

## **CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: WINSTONES AGGREGATES WHITEHALL QUARRY**

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### **1. BACKGROUND**

Winstones Aggregates Whitehall Quarry prepared a resource consent application to expand the current extraction area by about 15.5 hectares to the west. Based on current demand, this expansion is expected to provide around 35 years of aggregate supply. The new pit area includes land both inside and outside the Significant Mineral Extraction Zone (SMEZ), as well as Rural Zone land and areas identified as Significant Natural Areas (SNA) in the District Plan.

The existing landuse consents issued by Waipā District Council for quarrying at the site do not have an expiry date. Winstone plans to continue operating under those current consents, and this new application is only on the proposed long-term expansion area.

An application prepared by Boffa Miskell is about expanding the physical area where extraction is allowed. It does not change how the quarry currently operates. All existing activities at Whitehall Quarry will continue as they are now, and the quarry will keep working within the limits set by the current land-use consents and the Whitehall Quarry Management Plan.

This Cultural Impact Assessment has been prepared on behalf of Ngāti Hauā, Raukawa, and Ngāti Korokī Kahukura.

### **2. ACTIVITY**

Whitehall Quarry is on the eastern part of a large, gently rolling area. Steep ridges border the site to the north, east, and west, while the land slopes down to the south towards the lower part of the Karapiro Stream catchment.

Whitehall Quarry is recognised as a regionally significant mineral extraction activity in Section 4A of the Waipā District Plan. The quarry is managed within a Significant Mineral Extraction Zone and aligns with the Waikato Regional Policy Statement.

The Karapiro Stream runs north to south along the eastern edge of the quarry pit. Three smaller streams cross the site from east to west. The northernmost and southernmost streams have been partially modified but remain in a natural state beyond the site boundary.

The quarry expansion will not disturb any known archaeological sites. Permission has already been given to remove Heritage Feature T15/45. The new pit area will also stay clear of the high ridgeline and other known sites. The quarry expansion will also stay at least 20 metres away from the archaeological sites T15/341 and

T15/374. As part of the 2023 consent, these sites will be permanently protected by a covenant on the land, agreed to by Winstone and us as mana whenua.

A Cultural Landscape Area applies to the main Karapiro Stream, with a 50 m setback from each bank. The proposed quarry expansion does not fall within this Cultural Landscape Alert Area.

Winstones is seeing a strong and steady demand for the aggregate taken from Whitehall Quarry. This material is needed for roads, buildings, and other construction projects across the Waikato region.

To keep up with this demand, Winstone is applying for resource consent to continue and expand its work at the quarry. The application is made under several rules in the District Plan and the Waikato Regional Plan, including:

#### Waipa District Plan

- Carrying out mineral extraction and processing in the Rural Zone (discretionary activity under Rule 4.4.1.4(h)).
- Mineral extraction that follows an approved Quarry Management Plan (controlled activity under Rule 4A.4.2.11).
- The current certified Quarry Management Plan will also cover the new expansion area. It will be updated as needed to include things like the Planting Plan and Pest Management Plan, and to match consent conditions.
- Removing indigenous vegetation within a Significant Natural Area (SNA) in the Significant Mineral Extraction Zone (restricted discretionary activity under Rule 4A.4.1.3(b)).
- Removing indigenous vegetation within an SNA of local significance in the Rural Zone (discretionary activity under Rule 24.4.1.1(n)).
- Removing indigenous vegetation in a biodiversity corridor outside the SMEZ (restricted discretionary activity under Rule 24.4.1.1(n)).
- And carrying out mineral extraction and processing in visually sensitive hill country outside the SMEZ (discretionary activity under Rule 25.4.1.1(t)).

#### Waikato Regional Plan

- Rule 5.1.4.15 Soil Disturbance, Roading, Tracking, Vegetation Clearance, Riparian Vegetation Clearance in High-Risk Erosion Areas which is a discretionary activity.
- Rule 3.5.11.8 Discharge of stormwater to the Karapiro Stream is a discretionary activity.
- Rule 3.6.4.13 Diversion and Any Associated Discharges of Water is a discretionary activity.
- Rule 4.3.4.4 Bed Disturbance Activities is a discretionary activity.

### 3. IWI CONSULTATION

Winstone acknowledges that Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust, Raukawa Charitable Trust, and Ngāti Korokii Kahukura Iwi Trust hold deep cultural, spiritual, and ancestral connections to the whenua and the wider environment within the Whitehall Quarry project area. These relationships carry responsibilities to safeguard and enhance the mauri of the land, water, and ecosystems that support the wellbeing of present and future generations.

In recognising this, Winstone has continued its longstanding commitment to working alongside mana whenua in a way that reflects respect, openness, and genuine care for the environment and the people connected to it. Partnership is not a new for Winstones and has been a consistent part of how the organisation engages, ensuring decisions are informed by local knowledge, mātauranga, and shared values with and for mana whenua.

The methodology with us has involved holding regular onsites to review the proposal, discuss technical details, and provide for honest kōrero. This enables us mana whenua to contribute our whakaaro early in the process, ensuring that cultural considerations are input to planning and guide mana whakahaere for environmental outcomes for the quarry and the surrounding area, including whenua, pae maunga and ngā awa.

