.

In all cases contour drains and sumps would be dug at the bottom of the site to control any run-off from rain events. Any excess drilling water or run-off would be passed through the settling tanks to remove the fines and then discharged to ground via a diversion drain and then run through bush and leaf litter.

Hazardous materials, including fuels, would be stored in double skinned tanks or bunds to minimise the risk of contamination to land or water. All refuelling and maintenance works would be undertaken in such a manner as to prevent contamination of land and surface water. At the completion of drilling boreholes would be capped.

Diamond drilling requires around 20 cubic metres of water per day and will be pumped from the Wharekawa River, downstream of the Sutcliff sites, on adjacent forestry land. Due to the pumping distance the water will be pumped to a stage pump and holding tank within the footprint of any drill/camp site and pumped from there. Pipelines and hoses laid over the ground for the duration of the drilling are unlikely to cause disturbance to vegetation.

Only relatively small quantities of water are required for drilling activities (2L/sec) and camps and water take would be significantly less than the flows in the stream. Any take would be short term in

nature. A water take for drilling is estimated at 40 cubic metres/day. No operations are planned in or within 20m of any water bodies, other than the draw off of water.

Water would be pumped to a holding tank and then pumped to the rig as and when required. Similarly, water required for drinking and toilet facilities would be pumped into a holding tank. By pumping water to a holding tank the effects of the draw off on in stream values will be minimal as the draw off will not be continuous.

Helicopter Access

All access would be helicopter assisted for mobilisation of staff, drill rigs and equipment, and the removal of the drill rig, drill core, equipment and waste. Personnel will move between sites on foot, using established tracks where possible or temporary flagged tracks.

Rehabilitation

Drilling platforms, camps, other infrastructure and rubbish would be removed at the end of the drilling operations and drill holes would be capped. Research into the rehabilitation of areas disturbed through exploration has indicated that natural rehabilitation is preferable to, and more successful than artificial means. Sites would be surveyed annually, and any weeds recorded and sprayed as required. The applicant would respread soils and slash stockpiled for the proposed drilling.

3.0 Information available for consideration

Information received:

The revised AA application ([260512_Glamorgan Access Arrangement Application amended.pdf](#)) for EP 60950 (Glamorgan) was received on 12 May 2026 and is assessed throughout this Report.

The following further information was requested from RGL and received on 12 May 2026:

Response to FIR: [260512_Glamorgan_RFI Response.pdf](#)

Ecology report: [Appendix A - Bioresarches Report 2024.pdf](#)

Ecology desktop and walkthrough: [Appendix B - Bioresarches Report 2025.pdf](#)

Ecological Impact: [Appendix C - Bioresarches Report 2026.pdf](#)

4.0 Conservation values, effects on values, and measures proposed to safeguard potential adverse effects

This section elaborates on the conservation values (flora, fauna, freshwater, historic, cultural, and amenity values) present on the Land at the Site and on surrounding public conservation land, the potential adverse effects on conservation values, and any safeguards proposed to manage potential adverse effects.

Flora

Flora Values

The Applicant states that vegetation in EP 60950 includes native bush administered by the Department, commercial pine forestry plantations and private farming pasture. However, the AA application area is solely located on conservation land. The area has been heavily modified over the years due to historical mining, logging and farming activity. Present day vegetation consists of native regenerative forest at various stages of regrowth. It is characteristic of secondary growth native forest common throughout the hills of the Coromandel.

Flora in the Coromandel Forest Park and Tairua Forest Conservation Area within EP 60950 are a mix of broadleaved species and tree fern forest. Large trees dominate the upper canopy and include kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydiodes*), rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), kauri (*Agathis australis*), miro (*Pectinopitys ferruginea*) and totara (*Podocarp totora*). The mid canopy comprises trees and shrubs such as Coprosma sp., tawa (*Beilshamedia tawa*), akeake (*Dodonaea viscosa*), neinei (*Dracophyllum* sp.), Kanuka and manuka (*Kunzea* sp.) and *Leptospermum* sp), rata (*Metrosideros* sp.), kawakawa (*Piper excelsum*), *Pseudopanax* sp. and *Cordyline* sp. The forest floor is typically dominated by a wide variety of ferns, sedges, orchids, grasses, rushes and herbs.

Ecological values were assessed by Biosearches (2024) on behalf of Reefton Gold limited and they noted the area surrounding the Wires Loop Track was once cleared of native vegetation and is now covered by relatively young regrowth forest. They also identified the presence of gumlands, which typically form on sites where Kauri forest was historically present. Gumlands are classified as 'Critically Endangered' ecosystem. However, during the walkthrough assessment, Biosearches (2025) did not identify any gumlands at the proposed drill/camp sites.

A number of threatened flora species have been identified in NZPCN plant lists in the Wentworth Valley area adjacent to Wires Ridge. Biosearches (2025) identified 13 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' (TAR) plant species within 5km of the AA application area.

Figure 7: 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' plant species within 5km of the proposed AA area

Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation Status
<i>Lophomyrtus bullata</i>	Ramarama	Threatened - Nationally Critical
<i>Pimelea tomentosa</i>	Riceflower	Threatened - Nationally Endangered
<i>Brachyglottis kirkii</i> var. <i>kirkii</i>	Kirk's daisy	Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable
<i>Juncus pauciflorus</i>	Leafless rush	Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable
<i>Agathis australis</i>	Kauri	At Risk - Declining
<i>Pseudopanax discolor</i>	Purple five finger	At Risk - Declining
<i>Metrosideros robusta</i>	Northern rātā	At Risk - Declining
<i>Leionema nudum</i>	Mairehau	At Risk - Declining
<i>Metrosideros carminea</i>	Carmine rātā	At Risk - Declining
<i>Raukawa edgerleyi</i>	Raukawa	At Risk - Declining
<i>Loxosoma cunninghamii</i>	Fern	At Risk - Declining
<i>Dracophyllum patens</i>	Great Barrier Inaka	At Risk - Naturally Uncommon
<i>Caladenia bartlettii</i>	Orchid	At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

On the ground surveys between November 2025 and February 2026 identified two 'At risk' species, kauri and mairehau.

Appendix A of this report displays the applicant's site by site assessment of flora values and impacts.

Potential Adverse Effects on Flora Values

Overall, the impact to flora values would be low with most disturbance being limited to a small amount of vegetation cut back and removal.

RGL had Bioresarches complete vegetation surveys and the outcome included the following mitigations:

- The boundary of drill/camp site GLA003 has been slightly adjusted to avoid mairehau present on one edge.
- Drill/camp site GLA007 has been moved 300m east from mature forest and the root zone of a large kauri tree.
- Drill/camp site GLA009 has been moved 230m to the east-northeast from an area that would require removing larger trees.

