Auld Creek Project Fast Track Application

Social Impact Assessment

Prepared for Reefton Resources Pty Limited

November 2026

Auld Creek Project Fast Track Application

Social Impact Assessment

Reefton Resources Pty Limited

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November 2026

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For the avoidance of doubt, this report may be relied on by an expert panel assessing the substantive application discussed in this report.

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Executive summary

ES1 Purpose and context

This Social Impact Assessment (SIA) has been prepared by EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) to identify and evaluate the potential social effects – both adverse impacts and benefits – of the Auld Creek Project (the Project), an underground gold-antimony mine proposed approximately 3 kilometres (km) south of Reefton, on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island. It seeks to provide a clear understanding of the nature and significance of social effects and drive effective management or enhancement of them.

ES2 The Project

Rua Gold (the applicant) proposes to develop the Auld Creek Underground Mine, an ore body accessed via land owned by Ngāi Tahu Forestry Limited, with ore processed at a single Plant Site on the valley floor. Construction is expected to commence in 2027, requiring 100 to 150 roles over a period of approximately 15 months. This is to be followed by approximately 13 years of operation, decommissioning and rehabilitation with full site closure scheduled by 2040, employing approximately 200 people (noting the economic impact assessment modelled on-site estimate employment numbers). A number of effect-reducing decisions have been embedded in the Project design, including the choice of underground rather than open-cut mining, dry-stack rather than wet tailings, siting of surface infrastructure in a sparsely populated location, and an access route designed to minimise effects on nearby residences and recreational trails.

ES3 Assessment methodology

The SIA has considered the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) SIA framework endorsed by the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) and recommended by the New Zealand Transport Agency for effect assessment. It also draws on the Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) under the *Resource Management Act 1991* (RMA). The social baseline has been compiled from Census and other public data and is also informed by Rua Gold's ongoing stakeholder and community engagement together with SIA-specific key informant interviews and a review of specialist technical assessments prepared for the Project.

Effect significances are determined using the IAIA risk assessment framework. The IAIA framework places considerable weight on how likely an effect is to occur. This means even relatively minor effects can receive High significance ratings, which do not necessarily mean the effect will be severe or unacceptable on those who experience it. The consequence of effects, as emphasised in other SIA approaches, is also an important consideration. This is identified within the IAIA assessment process and considered within the development of management measures and the drafting of this report.

ES4 Social and community context

Reefton is a small former gold-mining town with a population of approximately 1,050, located within the sparsely populated Buller District. The town carries a high proportion of residents in the most deprived deciles of the New Zealand Deprivation Index (NZDI) (88% at level 9 or 10), below-average incomes, constrained health and aged-care services (including the 2024 closure of Reefton's aged-care facility), and a housing market already under pressure from rising prices and rents. The town nonetheless retains a strong mining identity and a high rate of volunteerism underpinning key community services. The assessment context also includes other mining activity in the district – most notably the Snowy River mine, approximately 30 km by road from Reefton, which is establishing a 100+ bed camp for a drive-in, drive-out (DIDO) workforce in Reefton. Also, the Stockton Mine, approximately 35 km north of Westport by road, for which a Fast-track Approvals (FTAA) Substantive Application for continuation/expansion was lodged in August 2026.

ES5 Stakeholder and community engagement

Rua Gold has engaged substantively with the community and other key stakeholders since 2025, recording over 1,200 interactions with more than 100 stakeholder and community groups. Additional SIA-specific key informant interviews were conducted directly by EMM to inform this SIA. Engagement to date has been predominantly positive, with community sentiment centred on ensuring Project benefits are sustained and shared locally rather than on opposition to the Project itself. Feedback has directly shaped Project design, including the use of underground mining and dry-stack tailings, siting of surface infrastructure away from residences, the selected access route, and a commitment to prioritise a residential (rather than fly-in/fly-out (FIFO)) workforce. Ongoing engagement – quarterly public events, a Reefton drop-in office, a grievance mechanism, and a Stakeholder Engagement Plan reviewed throughout the Project life – is proposed to continue through construction, operations and closure, including a dedicated closure-phase SIA approximately two years ahead of decommissioning.

ES6 Summary of assessed social effects

The Project's primary social effects are socioeconomic benefits. It will generate an estimated NZ$988 m Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the life of the Project (direct and indirect) and NZ$674 m in present value. Based on the current expectation for the contractor's roster (roughly 50% residing in Reefton), of that NZ$581 m falls in Buller. In a full production year, the national figure averages NZ$108 m. As such, it will make material contributions to local, regional and national economic security, local business income, employment and household income. The three principal social effects – regional and national economic health, local business income, and access to employment and household income –are assessed as extreme positive, with active enhancement measures focused on ensuring local communities and businesses benefit. Less significant positive effects include predicted effects on population level and vitality and community identity and sense of place.

Seven effects are assessed as High in significance. Five of these being assessed to have only minor consequences if they occur. Two – changes to access to long-term/permanent housing and social experience upon mine closure – are assessed to have moderate negative consequences once proactive management is taken into account such as supporting planned expansions to the Reefton housing market and pro-active closure planning.

All remaining effects are assessed as Moderate or Low, with all but one being considered to have minor or insignificant consequences should they occur. These include effects on community identity and sense of place, short-term accommodation, facilities and services, community cohesion, traffic and road users, environmental amenity, labour availability, and community health, safety and wellbeing.

When considering consequence alone, 14 of the 20 effects assessed are considered to have low or insignificant effects should they occur as expected. Three moderate negative consequences are identified in this fashion- potential social experiences upon mine closure, changes to access to long-term/permanent housing and Physical infrastructure (sewerage) performance. As are three Major positive consequences: regional and national economic health, local business income, and access to employment and household income.

ES7 Cumulative effects of major projects in the area

The SIA has considered the Project in combination with other current and reasonably foreseeable major project activity in the district. Such as the imminent operational phase of Snowy River Mine and its Reefton workforce camp, and the proposed continuation of the Stockton Mine via the proposed Buller Plateaux Continuation Project.

Snowy River's camp-based accommodation model is expected to limit cumulative pressure on the local housing market but will add to cumulative demand on shared infrastructure, in particular the Reefton sewerage network, which is expected to be at or over capacity once both workforces are resident.

