

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED ON BEHALF OF THE  
OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL, CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL,  
AND QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**UNDER** The Resource Management Act  
1991

**IN THE MATTER** of an application for resource  
consents for Suction Dredge  
Gold Mining on the Clutha River  
/ Mata Au

**BETWEEN** **COLD GOLD CLUTHA  
LIMITED**  
**Applicant**

**AND** **OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL  
(RM22.434)**  
**QUEENSTOWN LAKES  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
(RM220834)**  
**CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT  
COUNCIL (RC220255)**  
**Consent Authorities**

**AND** **TE RŪNANGA O MOERAKI  
KĀTI HUIRAPA RŪNAKA KI  
PUKETERAKI**  
**TE RŪNANGA O ŌTĀKOU  
HOKONUI RŪNANGA INC**  
**Submitters (Collectively Kāi  
Tahu Ki Ōtākou)**

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**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF RIKI PARATA  
ON BEHALF OF HOKONUI RŪNANGA INC &  
KĀI TAHU KI ŌTĀKOU**

**14 November 2023**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. My name is Riki Neihana Parata. I whakapapa to Kāi Tahu, Kāti Mamoe, Waitaha, Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai. I am employed as the Kaiārahi Taiao Mātauranga at Hokonui Rūnanga Kaupapa Taiao, where I lead a team of seven kaimahi working in wai māori (freshwater) research, monitoring and education.

## **NGĀI TAHU ASSOCIATION WITH THE MATA-AU**

2. The Mata-au (Clutha River) is culturally significant to mana whenua. Ngāi Tahu's association with the Mata-au (Clutha River) is recognised by the Crown and provided for as a Statutory Acknowledgement Area in the Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998
3. The Mata-au is our whakapapa and mahinga kai: a source of life, resources, and knowledge. It facilitates our memory and connection to place and is a focus for our identity.
4. The Mata-au and mana whenua connection to the Mata-au has been impacted by human activities post-colonisation and continues today through practices including dredging.
5. However, the impacts of these activities on the awa does not diminish the cultural significance of the Mata-au for mana whenua. Rather it imposes a duty on mana whenua as kaitiaki to address that degradation and to restore mauri and mahinga kai.

## **WAI MĀORI, MAURI AND MAHINGA KAI**

6. For mana whenua, water is a fundamental part of our whakapapa. This whakapapa connection carries rangatiratanga rights and imposes obligations on mana whenua as kaitiaki to protect wai māori in accordance with mātauranga (knowledge) and tikanga (practices) developed over many generations.
7. Mauri is a critical element of the spiritual relationship of Kāi Tahu with wai māori. A cornerstone for mana whenua in exercising kaitiakitanga over the Mata-au (Clutha River) is to avoid activities which further degrade the mauri of the river. Mr Sycamore has attempted to discern between the physical and spiritual aspects of mauri, which suggests that he does not share my understanding of mauri.
8. Mahinga kai is the Kāi Tahu whānui resource system that underpins mana whenua relationships with rivers, lakes, wetlands, and the broader

environment.

9. For mahinga kai to be sustained, populations of species must be present across all life stages and must be plentiful enough for long term sustainable harvest. An example of our work to enhance mahinga kai within the Mata-au is the work we are commencing around the trap and transfer of kanakana. The project involves trap and transfer of kanakana and installation of a Lamprey Passage System (LPS) to aid in the successful migration above the dams.

## **EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY ON WAI MĀORI**

10. The effects of activities on freshwater and our cultural values must be understood contextually. Any assessment of cultural values or effects of activities on cultural values needs to be deduced from knowledge, research, and monitoring of the Mata-au.
11. An assessment of the current state of the awa using western scientific disciplines is not an appropriate starting premise for assessing the effects of activities on our cultural values. The fundamental starting point is a comprehensive understanding of those cultural values, and assessing whether and to what degree the proposed activity aligns with those values.
12. I fundamentally disagree with Mr Sycamore's assessment of the proposal against cultural values. Any views mana whenua representatives may or may not express in relation to a regional plan in Murihiku are not relevant to this activity in Ōtākou/Otago.
13. Secondly, Te mana o te wai 'is not a traditional Ngāi Tahu whānui concept nor a framework to assess the impact of a proposed activity on Ngāi Tahu cultural values. Rather 'te mana o te wai' is a planning construct for managing freshwater in New Zealand.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

14. I consider that the proposed activity will adversely affect cultural values associated with the Mata-au (Clutha River).
15. I do not agree the applicant has appropriate information to conclude that there will be no adverse effects on mahinga kai, and the approach taken to understanding mahinga kai in making that assessment is too narrow.

Riki Parata

**14<sup>th</sup> November 2023**