Risks to flora from the proposals include potential vegetation clearing and weed introduction/spread. The Applicant proposes to minimise these risks by:

- All equipment will be cleaned and free of exotic weed and seed material prior to entering the land. Kauri Dieback Disease, Didymo and Myrtle Rust control procedures/management plans will be followed.
- Wetland and gumland avoidance – no activities are proposed in the wetland or gumland areas.
- Site rehabilitation through restoration of stockpiled topsoil and vegetation to the site by DVT, as well as subsequent weed control for the duration of the AA and 2 years after completion.

The extent of the proposed vegetation removal is small in the context of the surrounding environment. It is anticipated that the natural recolonisation by native species would quickly take place following the completion of drilling operations, and the rehabilitation and weed management proposed by the Applicant. Supplemented by draft AA conditions, it is considered that potential adverse effects on flora would be low.

Fauna

Fauna Values

Overall, the fauna value of the sites is high. RGL has reviewed a number of documents pertaining to the ecological management of the region and employed the services of Bioresearches, an independent ecological consultancy who most recently supported work on the neighbouring Oceana Gold (New Zealand) Limited's Waihi North Project. The Coromandel Peninsula is home to distinctive fauna and there are a number of nationally threatened species in the region.

Birds

The area supports a wide variety of common forest birds, including the silvereye/tauhou, North Island fantail/piwakawaka, grey warbler/riroriro, North Island pied tit/miromiro, kingfisher/kotare, tui, bellbird/korimako, morepork/ruru, rifleman/titipounamu and New Zealand wood pigeon/kereru. including bellbird, bush robin, yellow-breasted tit and tui. Kiwi have potential to be found within the AA areas. However, none have been sighted and no significant populations are recorded in the area. The New Zealand bush falcon/karearea have also been found in the AA area and are considered a 'Threatened – Nationally Increasing' species. Special conditions for nesting Falcons are recommended to be included in the AA contract.

Frogs

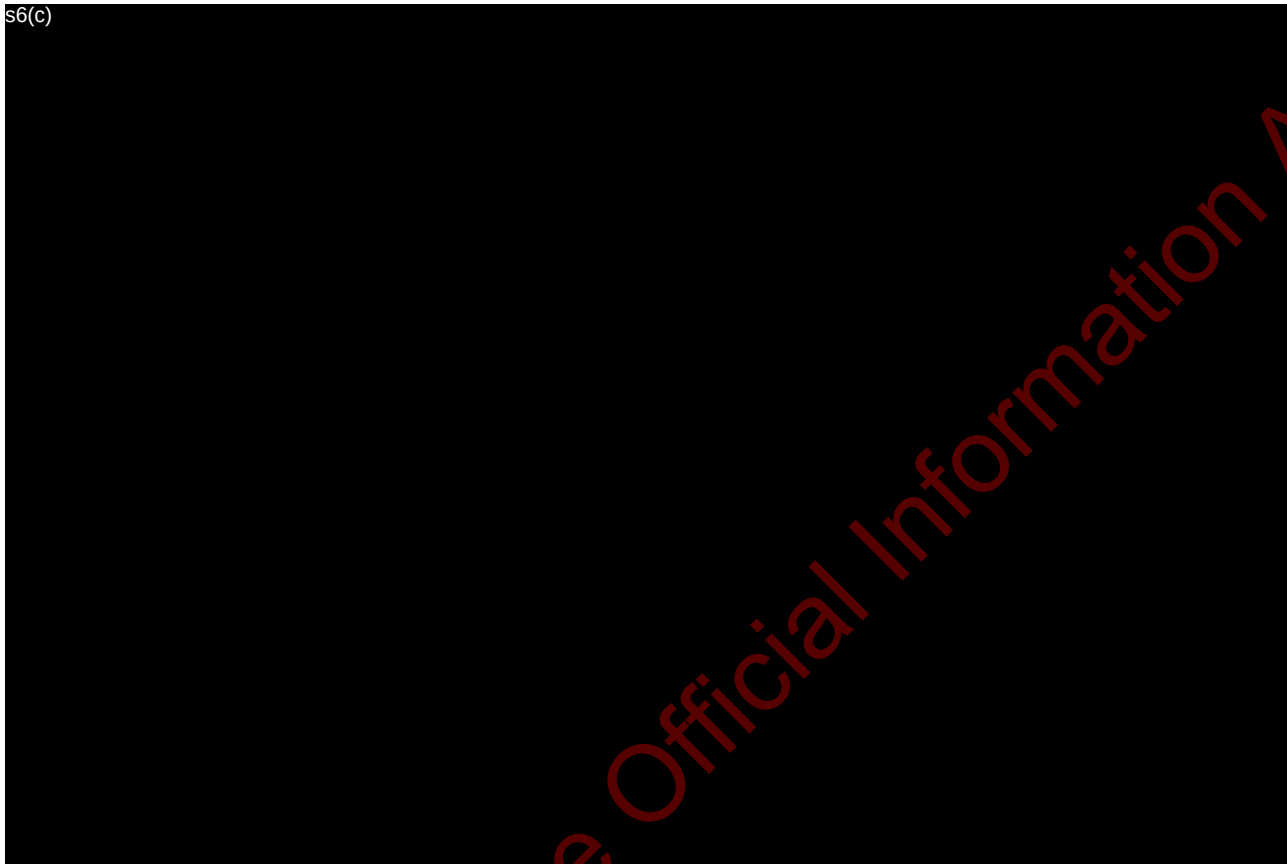
The Archey's frog is one of only 3 native New Zealand frogs, it is classified as 'Nationally Vulnerable' and is only found in the Coromandel and part of King Country. It is the only terrestrial frog found on mainland New Zealand. RGL commissioned Bioresearches to conduct frog distribution surveys within the proposed AA area.

Nocturnal surveys of the proposed drill sites identified the presence of Archey's frogs within the Glamorgan Exploration Area. A total of 16 frogs were observed, with 12 seen whilst walking between sites and 4 identified within proposed sites. Of the three target sites, Archey's frogs were only found in the Tairua target, Sites 4, 5 and 6. They were not identified within or near the Sutcliff and Wires Ridge Targets.

Bioresearches noted that Archey's frogs have been found previously along the Wires Loop track by surveys conducted by Oceana Gold NZ, therefore it is likely they are in the proximity of the proposed AA area.

Figure 8: Target locations

s6(c)



The 'At Risk – Declining' Hochstetter's frog is semi-aquatic, the most widespread native frog in New Zealand and is found on the Coromandel Peninsula. Bioresarches (2024) identified records of Hochstetter's frogs within the proximity of the AA application area during a review of the DOC Amphibian and Reptile Distribution Scheme database. Hochstetter's frogs are closely associated with low order and low flow forested streams, neither of which are within the proposed drill sites. Although Hochstetter's frogs are known to venture from these waterways in hot and humid conditions, none were observed during nocturnal surveys conducted at each site nor through opportunistic searches.