Rua Gold also envisages the Project as the first of a series of gold-mining developments in the district by the company, which would delay, and potentially alleviate, the potential social impacts of Project Closure.

ES8 Mitigation, management and monitoring commitments

Management and enhancement measures are set out in a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP), covering stakeholder engagement, local procurement, local employment, workforce accommodation and conduct, and community investment, alongside supporting environmental management plans (water quality, noise and vibration, air quality, traffic and biodiversity). Key measures from the SIMP are identified in this SIA. It is understood that Rua Gold proposes that its core social effect management commitments be included as conditions of any planning consent, to provide certainty that they will be delivered regardless of future changes in Project personnel or circumstance. A monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework is proposed – based on the IAIA guidance's four-phase approach (indicators, participatory monitoring, adaptive management, and periodic review) – with quarterly and annual reporting against stakeholder engagement, procurement, employment, accommodation and community investment indicators, and public reporting of complaints and environmental performance.

ES9 Conclusion

Subject to implementation of the mitigation, enhancement and management measures described in this SIA, the Project is assessed as generating substantial positive social effects, principally through local, regional and national economic benefit, employment, and business income, alongside more localised benefits to population vitality and community identity. Socioeconomic benefits are particularly notable given the high NZDI deprivation score for Reefton and much of the surrounding area.

Notable negative effects are impacts on housing availability and the general social experience upon closure; noting proactive measures are being developed to minimise the effect of these impacts, including support of proposals for 110 additional properties in Reefton and the intent to undertake socially responsible closure planning in consultation with community and stakeholders.

When considering consequence, i.e. how an effect will be experienced, but not the likelihood it will happen, three positive effects are considered Major and three as Minor. No negative effects are considered Major in consequence: three are considered Moderate with seven considered Minor and four considered Insignificant should the likely degree of social effect occur.

The Project is assessed to have a positive social effect overall.

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Terms and abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Term
$	New Zealand dollar (NZD)
ACP	Auld Creek Project (the Project)
ACUG	Auld Creek Underground Mine
AEE	Assessment of Environmental Effects
BDC	Buller District Council
DIDO	Drive in, drive out
DoC	Department of Conservation
EIANZ	Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
EMM	EMM Consulting Pty Ltd (The Author)
FTAA	*Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024*
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ha	hectare
IAIA	International Association for Impact Assessment
IWF	Integrated Waste Facility
KII	Key Informant Interviews
km	kilometre
NZDI	New Zealand Deprivation Index
NZTA	New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi)
NZX	New Zealand Stock Exchange
p/w	per week
RMA	Resource Management Act
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIMP	Social Impact Management Plan
SIS	Surface Infrastructure Site
VFP	Victoria Forest Park (part of the DoC Estate)

Term	Project definition
Auld Creek Project	The topic of this fast-track approvals application includes all proposed activities within the application.
Auld Creek Underground Mine	Underground mining works area/mine site beneath the VFP and accessed via the Mine Portal on Ngai Tahi Land.
Construction	This initial phase of Project implementation, this includes all activities undertaken from the point of Project commencement up until the process plant is commissioned.
Effect	A change resulting from the Project. An effect may be an impact or a benefit, direct or indirect. • Impact: a negative effect resulting from the Project (e.g. increased pressure on local housing). • Benefit: a positive effect resulting from the Project (e.g. increased local employment and household income). • Direct effect: an effect experienced directly as a result of the Project or its activities (e.g. employment of local workers). • Indirect effect: an effect arising from another change caused by the Project (e.g. Project-generated noise affecting people's experience of local amenity).
Enhancement measures	Enhancement measures are initiatives intended to strengthen or maximise social benefits arising from the Project.
Integrated Waste Facility	An engineered structure designed to hold mineral waste (dry-stack tailings) and rock.
Management measures	Management measures are the systems, processes and commitments used to control, minimise and monitor any social effects arising from the Project remaining after the mitigations
Mine Portal	The physical reinforced access where the mine tunnel begins located on Ngai Tahi land associated with the ACUG.
Mitigation measures	Mitigation measures are actions designed to avoid, reduce or remedy adverse social effects – effectively, to design them away.
Operations	The operational phase commences upon the commissioning of the process plant, enabling the processing of ore to commence. The operational phase also includes any decommissioning activities following the completion of mining and processing, as well as progressive rehabilitation activities, with the end of the operational phase (also known as Closure) being the point at which all rehabilitation has been completed.
Plant Site	Located within the Surface Infrastructure Site the processing plant site consists of ore processing activities to separate gold and antimony concentrates, as well as other support processes for operational activity.
Post-Closure	The Post-Closure phase commences once all rehabilitation activities are complete. Water treatment activities will be ongoing.
Project	Auld Creek Project.
Project Site	Includes all land parcels intersected by the Mining Permit Area.
Rua Gold	Reefton Resources Pty Limited, the applicant.
Surface Infrastructure Site	The land upon which surface infrastructure is located including IWFs and processing plant).
Soldiers Haul Road	The portion of Soldiers Big River Road to be repurposed as a haul road.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Reefton Resources Pty Limited (known as 'Rua Gold') is a minerals exploration and mining company listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange and the Toronto Stock Exchange. Rua Gold has mining exploration control over the historic Reefton Goldfield in the Buller District on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island.

Rua Gold intends to develop a new multigenerational gold-antimony mining operation in this historical mining area which consists of over 120,000 hectares (ha) of tenements. The first mine development planned by Rua Gold is the Auld Creek Project (ACP or 'the Project'); an underground gold and antimony mine. Rua Gold anticipates this to be the start of a long-running mining opportunity for the company and for the local and regional communities.

EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) has been engaged to provide Rua Gold with a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of the Project to form part of a suite of technical reports to support the Project's Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) and the wider Substantive Application under the *Fast-track Approvals Act 2024*.

1.2 Authorship

This report was prepared by Samantha McCrea and Chris Alder. Samantha McCrea is an Associate Director Social Performance at EMM and the technical lead and expert responsible for this SIA. Samantha has more than 20 years' consulting experience, specialising in the assessment and management of community impacts, social risk, stakeholder engagement and social performance across the mining, energy and infrastructure sectors.

