

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

of an application for resource consents by **TIGA
MINERALS AND METALS LTD**

AND

IN THE MATTER

of a submission by the

COAST ROAD RESILIENCE GROUP INC

Statement of evidence of Patrick Volk
For COAST ROAD RESILIENCE GROUP INC
Topic: Tourism

Dated: 17 January 2024

Coast Road Resilience Group Inc
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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Patrick Volk.

I hold a degree in hotel management and marketing from the [Hotelfachschule](#) in Villingen-Schwenningen (a German institution) and have worked in the industry for 30 years. Before I moved to New Zealand I was working for the Swiss Dulux hotels in marketing, management and quality control. My role was looking for the hospitality market and making sure to meet the needs in the industry and infrastructure.

2. I have the following relevant experience:

Living on the West Coast and developing tourist opportunities for the past 15 years, including assisting with initiating the Paparoa Great Walk, talking with visiting Prime Ministers including Jacinda Ardern, Chris Hipkins and Christopher Luxon, with local MPs Damien O'Connor and Maureen Pugh, Greymouth Mayor Tania Gibson and Buller Mayor Jamie Cleine on local tourist projects and West Coast tourism infrastructure.

The businesses I run include the Pancake Rocks Cafe, Paparoa Park Motel, Tasman Sea Retreat, Rataview function venue and West Coast chocolate icons.

In the summertime we employ up to 40 people and we are one of the biggest rate and taxpayers in our area.

3. I have been asked by the Coast Road Resilience Group Inc to provide expert evidence in relation to tourism.
4. While this is not an Environment Court hearing, I have read the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses 2023, and I agree to comply with it. My qualifications are set out above. I confirm that the issues addressed in this brief of evidence are within my area of expertise.
5. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

6. This evidence covers the following matters effects of the TiGa proposal on West Coast tourism businesses.

SUMMARY

7. West Coast Tourism is based on an untouched, untamed natural wilderness.
8. The TiGa proposal will more than likely impact on the visitor experience.

9. The trucking proposed poses a threat to our tourists who are unfamiliar with our roads. Potential travel disruptions due to slow trucking, breakdowns or accidents threaten the untamed branding.
10. Tourists research their travel and refer to the experiences of others. Even one accident resulting in death or severe injuries because of large trucks on our narrow roads has the ability to affect our visitor numbers.
11. Issues with dust and noise will be reported internationally and will damage our reputation as a great visitor destination.
12. Any damage to our reputation has the potential to affect local jobs and businesses. And we are concerned local tourism-related workers will opt for the higher paying mining jobs available, leaving us unable to adequately service our customers and guests. A drop in service standards would also damage our reputation.

EVIDENCE

13. I manage a number of tourism-focused businesses including the Pancake Rocks Café at Dolomite Point, Punakaiki, Paparoa Park Motel, Rataview Function Centre in Barrytown, Tasman Sea Retreat, Wild Coast Cleaning and Chocolate Icons NZ. We host thousands of tourists every year as part of a multi-million dollar industry for the Coast, and we know why they come.
14. I am very concerned that the councils are not looking broadly enough at the effects of the TiGa proposal. The Government has put around \$100 million into tourism infrastructure on the West Coast supporting the Untamed Natural Wilderness branding - that is the drawcard that brings people to the West Coast.
15. The Coast environment between Westport and Greymouth includes one of the most beautiful coast roads in the world – stated by Lonely Planet. \$41million has been invested for the Dolomite Point Visitor Centre, \$12million for the Great Walk – all the dollars given towards the untamed/untouched infrastructure and the image of the West Coast we sell to the world could well be tarnished with this TiGa mining proposal.



16. Dolomite Point is a significant tourist spot with up to 500 000 visitors a year. This is where the Pancake Rock Walk is, (opposite our cafe). Most visitors to Dolomite Point crosses the State Highway twice, as the majority of car parking is on the eastern side of the highway. So that's a million people crossing the highway per year outside our café.
17. There is still a possibility that the TiGa trucks will pass directly in front of the entrance of the Pancake Rocks/Dolomite Point. Or they might also (as their recent comments suggest), have trucks travel to Greymouth.



18. The Pancake Rock Entrance has long had safety concerns around so many people crossing here, in what was previously a 60 km/h zone.



19. We also witness some close calls with international customers unfamiliar with our roads. Milk tankers already create a dangerous situation particularly at Dolomite Point. They drive

through at 30km/hour at the moment. Once the new visitor centre building is finished it will change to 40km/hour.

20. Three or more movements an hour from up to 50-tonne trucks in Punakaiki would impact on the experience of visitors to our café which is just metres from the highway and the dust, noise, vibrations and visual impact will directly affect our visitors who sit outside (and inside), especially during summer (when most of our business is done). Constant trucking will similarly affect other tourism businesses in the area between Greymouth and Westport. At the moment we do not have heavy trucking at anywhere near these rates.
21. Punakaiki is a place which is all about natural experiences. We do not have many big freight trucks - except the milk trucks which is a big problem already for the infrastructure as they are very loud and noisy.
22. So to have further very heavy trucks so regularly is very concerning for us - regarding our cafe visitor experience.
23. Revenue losses could be very large if word gets around about the negative experience (frequent heavy trucks going past where people eat). In tourism, we all rely on positive visitor experiences for our income.
24. I run also the Rataview Function Centre which will be impacted by trucks heading from the mine site towards Greymouth. We have had forward cancellations due to fear that the trucks will interrupt (i.e. a wedding ceremony onsite). So the mine proposal and its predecessor Barrytown JV Ltd has already negatively impacted our business. This is very concerning!



25. Our state highway all the way from Rapahoe to Westport is not suitable for the heavy vehicle schedule proposed by TiGa. The effects will negatively impact the untamed image. And with big trucks going both ways, there will be little room for error from our international visitors who are driving or cycling, let alone the local residents.
26. The dust pollution and noise issues for both residents and tourists is unacceptable.
27. I have had several conversations with others in the tourist industry locally and we are concerned about jobs that may be lost because of the proposed mine. Some local tourism industry workers might find the wages more attractive - in tourism we are impacted by seasonality and can't offer year-round full-time employment to many. If we can't find workers, our standards may be affected and that would damage our reputation and ability to attract guests and customers. But also any decrease in visitors because of a change to our untamed and quiet experience will inevitably mean fewer jobs, and could well spell the end of many businesses.

CONCLUSION

28. This proposal does not support the best interests of the tourism industry and could have a huge impact on many local businesses and tourism operations.

Patrick Volk

17 January 2024