Both species of frog spend most of their time taking refuge in vegetation and under logs and rocks, recent nighttime surveys have recorded both species crossing the Maratoto 4wd track. Therefore, the likelihood of this happening at a proposed drill/camp site location is high. The ecological values pertaining to frogs within the habitat surrounding the loop track is high.

Adverse effects where frogs are present would include trampling, disease spread and displacement due to vegetation clearance, noise and light disturbance. Conditions are proposed in the AA to ensure frog fencing and frog management and effects mitigation conditions are adhered to. These include 3x frog surveys to be completed with during warm conditions, at least 12 degrees C and after rain (see condition 27 of the AA contract). A suitably qualified herpetologist must be onsite to survey for TAR native frogs during vegetation clearance. Handsaws and secateurs are to be used to clear high risk habitat. Motorised tools including chainsaws are only permitted in the presence of suitably qualified Herpetologist. An alternative drill site should be proposed and agreed with Hauraki District office if

5+ TAR native frogs are found during clearance. Flagged paths are proposed and strict rules for personnel to stay on established paths to ensure any bush bashing is limited to reduce the risk of trampling and spreading of pathogens. A frog hygiene protocol is also proposed to be followed.

Frog management and hygiene protocol conditions are included in the AA contract as special conditions. These conditions have been drafted to ensure consistency with the Oceana Gold Wharekurauponga AA, while consideration for the scale of activity has been taken into account to ensure the conditions are proportionate to RGL's activities.

Lizards

Native lizards have been recorded within a 10km radius of the project area. The type of habitat in the proposed AA area would support a variety of species. Ten species of native lizards have been recorded on the Coromandel Peninsula, although some are coastal and not likely to be found within the proposed area. The northern striped gecko is known from records to be found in the northern half of the peninsula, however, due to the contiguous habitat it is likely it could occur in the proposed area. The ecological value of the habitat along the wires loop pertaining to lizards is high.

RGL propose to adhere to a lizard management plan. Lizard management conditions have been included in the AA contract. The lizard management conditions and frog fencing conditions would ensure adverse effects are avoided, mitigated or remedied.

Invertebrates

Invertebrate diversity in the Coromandel region is high due to the wide range of habitat available. A desktop assessment was conducted for records of invertebrates in the proposed AA exploration area; no TAR species were recorded within the exploration area. However, two invertebrate species of conservation interest, the paua slug and a flightless stag beetle have been noted in the neighbouring Waihi Ecological District, though only paua slugs have been observed in the Wharekurauponga catchment. Other native invertebrates such as *peripatus* and wētā are frequently found in intact forest areas, suggesting a characteristic native forest invertebrate community is present where habitat conditions are suitable. Slug salvage conditions are proposed to be included in the AA contract and would ensure adverse effects are avoided, mitigated or remedied.

Bats

Baseline monitoring for long-tailed and short-tailed bats was conducted between December 2025 and February 2026 at the proposed drill/camp/helipad sites throughout the Glamorgan exploration area. No bats were detected during this survey effort. While the majority of the forest throughout the proposed Glamorgan exploration area is young, there are still numerous trees in the landscape that support features that bats can utilise as roost habitat such as cavities and flaking bark. Due to the prevalence of bat habitat and historic records of long-tailed bats occurring within a 5km radius of the proposed area, the ecological values are considered high.

It is recommended that bat protocol conditions be included in the AA contract, this would ensure adverse effects are avoided, mitigated or remedied.

Potential Adverse Effects on and Mitigation Measures on Fauna Values

Overall, the potential impact to fauna values is high. The adverse effects of the proposed activities include habitat loss through the direct clearing of vegetation i.e. reducing shelter, breeding sites and food sources, disturbance to sensitive species due to noise, vibration and human activity, increased predation risk through creating edge effects in clearings, soil and water impacts, barrier to species movement.

The proposed special conditions, including the bat protocols, lizard management plan, invertebrate conditions, avifauna (specifically New Zealand Falcon) conditions and frog management conditions adequately address the potential adverse effects to fauna values.

Freshwater

Freshwater Values, Potential Adverse Effects and Mitigation Measures

The freshwater effects at the proposed AA exploration site would be minimal. RGL propose to take water from the Wharekawa River, this is situated off PCL on property owned by Rayonier Matariki Forests. RGL have applied for resource consent to Waikato Regional Council who manage the protection of water flow and quality.

Historic/Archaeological

Historic/Archaeological Values

Mining - The Applicant states that mining activity has been present in the Coromandel area since 1887 with production of 9,796 tons of gold-silver ore from the Luck-at-Last, Glamorgan, Auckland and Goldwyn mines between 1887 and 1925. Mining ceased in 1925 and further exploration in the area did not commence until the 1970s. While the state of preservation of the numerous sites varies considerably, many are of importance. These sites focus on the historical aspects of mining activity and are of significance in representing the lifestyle of mining communities in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Telegraph Line - The Old Wires Track is named after a telegraph line that was erected in 1872 and used to run through the Maratoto area connecting Auckland and Wellington. Remnants of the old telegraph poles can be seen along the Maratoto 4WD track and along Wires Ridge, as well as the fence from the old cattle holding pen.

Timber and Farming – Māori used kauri timber for boat building, carving and building houses. The gum was used as a fire starter and for chewing. After the arrival of the European settlers from the 1700s onwards, kauri was logged on a much larger scale. The Wires area was worked for kauri timber in the 1800s. The Wire plateau was cut up into sections in the early 1900s. Some land was used for farming and consequently the bush was felled and the property grassed and ring fenced. A sawmill was also built. When milling ceased the project became unprofitable and land was returned to the Crown and all property removed.

RGL has checked the GIS map on the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga website and the list of registered historic sites; no archaeological or historic sites were shown to be in the proposed AA area. However, the ArchSite website listed several archaeological sites within EP 60950. RGL are aware the area could contain other archaeological sites. RGL are aware of their obligations under the Heritage

New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. Consequently, RGL have developed a Heritage Management Plan and Accidental Discovery Protocol.

Historical and cultural sites will be avoided, and any protected New Zealand object, or taonga tuturu (as defined by the Protected Objects Act 1975), or any object of historical significance found in the area or on the land will be left in situ and the Hauraki District Office and Secretary of Internal Affairs notified as soon as reasonably practicable. Authority from Heritage New Zealand will be obtained before any historical site is destroyed, damaged or modified.

The Applicant's assessment and proposed mitigations are accepted. Supplemented by draft AA accidental discovery protocols conditions, it is considered that potential adverse effects on heritage values would be low.