#### 4. CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The table below summarises mana whenua's assessment of the key cultural and environmental considerations for the proposed quarry expansion, reflecting on the consultation discussions and the AEE provided by Boffa Miskell.

| <b>Kaupapa</b>         | <b>Assessment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Archaeological Sites   | There are five recorded archaeological sites near Whitehall Quarry: T15/45, T15/341, T15/342, T15/344, and T15/374. Resource consent WDC-LU/0171/23 has been granted for the removal of Heritage Feature T15/45.                                                                                               |
| Protection Measures    | No quarrying will occur within 20 metres of T15/374, T15/344, or T15/341. These sites will be permanently protected through a cultural covenant.                                                                                                                                                               |
| Ridgeline              | During consultation we highlighted the importance of maintaining the ridgeline. Winstone has designed the proposed quarry expansion footprint to respect and retain the ridgeline.                                                                                                                             |
| Ecological Planting    | Mana whenua support the proposed ecological planting of 12.5 ha on the western side of the quarry. The planting will require careful management including fencing, stock removal, pest control, and ongoing maintenance to ensure positive biodiversity outcomes.                                              |
| Landscape & Operations | Winstone is taking steps to reduce impacts on the natural landscape and visual environment. Current quarry operations will continue unchanged, using existing diversion and discharge systems. An updated Erosion and Sediment Control Plan has been prepared for the expansion.                               |
| Wildlife & Habitats    | Habitats within the expansion area provide spaces for native species including lizards. Bat surveys since 2021 show high activity, and trees in SNAs provide potential roosting sites.                                                                                                                         |
| Planting Plan          | Ecological Assessment recommends fast-growing, eco-sourced native species. An Expansion Planting Plan has been prepared, including species selection, maintenance guidance, and fencing. A Pest Management Plan will manage pest plants and animals.                                                           |
| Forest Replacement     | While cleared tawa forest will take decades to reach full maturity, a functioning forest can establish sooner through careful planting, soil and fertiliser support, early-stage care, and replacement of failed plants. Planting areas are scaled to twice the size of cleared vegetation to ensure net gain. |

| <b>Kaupapa</b>                        | <b>Assessment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Effects<br>Management<br>Avoidance    | Winstone acknowledges that it is not possible to avoid all vegetation removal but will minimise impacts where possible.                                                                                   |
| Effects<br>Management<br>Minimise     | Only 5.46 ha of SNAs (11.7%) will be cleared, leaving 88% intact. Staged clearance and timing avoids bat maternity and bird breeding seasons. Tree-felling protocols protect potential bat roosts.        |
| Effects<br>Management<br>Remedy       | Geckos and other species will be checked and relocated as needed.                                                                                                                                         |
| Effects<br>Management<br>Offsetting   | 12.5 ha of native planting will replace lost vegetation, with fencing and stock exclusion.                                                                                                                |
| Effects<br>Management<br>Compensation | Pest and weed management will protect new plantings and existing SNAs, supporting fauna including long-tailed bats.                                                                                       |
| Overall Ecological<br>Values          | Mana whenua are satisfied that cultural, biodiversity, and ecological values will be protected. The proposed expansion is consistent with the objectives of the NPS-IB and Waikato RPS and our iwi EMP's. |
| Consistency with<br>Iwi Plans         | These recommendations and measures are consistent with relevant iwi environmental management plans and reflect mana whenua values and priorities.                                                         |

#### 4. POSITION STATEMENT

Ngāti Korokii Kahukura, Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust, and Raukawa Charitable Trust work together, applying a unified and practical approach to resource consent applications on a case-by-case basis.

Iwi are confident that the Quarry Management Plan includes an appropriate Accidental Discovery Protocol for earthworks, including the opportunity for mana whenua to monitor earthwork stripping.

For this project, all quarrying and earthworks will be carried out in a way that avoids, remedies, or mitigates past impacts on the land. The proposed activities are consistent with the objectives of Te Ture Whai Mana, Te Tāmata Ao Turoa o Ngāti Hauā, and Part 2 of the RMA. Although Te Ture Whai Mana does not formally apply within this catchment, mana whenua follow its principles to guide decision-making and ensure the long-term betterment and restoration of the receiving environment.

**Mana whenua acknowledge that our values have been considered throughout the consent process and, provided the recommendations outlined are fully implemented, we do not oppose the resource consents sought by Winstone for this application.**

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Quarries can be damaging, so mana whenua support a well-planned rehabilitation programme that is environmentally responsible and contributes positively to the local ecosystem. This AEE and the relevant programme of works has been planned to restore the landscape, enhance biodiversity, and potentially create enhancement and betterment longterm for the community. Mana whenua are supportive of this.

**Recommendation 1:** Maintain and strengthen relationships with mana whenua by actively involving the mana whenua kaitiaki group throughout the life of the Whitehall Quarry operations. This includes input into the quarry exit plan and oversight of restored landscapes and ecological enhancement areas.

**Recommendation 2:** Ensure that an Accidental Discovery Protocol (ADP) is implemented for all works, with mana whenua representatives appropriately identified and involved in monitoring.

**Recommendation 3:** Protect the integrity of existing freshwater springs, groundwater sources, and waipuna by implementing suitable safeguards. Restoration contributions should also be applied to the Karapiro Stream to support the wider aquatic environment.

**Recommendation 4:** The existing Memorandum of Understanding with Winstone be strengthened to ensure ongoing, meaningful engagement throughout the life of the quarry project and,

**Recommendation 5:** Establishment of a Partnership Restoration Fund to support environmental and cultural restoration projects, creating partnership outcomes with and for mana whenua.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Ngāti Korokii Kahukura, Ngāti Hauā, and Ngāti Raukawa Charitable Trust will maintain a long-term partnership with mutual benefits for all parties. This includes working through any issues related to quarry expansion and continuing our mana whakahaere role over our whenua, wai, and taonga within the area.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been established between Winstone and mana whenua, which includes the development of a Mātauranga Māori Environmental Monitoring Plan.

Mana whenua will continue to apply this approach for this current application and future resource consent applications, guided by authentic, values-based understanding and with respect for the wellbeing of the Taiao – past, present, and future.

Me kōrero tonu tātou mo ngā uara o te roto, me ngā whenua, otira me tātou katoa.

Nāku noa, nā

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