Samantha holds a Master of Science in Environmental Technology from Imperial College London and a Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical Engineering) from University College London. Her experience includes leading and reviewing social impact assessments and social performance work for mining and major infrastructure projects across Australia and Asia. This includes SIAs for mining projects and modifications, mine closure and transition planning, and major energy and infrastructure developments.

Chris Allder is an Associate Social Scientist at EMM and the principal author of this SIA. Chris has 17 years' experience in social performance, including social impact assessment, stakeholder engagement, social risk management, management planning, community investment and resettlement. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sociology and History from the University of Warwick, is a member of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) and is a Certified Member of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2 Australasia).

Chris' experience includes preparing and leading social assessments and management plans for mining and major infrastructure projects in Australia and internationally, including new mines, mine expansions and modifications, and mine closure and transition projects. He has also provided stakeholder engagement advice to Rua Gold during development of the Auld Creek Project.

Samantha has reviewed and approved the assessment and conclusions presented in this SIA and is responsible for the expert opinions expressed. In doing so, she has applied the standards expected of expert evidence before the Environment Court.

Samantha and Chris understand and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the *Environment Court Practice Note 2023* (Environment Court of New Zealand 2023). Unless otherwise identified, the opinions expressed are within their area of expertise and have been formed having regard to the information and material facts available to them, including matters that could qualify or detract from those opinions.

1.3 Purpose and scope of the SIA

The decision on Rua Gold's referral application included a direction that an SIA be included with the application. The SIA is to:

> [include] an assessment of workforce accommodation demand, the capacity of local housing and accommodation supply to meet that demand, the potential effects on local infrastructure and services in Reefton and the surrounding areas, and any proposed measures to manage those effects.

The purpose of this SIA is to identify and consider potential social effects - both effects (negative effects) and benefits (positive effects) - likely to arise from the Project. It seeks to provide a clear understanding of the nature and significance of social effects and drive effective management or enhancement of them.

The SIA seeks to consider Project effects as they will be perceived or experienced by members of the community (and other key stakeholders). It considers the Project's direct effects upon society/community. It also considers its indirect effects arising from changes to the wider lived environment and people's experience of it, drawing on a wider suite of technical assessments informing the AEE to do so.

The methodology used to develop this SIA is set out in Chapter 5. In alignment with key New Zealand and international SIA principes, practice and guidance, this included:

- establishing a social baseline, documenting relevant social conditions
- identifying potential social effects and benefits of proposed Project activities for focus
- determining an appropriate assessment framework based on respected standards in mining and SIA industry, and the *Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024* (FTAA)/regulatory context
- considering engagement activity and feedback received during ongoing community engagement, led by Rua Gold, and performing key informant interviews (KII) to further explore and validate key themes and information for the SIA
- identifying direct social effects and indirect social effects (drawing upon a review of technical studies for effects indirectly affecting the human/social experience)
- establishing appropriate benefit enhancement and effect management measures and determining the significance of any effects
- describing the monitoring and reporting envisaged to evaluate social effects should the Project be approved.

1.4 Nearby projects

It is important to consider the effect a project may have in combination with other infrastructure and developments nearby, especially those of a similar nature or scale. This helps identify the true potential extent to which effects will be felt with the aim of managing effects to the best of the Project's ability. It is also important as prior, current or future project experiences and expectations can help shape community and stakeholder views of the Project and inform perspective and feedback re potential effects.

Existing infrastructure and operations are considered as part of the baseline landscape informing the main assessment within the SIA. This includes the current construction and imminent operations phase at the Snowy River Mine, and ongoing mining operations at smaller facilities such as Echo Coal Mine, all part of the wider Reefton mining district.

The former Globe Progress mine site, owned by OceanaGold, is very close to the Project Site; however, this project is now considered complete, having been effectively fully rehabilitated. It is understood that Rua Gold intends to apply for a mining permit over this location outside of the current fast track process.

The Globe Progress mine was an open-cut mine and its accommodation and employment strategy was felt not to be primarily focused on Reefton, limiting perceived benefits to the town during its operations and in the years following its closure. This has shaped some community views on the potential social benefits the Project may bring as well as heightened their fears, expectations and aspirations. The quality of rehabilitation work at Globe Progress has, however, been widely praised.

This report considers how predicted effects will be experienced should they occur in conjunction with those from any other new projects planned (including non-mining projects) which could realistically come into being in parallel with the Project. In August 2026 Bathurst Resources submitted an FTAA Substantive Application for an expansion of their Stockton Mine. This would maintain and expand the Stockton Mine beyond its current 2027 approval and would involve retention of the existing workforce as a minimum.

Consideration of cumulative effects is provided in Section 9.3.

2 The Project

2.1 Project location

The Auld Creek gold-antimony deposit is located beneath Victoria Forest Park (VFP), approximately 3 kilometres (km) south of Reefton township. Reefton is a historical mining town, established in the mid-1800s, within Buller District in the West Coast Region of New Zealand's South Island. Ngāi Tahu are the recognised tribal authority for the broader West Coast region, including Reefton. Smaller settlements around the Project Site include Blacks Point and Crushington which are both located to the east of the Project, as well as a small number of sparsely located houses outside of the main settlements along State Highway 7.

There are several local roads which provide access to surrounding farmland and bush areas, including Quigleys Road and Soldiers Big River Road. Natural waterways flow through Reefton and near the Project, including Soldiers Creek, Devils Creek and Auld Creek. These creeks join the Inangahua River, which spans north-west through the Buller District.