Potential Adverse Effects and Mitigation Measures

Despite the proximity of registered historical sites, the proposed activity has low potential adverse effects on historical values. The standard special conditions adequately address the potential adverse effects to historic values.

Amenity

Amenity Values, Potential Adverse Effects and Mitigation Measures

Amenity values relate to the perception of and experiences of the landscape, scenic and recreational values in a locality.

The Applicant states that the public uses the general area for tramping, 4wding, and hunting.

Walking Tracks – Several walking tracks pass through EP 60950 including the Old Wires Track, Whangamata Tramping Track and Wentworth Falls Track. There is also a campsite in the Wentworth Valley. The proposed AA drill/camp sites are located in the vicinity of these walking tracks with the closest being drill /camp site 6 which is approximately 500m from the Loop Track.

4wd Tracks – The Maratoto 4wd Track is a key entry point to the AA application area from the west. The community agreement is with NZ 4WD Association is open in the summer months to 4wd vehicles. It is also a popular track with walkers. **Hunting** – The proposed AA application area is within an open hunting area and is frequently used by hunters.

RGL have positioned the drill/camp sites in locations within thick bush that would not be visible to the public from any walking tracks. The Company therefore considers that, given the short duration of each phase of activity, there is no need to reduce the visual impact of its activities. Clear signage and or markers will be erected around the drill/camp/heli pad sites to deter members of the public from incidentally accessing the site whilst drilling or helicopter operations are happening.

The Applicant's assessment and proposed mitigations are accepted. Supplemented by draft AA conditions that propose to exclude exploration works over Christmas/New Year and other public holidays, it is considered that potential adverse effects on recreation values would be low.

Public Safety

RGL have developed a standard operating procedure for managing safety around public access. The Applicant's assessment and proposed mitigations are accepted. Special conditions are added in the AA contract to ensure public safety and sites will be closed under section 13 of the Conservation Act for the purpose of public safety.

5.0 Section 4 CMA – Treaty of Waitangi Principles

Section 4 of the CMA provides that *"all persons exercising functions and powers under this Act shall have regard to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi)."* This implies that the Department should consult with iwi if it is determined that an application would impact on their relationship with their lands, resources and taonga.

The Conservation Act 1987 Section 4 is as follows:

s4 Act to give effect to Treaty of Waitangi

This Act shall so be interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the [Treaty of Waitangi](#)

Note the difference between the two Acts with the Crown Minerals Act "shall have regard" to the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) and the Conservation Act "give effect to".

The following Iwi were consulted with on this application with comments due by 30 June 2026:

- Hauraki Collective
- Ngāti Hako
- Ngāti Hei
- Ngāti Maru
- Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki
- Ngāti Tamatera
- Ngāti Porou
- Ngāti Pūkenga
- Ngāti Rāhiri Tumutumu
- Ngāti Pū
- Ngāti Tara Tokanui
- Ngāti Whanaunga
- Ngāti Pāoa

Ngāti Hei commented on 26 June 2026, requesting further information including technical reports, a site map and site visit. Further information was provided by the Department and RGL contacted Ngāti Hei to arrange a site visit on 25 June 2026. However, Ngāti Hei requested the site visit be deferred to late August/early September after the election of the new Board Members at Ngāti Hei. RGL also made attempts in March 2026 to engage with Ngāti Hei as part of their AA application, including the request for a meeting and site visit, however no response was received. The Department agreed to extend the consultation period to 14 July 2026 to enable sufficient time for the review of further information and include a special condition in the AA that ensures any request for a site visit be any Hauraki iwi will be met by RGL. No response was received.

No redress impacts the area within this AA. The Department has provided Ngāti Hei with the agreed consultation period and further extended this period for two weeks to 14 July 2026 to review the additional information. It is considered iwi have had sufficient opportunity to provide feedback.

The requested site visit would extend the decision on this application over the agreed Ministerial timeframes for processing such applications. A special condition is proposed to be added to the AA contract to ensure Ngāti Hei can request a site visit at any point during the term of the AA.

The Department recognises the interest of iwi given that the location is within their rohe. However, the Department has been advised that at the current point in time, all other local iwi and hapu have made a choice not to engage on the application presented.

The requirement 'shall have regard to' under the CMA is not synonymous with shall 'give effect to' under the Conservation Act 1987 (CA).¹ Rather, the legislative intent is for the decision maker to give genuine attention and thought to section 4 matters but not necessarily to accept them (they do not in themselves determine an outcome). The weight to be given is a matter for the decision maker and will depend on the circumstances of each case, including the nature of the activity, the statutory conservation framework, intent of applicable Treaty settlements and the significance to tangata whenua of the land, resource or taonga in question.

It is considered that the Principles of Informed Decision Making and Partnership have been met having attempted to consult iwi and as the proposed special conditions avoid, remedy, or mitigate known concerns of iwi.

It is also considered that there are no issues around Active Protection of known Reconciliation Redress required to be addressed outside of the standard special conditions applicable.

The Department consider that consultation was carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation and took into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

6.0	Section 61 Crown Minerals Act (CMA) – Matters the decision maker shall have regard to
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The purpose of the Crown Minerals Act 1991 (CMA 1991) is *"to promote prospecting for exploration for and mining of Crown owned minerals for the benefit of New Zealand."* Section 61 (1A) of the CMA 1991 states that *"The appropriate Minister (in the case of subsection (1)) or the Minister and the appropriate Minister (in the case of subsection (1AA)) must not accept any application for an access arrangement, or variation to an access arrangement, or enter into any access arrangement, or variation to an access arrangement, relating to any Crown owned mineral in any Crown owned land or internal waters or land of the common marine and coastal area described in [Schedule 4](#)...[except in relation to limited circumstances and works specified in subsections (a)-(e)]."*

The public conservation land over which the permit holder is seeking an Access Arrangement is not included in Schedule 4; therefore, the Ministers can accept and consider this application.

EP 60950 is classified as a Tier 1 Minerals Permit pursuant to section 2B(1) of the CMA and the land over which access is sought is not restricted from prospecting, exploration or mining by the CMA.

Therefore, under s61(1AA) the Minister (Minister for Resources or their delegate) and the appropriate Minister (Minister of Conservation or their delegate) may, by agreement with the permit holder concerned, enter into the following arrangements in respect of Crown land:

- (a) an initial access arrangement in relation to a Tier 1 permit:
- (b) a variation to an existing access arrangement in relation to a Tier 1 permit if the variation is to allow access for the purpose of significant exploration or mining activities.

Under section 61(2):

"In considering whether to agree to an access arrangement, or variation to an access arrangement, in respect of Crown land, the appropriate Minister (in the case of subsection (1)) or the Minister and the appropriate Minister (in the case of subsection (1AA)) shall have regard to—

- (a) the objectives of any Act under which the land is administered; and*
- (b) any purpose for which the land is held by the Crown; and*
- (c) any policy statement or management plan of the Crown in relation to the land; and*
- (d) the safeguards against any potential adverse effects of carrying out the proposed programme of work; and*
- (da) the direct net economic and other benefits of the proposed activity in relation to which the access arrangement is sought; and*
- (db) if [section 61C\(3\)](#) applies, the recommendation of the Director-General of Conservation and summary referred to in that subsection; and*
- (e) any other matters that that Minister or those Ministers consider relevant."*

These aspects are discussed in detail in the following sections.

(a) Objectives of any Act under which the Land is administered

The public conservation land that the applicant has applied for access to is administered by the Department under the Conservation Act 1987.

The long title of the Conservation Act 1987 is: *"An Act to promote the conservation of New Zealand's natural and historic resources, and for that purpose to establish a Department of Conservation."*

Under the Conservation Act 1987, "conservation" is defined as:

"...the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their intrinsic values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations."

Under the Conservation Act 1987, "preservation" in relation to a resource, is defined as:

“...the maintenance, so far as is practicable, of its intrinsic values.”

And “natural resources” is defined as:

- (a) plants and animals of all kinds; and*
- (b) the air, water, and soil in or on which any plant or animal lives or may live; and*
- (c) landscape and landform; and*
- (d) geological features; and*
- (e) systems of interacting living organisms, and their environment: - and includes any interest in a natural resource*

(b) Purpose for which the Land is held

The application for exploration at EP 60950 is within Coromandel Forest Park and Tairua Forest Conservation Area.

Coromandel Forest Park is held as a Conservation Park under section 19 of the Conservation Act 1987, which states that the park should be managed for the following purpose:

- (a) that its natural and historic resources are protected; and*
- (b) subject to paragraph (a), to facilitate public recreation and enjoyment.*

Tairua Forest Conservation Area, which is held as stewardship area managed under Section 25 of the Conservation Act 1987, which states the area should be managed with the following purpose:

- (a) “Every stewardship area shall so be managed that its natural and historic resources are protected.”*

Comment on (a) and (b)

The majority of impacts on recreational enjoyment and appreciation of indigenous natural and historic resources by the public would be limited since the drill locations are not near any popular walking tracks or nearby historic sites. They would also be limited to the period of time that activities would occur over, that is, during helicopter transport and drilling.

The inherent nature of vegetation removal, means that the proposal would be inconsistent with the objectives of the Conservation Act 1987 and the purpose for which the Land is held in the short term because the proposal contradicts the objective of preservation and protection of natural resources, particularly beech forest. In the medium term, once rehabilitation has successfully occurred over all areas and each disturbed drill site is returned to its natural state, the application would be consistent with the objectives of the Conservation Act 1987 and the purpose for which the land is held.

Having regard to the matters in section 61(2)(a) and (b) of the Crown Minerals Act 1991, the limited scale and temporary nature of the proposed activities, the reuse of previously authorised sites, the adequacy of safeguards and rehabilitation measures, and the modest but tangible economic benefits together weigh in favour of granting access. The residual adverse effects are not of a nature or scale that would warrant decline.

(c) Any policy statement or management plan of the Crown in relation to the land
Conservation General Policy (CGP)

The Conservation General Policy (CGP) is the first statement of general policy prepared under section 17C of the Conservation Act 1987. It provides guidance for the implementation of the Conservation Act and other conservation related legislation. The CGP sets out to achieve integrated conservation management over the wide spectrum of conservation areas administered and tasks performed, while maintaining a strong statute-based focus on the protection and preservation of natural and historic resources. The policy sections of the CGP relevant to this proposal are outlined below.

These sections describe the Department's generic strategy in terms of managing activities on public conservation land that is not national park. The relevant policies to activities such as mining operations that the Department needs to consider are:

Policy 4.5 – Geological Features, Landforms, and Landscapes

Policy 4.5(b) of the CGP states: "Activities which reduce the intrinsic values of landscape, landform and geological features on public conservation lands and waters should be located and managed so that their adverse effects are avoided or otherwise minimised."

In relation to the above policy, the proposed activity would have short term adverse effects which would have low adverse impacts on the intrinsic values of landscape, landform and geological features associated with the application area. Compliance with the conditions will ensure that the proposed activity is consistent with the Conservation General Policy.

Policy 4.6 - Ecosystem Services

Policy 4.6(a) of the CGP states: "*Activities on public conservation lands and waters should be planned and managed in ways which avoid or otherwise minimise adverse effects on the quality of ecosystem services.*"

It is expected that the proposed exploration activities could be planned and managed so that any adverse effects on ecosystem services are minimised through appropriate operations management, rehabilitation and the conditions proposed in the AAs. Compliance with the conditions will ensure that the proposed activities are consistent with the Conservation General Policy.

Policy 11.1 – All Activities requiring specific authorisation

The relevant sections of Policy 11.1 states:

11.1 (a) Any application for a concession or other authorisation would comply with, or be consistent with, the objectives of the relevant Act, the statutory purposes for which the place is held, and any conservation management strategy or plan.

11.1 (b) All activities on public conservation lands and waters which require a concession or other authorisation should, where relevant, avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects (including cumulative effects) and maximise any positive effects on natural resources and historical and cultural heritage, and on the benefit and enjoyment of the public, including public access.

11.1 (c) The Department and all concession and other authorisation holders should monitor the effects of authorised activities on natural resources, historical and cultural heritage, and

the benefit and enjoyment of the public, including public access, to inform future management decisions.

11.1 (d) Concession and other authorisation holders would be responsible for the safe conduct of their operations, including the safety of staff, clients, contractors, and the public, and compliance with relevant safety standards and legal obligations.

It is expected that the proposed activity could be planned and managed so that the adverse effects are minimised, through appropriate operations management and the conditions proposed in the AA.

Monitoring, as mentioned in policy 11, would initially be undertaken very regularly until it is determined that the operator is competent and would comply with conditions of the draft AA. This may initially occur every 1-2 months, then quarterly or 6 monthly and again at the conclusion of exploration activities to ensure compliance with the conditions of the AA and assess if the area has been disturbed and rehabilitated.

Waikato Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) 2014-2024

The CMS sets out objectives and policies for management of conservation values and desired outcomes.