2.2 Project overview

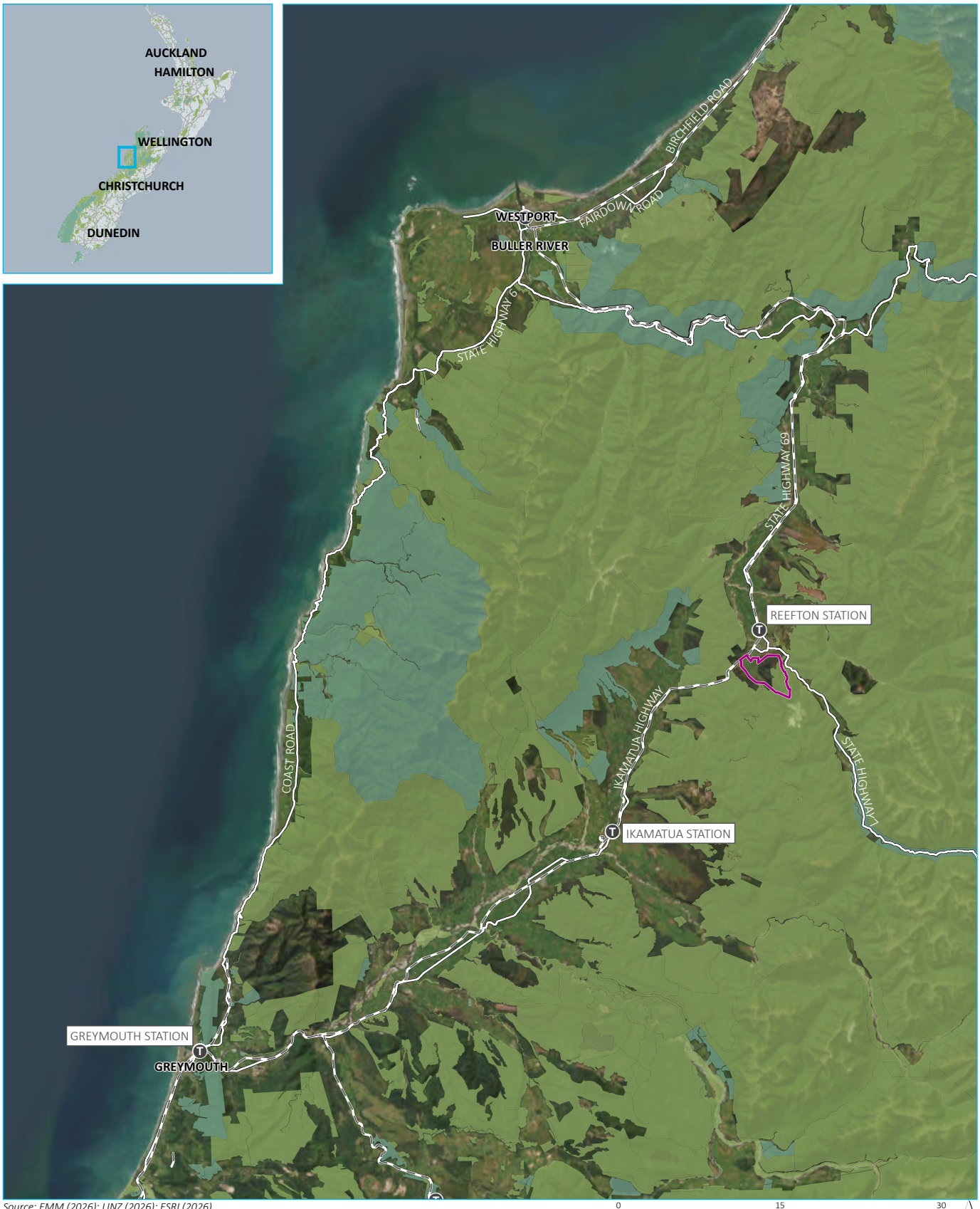
The Project is proposed to develop and extract the Auld Creek orebody, a gold and antimony deposit comprising two identified mineralised lodes, known as the Fraternal and Bonanza lodes. Based on the geological characteristics of the deposit and the objective of minimising the surface mining footprint, the Project incorporates narrow-vein underground mining through the Auld Creek Underground Mine (ACUG). The development approach for the ACP has been designed to maximise the use of underground mining methods, thereby minimising surface disturbance and the overall environmental footprint. The ore resource, including the deeper extensions of the mineralised lodes, is proposed to be accessed via the ACUG.

2.3 Key Project components

Full detail of the Project is provided in the Project Description included in the application. In summary, the proposed key activities associated with the ACP include:

- construction, operation and maintenance of the ACUG, including a portal access on Ngāi Tahu Forestry land and twin 1.4 km long inclined tunnels extending from the portal to the Auld Creek orebody beneath the Victoria Forest Park
- surface exploration drilling, including within VFP
- underground infill drilling of the Auld Creek Deposit
- construction, operation and maintenance of a process plant and supporting surface infrastructure to enable on-site processing of ore, located on what is currently privately owned farmland, disused Te Pūkenga land and Ngāi Tahu Forestry land, to be accessed via Quigleys Road
- establishment and operation of a concrete batch plant for the Project
- development of a ventilation adit on Department of Conservation administered land
- construction and operation of an IWF to permanently store tailings, waste rock and water treatment sludge, located on what is currently privately owned farmland
- construction and operation of temporary waste rock and soil storage facilities

- the required construction and upgrades of ancillary infrastructure, including new network utility connections, drainage and service connections
- activities in and on waterways, including stream diversions around the Plant Site, water take from Devils Creek and construction of multiple culverts across watercourses, including Devils Creek and Carton Creek and unnamed tributaries
- the take and use of groundwater during mining operations
- discharge of contaminants (including heat) to land, air and water
- handling, salvaging and possible incidental killing of avifauna, invertebrates, aquatic species and terrestrial fauna across the Project site
- low impact surface water, groundwater, ecological, meteorological, noise and vibration monitoring activities.