The relevant parts of the CMS are parts are as follows:

Part Three – section 16.9 – Mining

16.9.1 Policies – Mining

The CMS states... 16.9.1.1... *“Consider applications for access arrangements on a case-by-case basis...*

16.9.1.2 Assess applications for access arrangements under the Crown Minerals Act 1991, in accordance with (but not limited to) the following matters:

- a) Whether or not the site is included in Schedule 4 of the Act;*
- b) Whether the activity is consistent with the outcome and policies for the Place where the activity is proposed to occur, the objectives in Part One and the other relevant policies in Part Three;*
- c) The significance of the conservation values and recreation opportunities present, and the effect the proposal will have on these values;*
- d) The adequacy and achievability of the proposed site rehabilitation work;*
- e) The adequacy and or appropriateness of compensation offered for loss or damage to conservation values as a result of the access arrangement, where losses cannot be safeguarded through other measures;*
- f) Any direct economic or other benefits as well as any direct economic or other detrimental effects (such as decrease in tourism) that the activity will have in relation to the area; and*
- g) Whether a mining-related application will be classified as a ‘significant application (in accordance with the Crown Minerals Act 1991) so as to require public notification.*

16.9.1.3

Review the conditions of access arrangement under the Crown Minerals Act 1991 if monitoring reveals the effects of mining activities on conservation values and recreation opportunities are greater than expected or new effects are discovered.”

Part Two – Places

Maratoto, Wentworth and Wharekirauponga

9.2.2 Policies

9.2.2.14.....Should consider applications for access arrangements under the Crown Minerals Act 1991 16 under the Crown Mineral Act 1991 in accordance with Policies 16.3.1.1 to 16.9.1.3 in Part Three and the following criteria.....

- a) Only where the activity seeks access to public conservation lands south of SH25A and Hikau Settlement Road, excluding the Otahu Ecological Area and Parakawai Geological Area*
- b) The activity avoids priority ecosystem units for the persistence of native frogs, Coromandel brown kiwi, native bats, and other Threatened and At Risk species;*
- c) Adverse effects on other natural values, including the indigenous forest corridor along the Coromandel Range, are avoided, remedied or mitigated; and*
- d) Significant geological features, landforms and landscapes and cultural sites are protected.”*

The proposal has been assessed against the CMS policies above and the Conservation General Policy has been applied and considered elsewhere in this report. Conditions have been included in the draft Access Arrangement to protect natural flora and fauna, historical and cultural heritage values, as well as recreational opportunities, to the extent practicable while enabling the proposed mining activities.

However, the proposal may have short-term localised impacts to visitors of these sites in the frontcountry and backcountry, such as noise from drilling or helicopters. Compensation amounts and limited use during busy periods would mitigate these effects.

The recommended special conditions adequately address the potential impacts to flora. In the medium term, once rehabilitation has successfully occurred over all areas and the flora has returned to its natural state, the application would be consistent with the CMS at this place.

Adherence to the special conditions adequately addresses these potential impacts. As such, the proposed AA is consistent with the CMS at this Place.

(d) The safeguards against any potential adverse effects of carrying out the proposed programme of work

To safeguard against adverse effects occurring if access is granted, the Ministers are able to impose any conditions considered necessary as part of an access arrangement that would safeguard against any adverse effects that might result from the proposal.

To ensure all foreseeable adverse effects are minimised or mitigated, conditions have been included in the AA. These proposed conditions aim to minimise disturbance, protect conservation values and enhance rehabilitation outcomes. See the second schedule of the AA for the special conditions proposed to minimise the disturbance by the proposed exploration operation.

Insurances

It would be a requirement of any AA that insurances be in place for public liability and potential fires. The required amounts of insurance cover would be \$2,000,000.00 for public liability and \$500,000.00 for third party vehicle. The applicant has supplied proof of valid insurance.

Bond

Bonds can be required for ensuring that the Permit Holder complies with the conditions of the AA and to allow the Department to recover costs of undertaking rehabilitation, weed control, rubbish removal or recovery of equipment should the applicant default. An appropriate bond to cover the foreseeable worst-case scenario at the AA would be s9(2)(i).

(d)(a) Direct net economic and other benefits of the proposed activity

While a detailed description of the direct net economic benefits was not provided, at a high level this is expected to be driven by employment. For example, RGL notes the local economy will benefit through the wages paid in the employment of local people, including:

- field staff for RGL (the applicant also notes the potential to include iwi in carrying out compensation programmes)
- contractors (drilling, construction and helicopter)

There will also be additional local expenditure in relation to goods and services (fuel, lubricants, timber, food, accommodation, laboratory services, hire vehicles etc.).

In terms of the level of expenditure, in its 2023 permit application that resulted in the grant of EP 60950, RGL estimated it would need to spend at least \$6.5 million over five years to complete the requirements of the permit work programme activities. The majority of that spend was attributed to exploration drilling programmes.

Wider benefits will also be derived from RGL's activities. For example, the proposed activities would materially add to the existing knowledge of the Crown minerals estate. The data obtained from the proposed activities is required to be submitted to the Crown via the conditions of EP 60950 and through the Crown Minerals (Minerals Other than Petroleum) Regulations 2007.

RGL's activities will also determine whether there is an economically mineable resource within the land and allow for studies to determine the most effective way to exploit any such resource. If an economic resource is found, and can be technically and economically extracted, the Crown would then receive additional economic benefits through royalties, taxes as well as increased investment.

(d)(b) If section 61C(3) applies, the recommendation of the Director-General of Conservation and summary referred to in that subsection

Subject to the agreement of the Minister of Conservation's delegate only, it is advised that section 61C(3) does not apply because the proposal for exploration drilling is not considered significant mining activities under section 61C(2).

(e) Such other matters as the appropriate Minister considers relevant

Term

The recommended term is 5 years or the expiry of EP 60950, whichever is earlier.

Compensation

Section 76 of the CMA states that the owner and occupier of any land that has an AA granted over it, is entitled to receive compensation. As such, if the Access Arrangement is granted to the applicant for EP 60950, or any part, the Department is entitled to receive compensation to address losses of conservation values. It is considered appropriate for compensation to be set to cover industrial intrusion and the loss of conservation values on the land.

The recommended compensation framework addresses residual adverse effects that cannot be fully avoided or remedied, including vegetation loss and temporary industrial intrusion. The rates are consistent with comparable access arrangements in the Coromandel and provide an incentive to minimise vegetation clearance.

The following compensation is recommended to be levied and is based on similar AAs in the area:

- a. s9(2)(i) + GST per annum for the intrusion of an industrial operation on the Land because of Exploration operations, to be paid in advance at the time of presentation of an Annual Work Programme for the succeeding 12 months;
- b. s9(2)(i) + GST per use of drill rig per day (whether operational on site or not)
- c. s9(2)(i) + GST as a one-off fee per campsite and/or helicopter landing area utilised on the Land where vegetation is damaged or cleared;
- d. s9(2)(i) + GST per new drill site;
- e. s9(2)(i) + GST per reuse of any drill site authorised under this Access Arrangement where regenerating vegetation is damaged or cleared.
- f. s9(2)(i) + GST per drill site where any vegetation cleared/felled at that site is equal to or less than 10cm diameter at breast height; and
- g. s9(2)(i) + GST per drill site where any vegetation cleared/felled at that site is equal to or greater than 10cm diameter at breast height and less than 15cm diameter at breast height; and
- h. s9(2)(i) + GST per drill site, per stem where any individual tree is cleared/felled at that site that is equal, or greater than 15cm diameter at breast height and less than 30cm at breast height; and
- i. s9(2)(i) + GST per drill site, per stem where any individual tree is cleared/felled at that site that is equal, or greater than 30cm diameter at maximum breast height and less than 40cm at breast height; and
- j. s9(2)(i) + GST per drill site, per stem where any individual tree is cleared/felled at that site that is equal to, or greater than 40cm diameter at maximum breast height and less than 50cm DBH.
- k. s9(2)(i) + GST where Archey's frog found (prior to use of drill site, during use of the site or in the surrounding drill site extent);

- l. s9(2)(i) + GST where Hochstetter frog or at risk/threatened lizard found (prior to use of drill site, during use of site or in 20m x 20m area surrounding site);
- m. s9(2)(i) + GST per day, or any part thereof, where helicopters are used in association with the exploration operations in the high visitor period of 23rd December to 6th February (inclusive) and during any New Zealand statutory holiday.

These amounts are consistent with similar AAs in the area. All compensation amounts are to be annually reviewed for changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and adjusted accordingly. Compensation will be paid into a Department of Conservation Trust Account for conservation purposes in the North Island.

The permit holder would be required by way of condition to complete an annual schedule to record each tree stem removed from each drill site. This would enable compensation to be calculated and paid on submission of the next annual work plan or prior. This is also further incentive, should permission be granted, for the applicant to minimise tree removal.

7.0 Annual Work Programmes

EP 60950 (Glamorgan Wires Prospect)

The applicant submitted an Annual Work Programme (AWP) as part of their amended AA application ([260512 Glamorgan Access Arrangement Application amended.pdf](#)) on 12 May 2026 (original application 02 April 2026). As this is the first AWP, it follows the description of the proposed activity and locations set out in Section 2 of this Report.

Summary of Proposal:

- The first stage of the work programme will be completed from the 9 drill pads proposed a detailed in Appendix 1.
- Preparation of sites for drilling would involve the construction of (12m x 12m) wooden drilling/camp platforms. These would be built out of sawn timber and logs, which would be flown onto the required sites.
- On completion of drilling the platform may be dismantled and flown to the next location, dependent on whether the site would be reused as part of this access arrangement.
- Drilling operations would be completed periodically on both single and double shifts, generally on a 10 days on / 4 days off roster, 24/7 with 12-hour shifts.
- Hazardous materials, including fuels, would be stored in double skinned tanks. All refuelling, and maintenance works will be undertaken in such a manner as to prevent contamination of land and surface water. Only biodegradable additives would be used during drilling activities and at the completion of drilling boreholes would be capped.

The summary of the proposed AWP is consistent with the relevant provisions of the AA.

Compensation

The applicant will be invoiced s9(2)(i) plus GST in advance for industrial intrusion.

Bonds/Insurances/Resource Consents

The requisite ^{s9(2)(i)} bond is required, insurances are currently in place.

8.0 Conclusions

In considering the relevant matters set out above, the following conclusions have been reached:
On balance, the application is supported. The proposed activities are low scale, confined to specific sites, and subject to robust safeguards, rehabilitation requirements, compensation, and bonding. The residual adverse effects are temporary and do not warrant decline when weighed against section 61(2) CMA considerations.

9.0 Recommendations

I recommend that you..... (Ngā tohutohu)

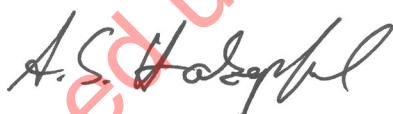
	Access Arrangement under section 61 (1AA) of the Crown Minerals Act 1991
a)	Agree that the proposal is not significant mining activities under section 61C(2).
b)	Approve the Application and grant an exploration AA, subject to the standard and special conditions listed therein.
c)	Subject to approval under b), Approve the initial Annual Work Programme and grant the Authority to Enter and Operate attached.

On behalf of the Minister of Conservation, with respect to the above recommendations a)-c):

a) Agree/Disagree;

b) Approve/Decline; and

c) Approve/Decline



Avi Holzapfel, Operations Manager
Hauraki Office

Pursuant to a written delegation from the Director-General of Conservation

Date: 30 July 2026

Decision Maker Rationale:

I have read, understood and agree with the report's recommendation, including the considerations of meeting our statutory and treaty partnership / S4 Cons. Act obligations, ecological and recreation

impacts, and the likelihood that the proposed impact management will address these impacts sufficiently.

Time spent reading this report to make a decision. All other time e.g. attending meetings etc should already be captured in the Cost Recovery Tool.	8 hr
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On behalf of the Minister for Resources, with respect to the above recommendation b):

b) Approve/~~Decline~~



John Buick-Constable
National Manager, Petroleum, Minerals & Offshore Renewable Energy
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
Pursuant to delegated authority from the Minister for Resources
Date:

APPENDIX A

Below is the site-by-site analysis provided by the applicant for EP 60950:

21.1 Drill/Camp Site GLA001 s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

This proposed drill/camp site is located on gently sloping terrain north of the 520 peak and northwest of the Sutcliff Stream (Figure 33). It is an area with a relatively open canopy from large treefalls, with 3–4 m-high silver ferns providing the dominant cover alongside some sapling trees of tanekaha, tawa, lancewood, pigeonwood, tawari, and towai (all <25 cm DBH). The understory and ground cover are complex, with woody debris in the form of dead branches and stumps, and deep leaf and fern litter. Whekī growing within the site have created large piles of fern fronds and kiekie grows throughout. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



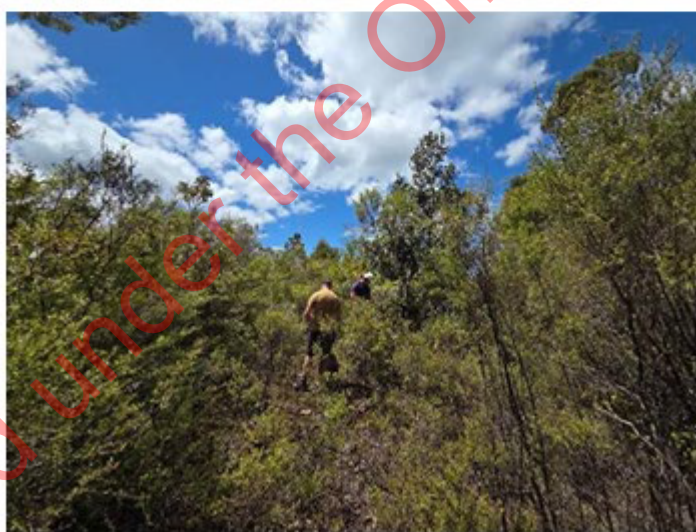
21.2 Drill/Camp Site GLA002 s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