Source: EMM (2026); LINZ (2026); ESRI (2026)

0 15 30 km

NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator

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KEY

- Mining permit application area

Existing environment

- Train station
- Rail line
- Major road
- Named waterbody
- National Park/Reserve
- Conservation Area

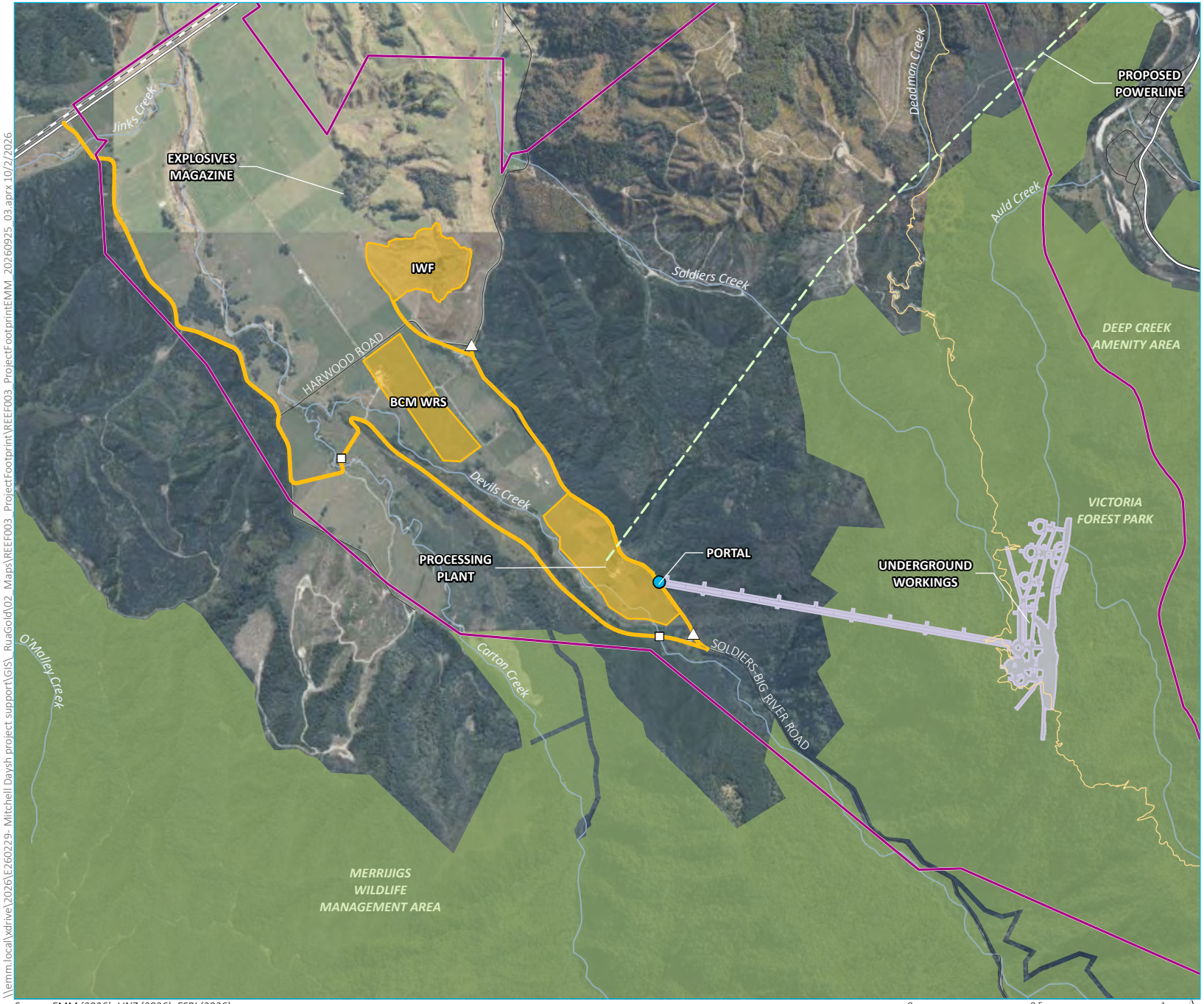
INSET KEY

- Major road
- National Park/Reserve
- Conservation Area

Project location

Auld Creek Project
Social Impact Assessment
Figure 2.1

EMM
creating opportunities



KEY

- Mining permit application area

Site layout

- Gate
- River crossing
- Portal
- Proposed powerline

Project footprint

- Phase 1: Construction
- Phase 2: Operation

Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Minor road
- Mountain bike trail
- Named watercourse
- Conservation Area

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Source: EMM (2026); LINZ (2026); ESRI (2026)

0 0.5 1 km

NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator

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Auld Creek Project overview

Auld Creek Project
Social Impact Assessment
Figure 2.2

EMM
creating opportunities

2.4 Project phasing and timeline

The Project includes three phases:

- Phase One: Construction:

  This initial phase includes all activities undertaken from the point of Project commencement up until the process plant is commissioned. Construction activities include the establishment of site access, the construction of the process plant and associated infrastructure, the construction of the integrated waste facility, the construction of the mine portal, and initial mining activities to provide access to the ore body.

- Phase Two: Operation:

  The operational phase commences upon the commissioning of the process plant, enabling the processing of ore to commence. Operational activities include the operation of the ACUG, the operation of the process plant, the operation of the integrated waste facility and the operation of all associated Project infrastructure.

  The operational phase also includes any decommissioning activities following the completion of mining and processing, as well as progressive rehabilitation activities, with the end of the operational phase (also known as Closure) being the point at which all rehabilitation has been completed.

- Phase Three: Post-Closure:

  The -post-closure phase commences once all rehabilitation activities are complete. Water treatment activities will be ongoing.

Within this, at a high level, the following sequencing of activities is proposed:

1. Site establishment works, including the upgrade and extension of Quigleys Road to Soldiers Big-River Road, and subsequent closure of approximately 2 km of Soldiers Big-River Road.

2. Construction of the Mine Portal, the ACUG and site infrastructure including the process plant, Integrated Waste Facility ("IWF"), haul roads, and water management and treatment systems.

3. Development of a ventilation adit within the VFP.

4. Operation of the ACUG and all Project infrastructure.

5. Rehabilitation and closure activities across the Project Site, with continuing water management and treatment activities.

The activities summarised above are anticipated to occur indicatively across a 14-year period. The Project will generally follow the sequence of activities outlined above.

Rua Gold proposes to commence work as soon as all necessary approvals are obtained, ideally in Q2 to Q3 2027. Activities covered by the approvals sought in this application are anticipated to be completed around the end of 2040 assuming ore volumes and processing rates are generally as anticipated.

It is envisaged that construction hours will be 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday to Saturday. Operations work will occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with a likely two-shift pattern, swapping shifts at 7:00 am and 7:00 pm.

2.5 Project workforce requirements

A total workforce of approximately 200 people will be required for the ACP across the Project life. The workforce is expected to include a broad mix of operational, technical, professional, management, administrative and support roles.

Operational roles, including underground mining, processing, maintenance and trades, are expected to comprise the majority of the workforce, with the balance made up of professional, technical, supervisory, environmental, health and safety, training, administration and site support roles.

- Underground miners – 95 people.
- Process plant – 30 people.
- Maintenance/trades – 20 people.
- Management/Supervision – 10 people.
- Professionals/Geo/Engineer – 30 people.
- Safety/Enviro/Community/Trainer – 10 people.
- Admin/Cleaning/Security – 5 people.

The indicative workforce ramp-up is as follows:

- Early 2027: approximately 6 to 10 staff for early works, including project management, engineering, environmental, administration and other support roles.
- Mid-2027: approximately 40 staff for early site establishment and mining works.
- Mid-2027 to mid-2028: approximately 100 to 150 construction roles during the construction phase.
- Early to mid-2028: progressive workforce ramp-up to an operational team of approximately 200 people.
- A separate exploration team of approximately 20 people may operate during the ACP.
- The Economic Assessment (Eaqub & Eaqub Limited, 2026) uses the same Project Description numbers at a different level of aggregation, and the two sets are consistent. Its estimate of 130 to 160 people on site in production comprises Rua Gold's own staff (21, plus about 29 in the process plant) and the underground mining contractor's crews of 80 to 110 in the main production years, the latter estimated from the mine plan's labour hours. Its construction peak of 210 to 260 people comprises the Project Description's 100 to 150 construction contractors plus the mining contractor's crews and Rua Gold's staff on site in 2028, on an annual-average basis. This SIA retains the Project Description figures (including the stated workforce of up to 200) and notes the Economic Assessment's modelled on-site estimate.

3 Mitigation through design

During the course of development to date, a number of likely benefits and effects associated with the Project have been identified, through considered design, risk assessment, substantive engagement by Rua Gold and the SIA process.

Referred to as 'mitigation' measures, the following key design decisions/elements are included in the Project design specifically to minimise potential social (and environmental) effects throughout the Project.

The mitigation measures were developed drawing upon Rua Gold's aspirations to enhance social and environmental performance, optioneering outputs, early technical assessment, and engagement with the local community and key stakeholders.

- The Project will be delivered using only underground mining methods rather than utilising any open-cut mining methods (used in previous projects in the area).
- The Project will use dry-stack tailings only, returning approximately 50% of the tailings underground prior to completion, limiting land take and removing the need for wet tailings reservoirs/dams.
- The location selected for the Surface Infrastructure Site (SIS) - with community input - is outside of a forested area, in a sparsely populated location with natural sound protection from the topography.
- The selected location for the SIS is in a location that does not require the acquisition of many properties or communal resources. The principal sites are:
    - a small number of private dwellings, who are in discussions with Rua Gold about a purchase and vacation of the properties ahead of construction
    - a former educational establishment which is no longer used for its original purpose
    - land in the VFP.
- The Project footprint in VFP has been kept to a very strict limit to minimise effect to the forest park; the activities that will affect the surface of the VFP is an existing exploration drilling site that would be used as a ventilation location for the operational mine. Early iterations of the project design involved either a small open cut mine in the VFP or an upper portal and haul road through the VFP. Both options were discounted in favour of the present proposal.
- To reduce noise, light and traffic effects to residential receptors on the initial access to the Project, a revised access route with safer access and fewer affected residences has been selected via Quigleys Road.
- The Project does not currently propose to include on-site or large worker camp accommodation for its workforce; in order to support economic benefits in Reefton, residential and Reefton-based workers will be prioritised. Some small-scale worker accommodation is expected to be required during Project start-up phase.

In addition to mitigation through core physical design elements, supporting behavioural elements of the Project will help enhance benefits and manage effects. Fuller discussion and examples of expected management and enhancement measures is provided in Chapter 8.

The suite of draft management plans for the Project includes a specific Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) focused on stakeholder engagement, local procurement, local employment, community investment, workforce accommodation and appropriate conduct. A focused Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been in place since 2025, driving engagement with stakeholders and the local community.

4 Administrative framework

4.1 Planning context and requirements

4.1.1 Planning context

The Project's alignment with relevant planning provisions is assessed in the substantive application document. Relevant to the SIA, Chapter 5 (Use and Development of Resources) of the West Coast Regional Policy Statement (West Coast Regional Council 2020) and Section 4.5 (Mineral Resources) of the Buller District Plan (Buller District Council 2011) provide relevant context. Both recognise the contribution that resource and mineral development, can make to economic and social wellbeing, alongside the need to appropriately manage adverse effects. The partially operative Te Tai o Poutini Plan, which is expected to replace the individual district plans for Buller, Grey and Westland, adopts a similar position.

These principles are reflected in the SIA's consideration of the Project's positive and negative, direct and indirect, social effects.

4.1.2 SIA guidelines and regulations

Provision of an SIA is a requirement of the referral decision for the Project. Neither the FTAA nor the *Resource Management Act 1991* (RMA) contain guidance about what is to be contained in an SIA.

The IAIA SIA approach and assessment framework is widely regarded as international good practice and has been endorsed by the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) as the primary framework for social effect assessment in Australia and New Zealand. The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA, Waka Kotahi) also recommends the application of the SIA framework, highlighting the IAIA principles and approach in the assessment and management of social effects associated with infrastructure projects under its remit (NZ Transport Agency 2017). The IAIA's SIA framework is set out in its 2015 guidance document 'Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for assessing and managing the social effects of projects' (IAIA 2015).

Under the IAIA framework, SIA is defined as the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences of planned interventions, with the objective of achieving a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment. The framework considers both positive and negative effects on the way people live, work, interact, organise, and experience their communities and surroundings.

4.2 Rua Gold's approach to social responsibility

4.2.1 Overview

Rua Gold has explained to EMM that it is committed to supporting sustainable development where it operates. It believes removing a finite natural resource from an area should translate into sustainable benefits for those in that area. It is EMM's assessment that Rua Gold is strongly aware of the importance of mining in a historic mining area such as Reefton, and the challenges faced from the 'boom and bust' cycle which can occur. It is cognisant of the potential for mining projects to affect the local community both directly and via the natural and lived environment and is committed to positive integration with the community from planning through to operations, expansion or closure planning and remediation.