This proposed drill/camp site is located on flat to gently sloping terrain, in a small depression, north of the 520 peak and northwest of the Sutcliff Stream (Figure 34). It is an area with more mature forest than GLA001; however, there are gaps in the canopy and no large trees >25 cm DBH. The subcanopy is dominated by silver fern, lancewood, pigeonwood, kanono, and rewarewa, and the understory is relatively open and dominated by kiekie, supplejack, and a few tree ferns. Ground cover is comprised of woody debris, crown fern, silver fern, and kiekie. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



21.3 Drill/Camp Site GLA003^{s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)}

This proposed drill/camp site is located on a flat plateau just north of the 520 peak and above the Sutcliff Stream (Figure 35). The site comprises mānuka and towai of low stature (presumably due to rocky substrate and resulting shallow topsoil), with slightly taller vegetation along the edges of the site. There are no trees >25 cm DBH. The vegetation in the centre of the site is sparse and below waist height, with the canopy height increasing to 2 m along the edges of the site (mānuka, towai, rewarewa, and lacewood). The ground cover consists of limited leaf litter and woody debris. In one corner of the site, a small amount of the TAR species mairehau is present. Biosearches (2025, 2026) recommended adjusting the site boundary to avoid damaging these plants, which RGL has complied with. Young kauri saplings occur in the surrounding area.



21.4 Drill/Camp Site GLA004 s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

This proposed drill/camp site is located on flat terrain, s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of the Tairua River and s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of the loop track (Figure 36). It is described as site 4b in Bioresearches (2025), as site 4a has a denser canopy cover and a small wetland ~10 m past the edge of the site boundary.

The site has a relatively open canopy of kānuka and towai (no trees >25 cm DBH), with a diverse subcanopy dominated by rewarewa, lancewood, pigeonwood, kanono, tawari, and mingimingi. The understory is relatively open, consisting of seedlings and ferns, and the ground cover comprises woody debris and leaf litter. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



21.5 Drill/Camp Site GLA005 s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

This proposed drill/camp site is located on gently sloping terrain, s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of the Tairua River and s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of the loop track (Figure 37). The canopy comprises mostly towai, with some tawa, rewarewa, and tawari, all <25 cm DBH. The subcanopy consists of supplejack, five finger, mahoe, heketara, and mingimingi, while the understory contains whekī, kiekie, puka, miro, and kanono. The ground cover is dominated by *Astelia* sp. Along with kiokio, whekī, and other ferns, and tanekaha and kauri seedlings. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



21.6 Drill/Camp Site GLA006 s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

The original location for GLA006 is in more mature forest with large trees surrounding the site on all sides, including a large kauri (a TAR species) whose root zone would fall within the site boundary. This, along with the highly complex understory and ground cover which would provide excellent habitat for Archey's frogs (a TAR species), prompted Biosearches (2025) to recommend that the site be moved. RGL has found a more suitable site to the east.

The new proposed GLA006 drill/camp site is located on flat terrain, s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of the Tairua River and s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of the loop track (Figure 38). It is characterised by a large clearing in the canopy which covers approximately two-thirds of the site. The canopy is comprised of rewarewa and towai, as well as five finger, tawa, and mahoe at lower levels. The understory is kiokio, crown fern, and *Astelia* sp. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



21.7 Drill/Camp Site GLA007 S9(2)(b)(ii), S6(c)

This proposed drill/camp site is located on flat terrain towards the northern end of the Wires Ridge (Figure 39). It is listed as site 7b in Bioresarches (2025), and was surveyed as an alternative to site 7a which contains ground cover that may offer potential habitat for Archey's frogs.

The site is comprised almost entirely of nikau palms (14 in total, the largest of which has a DBH of 22.3 cm), with a couple of small tawa and tree ferns intermixed to form canopy cover that is between 60–70%. The understory is largely clear of vegetation apart from some supplejack and small saplings of pigeonwood and kawakawa and a young silver fern. A large fallen tree occurs near the edge of the site. Ground cover comprises scattered leaf litter and nikau fronds, with patches of bare earth. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



21.8 Drill/Camp Site GLA008 s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

This proposed drill/camp site is located on gently sloping terrain s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of GLA008 on the Wires Ridge (Figure 40). It has a clearing in the canopy, with large tawa forming a tall canopy around the site. There are 10 nikau palms within the site, some reaching heights of 7–8 m, but all are <25 cm DBH. The understory is relatively clear, with few ferns and some kiekie. There is some bare ground interspersed between shallow leaf litter and nikau fronds. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



21.9 Drill/Camp Site GLA009 s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

This proposed drill/camp site is located on gently sloping terrain at the southern end of Wires Ridge, s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of the loop track and s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c) of GLA008 (Figure 41). It is described as site 9b in Bioresearches (2025), as the original site 9 does not have enough room to construct a wooden platform without the removal of larger trees >25 cm DBH.

The site is located in relatively young forest with a 7–8 m-high 80% canopy of towai, with some tree ferns and mahoe (all <25 cm DBH). The subcanopy consists of silver fern and supplejack, and the understory contains relatively sparse ferns, rangiora, mangemange, and saplings of miro, karamu, and tawa. The ground cover comprises leaf litter and some small piles of fern fronds below the larger tree ferns, as well as a mix of woody debris. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



21.10 Stage Pump Site s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

If required, the proposed stage pump site would be located adjacent to the Wharekawa River and below the Sutcliff sites, at an elevation of ~195 m a.s.l. (Figure 42). It is a gently sloping, relatively clear area with an open canopy surrounded by subcanopy nikau and ferns (up to 20 cm DBH). The understory contains relatively sparse rangiora and sedges, with leaf litter comprising nikau and ferns. There are no TAR flora species within the site.



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21.11 Loop Track Helipad s9(2)(b)(ii), s6(c)

This proposed helipad is located on the eastern side of the loop track. It is a very large (~20 m × 20 m) clearing with completely open canopy and low (up to 1 m tall) mānuka/kānuka seedlings (Figure 43). In the centre is a completely bare raised area ~10 m × 6 m.

This site was used to fly RGL staff, ecologists, and the archaeologist into the area during December 2025 to February 2026 (aircraft concession 123034-AIR). It is the most suitable location in the AA application area for a helicopter landing site and does not require any vegetation clearance.