4.2.2 Policies, strategies and plans

Social performance on the Project to this point has been guided by Rua Gold's core approach centred on meaningful engagement and sustainable development. Its guiding principles in the core areas of social performance are set out in the current draft of the Project's draft SIMP.

This live document collates the key approaches - policies, strategies, plans and considerations regarding the minimisation of effects and enhancement of benefits from the Project's activities. The document was developed to aid planning phase activities and will be reviewed and updated regularly throughout the life of the Project. It includes the Project's approach to stakeholder engagement, procurement, employment, accommodation / housing, and community investment. It is supported by a formal Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Local Procurement Policy already in existence/operation.

4.2.3 Community investment activities to date

Rua Gold has focused its community investment efforts on ensuring meaningful local benefits from what it intends to be a generational opportunity in its own right, but also the beginning of something much larger and longer. This commitment has been demonstrated in the work undertaken to list Rua Gold on the New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZX), achieving the ability to easier provide opportunity to New Zealand shareholders. At the time of writing, it is understood 15% of shareholders in the Project are from New Zealand.

Although Rua Gold is currently in the planning phase in New Zealand (i.e. not currently generating income), it has been undertaking active community investment activities (Figure 4.1) in discussion with local community. This has included supporting local clubs and organisations, with a focus on education, youth retention and health.

Community sponsorship and investment to date includes:

- Support for students.
- Provision of financial assistance to community organisations and services, including:
  - contributing to medical equipment costs for St John Youth Division
  - Reefton Trail Collective – financial assistance.
- Sponsorship or other financial support for community events, including the Reefton Christmas event, Inangahua Agricultural and Pastoral (A&P) show, Reefton Golf Club event, Reefton Fire Brigade Tusk, Tine and Trout Hunting Competition, Reefton Car Show, Reefton Netball Club, and the Reefton Volunteer Awards.
- AusIMM – student endowment and sponsorship of annual conference.



Source: Rua Gold Reefton Community Presentation September 2026 (Rua Gold 2026)

Figure 4.1 Examples of Rua Gold community investment to date

A strategic approach to community investment is being developed by Rua Gold, drawing on input from community members and stakeholders to date. It will be reviewed annually and at major project milestones along with all SIMP components.

5 Methodology

5.1 Selected framework

The assessment framework for this SIA is grounded in IAIA principles and methodology and tailored to the Project context. IAIA approach to SIA is endorsed by EIANZ and the New Zealand Government and has previously been used as a basis to assess social effects on mining projects in New Zealand, including as part of the FTAA pathway.

5.2 SIA within a comprehensive social effect management approach

Whilst presented as a consecutive set of activities, the SIA is an iterative approach throughout its development, responding to engagement feedback, effect identification, design and management measure changes, and feeds into a wider iterative process of identifying, understanding and reducing or enhancing effects. The key activities undertaken as part of the SIA are set out in
Figure 5.1, followed by a high-level summary of each activity. Additional detail is provided throughout the document in the relevant Chapters. This SIA is informed by a range of draft technical assessments and management plans, includes a draft Project SIMP, the contents of which will be finalised in collaboration with key stakeholders, including community.

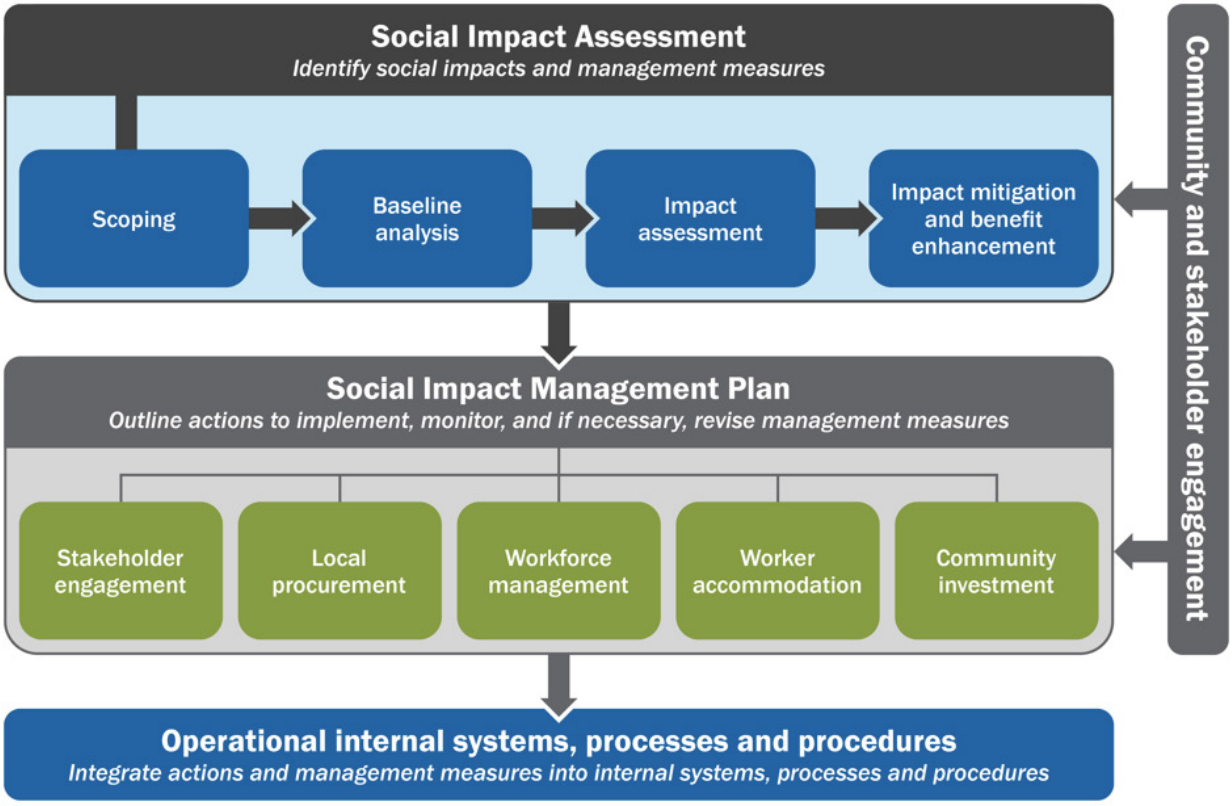


Figure 5.1 SIA within a comprehensive social effect activities management approach

5.3 Screening and scoping

The relevance and applicability of an SIA was confirmed, and the most appropriate framework to use was identified. A high-level preliminary assessment was undertaken to identify ('scope') areas not needing to be taken forward within the SIA, and/or for the SIA or project design teams to be aware of early.

As part of this step the IAIA's social effect categories, set out in Table 5.1, were reviewed for relevance.

Table 5.1 Impact category

Impact category	Including
Way of life	How people live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis.
Culture	Shared beliefs, customs, values and language or dialect.
Community	Community cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities
Political systems	The extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives, the level of democratisation that is taking place, and the resources provided for this purpose.
Environment	The quality of the air and water people use; the availability and quality of the food they eat; the level of hazard or risk, dust and noise they are exposed to; the adequacy of sanitation, their physical safety, and their access to and control over resources.
Health and wellbeing	Health is a state of complete physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
Personal and property rights	Particularly whether people are economically affected, or experience personal disadvantage which may include a violation of their civil liberties.
Fears and aspirations	Perceptions about safety, fears about the future of individuals or community, aspirations for the future and the future of their children.

Source: adapted from IAIA 2003/2015

All categories were deemed to be of relevance for consideration within this SIA. It is important to acknowledge there are notable partial exemptions:

- Culture: Matters pertaining to traditional culture, in particular connection to and use, enjoyment and protection of country, are outside the scope of this report. Effects on tangata whenua cultural values and experience are to be assessed separately by themselves.
- Political systems: no effect on the operation of or access to formal democratic institutions and processes is expected as a result of the Project. However, large projects have the potential to effect local and informal power dynamics through their spending power and decision-making.
- Personal and property rights and health and wellbeing: the SIA does not include a detailed Economic Impact Assessment or Health Impact Assessment; however, it considers these matters through the social lens, identifying any notable social effects expected from changes to the economic or biophysical environment.

For ease of understanding, consideration of these effect categories has been presented in the SIA in categories designed to be more familiar to the New Zealand project approvals process.

5.4 Social baseline study

A baseline study was performed to identify and understand the existing social environment. This process included:

- study area definition based on geographic areas likely to be affected
- review of relevant background studies, along with any relevant local policy frameworks
- demographic analysis to define the characteristics of the existing social environment against which potential social effects may be identified and assessed.

A description of the social baseline is provided in Chapter 6.

5.5 Engagement informing the SIA

Rua Gold has undertaken engagement with community and stakeholders over several years. Activities, feedback and outcomes were analysed. Additionally, EMM undertook SIA specific engagement directly in the form of key informant interviews offered to all local residents and stakeholder organisations. Engagement undertaken and pertinent feedback and outcomes resulting from it is summarised in Chapter 7.

5.6 Social effect identification

The proposed changes to baseline context were analysed to identify how the Project may affect individuals and community. The method included analysis of the Project description, baseline characteristics of potentially affected communities and feedback generated through engagement.

Several complementary approaches were used to triangulate findings and confirm accuracy of the assessment. These included consideration of:

- public literature and media to review and revise potential effects
- review of previous studies conducted for nearby or comparable mining operations
- local plans and policies, to contextualise and understand local priorities and values
- the existing social environment and emerging social trends and patterns
- feedback generated through stakeholder engagement.

Both direct and indirect (i.e. via effects on the surrounding environment) social effects were considered, of both a positive (benefits) and negative (effects) nature.

5.7 Social effect management/enhancement

Effect management measures were identified to further avoid or reduce the significance of effects identified and enhance benefits if and where possible. These were then factored into the social effect assessment. This was an iterative process ensuring a considered and reliable assessment of the effects likely to be experienced as a result of the Project as envisaged.

5.8 Social effect assessment

A systematic assessment of identified social effects was then undertaken to determine the significance of potential benefits and effects predicted to result from delivery of the Project.

To support a consistent and robust assessment, consideration was given to key characteristics of each effect, including its likely extent (geographic area), duration (timeframe), severity (degree of change) and the level of community interest or concern in it. Utilising professional judgement this information was then used to inform the assessment of consequence and likelihood. The following scales were used for each characteristic:

- Extent of effect: Focused/Community/Regional/National
- Duration of effect: Short-term/Medium-term/Long-term/Permanent
- Severity of effect: Low/Medium/High/Very high

- Intensity/spread of community interest: Low/Medium/High/Very high

A significance rating was then assigned to each effect using the IAIA risk assessment framework. The significance of an effect being derived from the combination of the likelihood of the effect occurring and the scale of its consequences should it occur.

The IAIA framework (matrix) and its associated risk categories of low, moderate, high or extreme, is set out in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 IAIA Risk assessment framework

Likelihood level	IAIA Consequence level				
	1- Insignificant	2-Minor	3-Moderate	4-Major	5-Catastrophic
A-Almost certain	High	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
B-Likely	Moderate	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
C-Possible	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
D-Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
E-Rare	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High

Source: Adapted from Figure 11 of SIA Guidance (IAIA 2015)

It is important to recognise that the IAIA framework is risk-management focussed, designed to identify areas of focus for those looking to prioritise management measures. As such the IAIA framework gives substantial weight to the likelihood of an effect occurring, meaning relatively inconsequential effects may be allocated high significance ratings if they are likely to occur. For example, if an Insignificant effect on air quality levels was predicted, but it was Likely that this would happen, the IAIA framework would return a significance rating of Moderate. Similarly, if it was considered Almost certain a Project would cause a Minor effect on traffic, this would be classified as a High significance effect on the IAIA framework.

A moderate, or high IAIA significance rating should therefore not, in isolation, be interpreted as indicating a severe or unacceptable social effect. Consideration should also be afforded to the level of Consequence identified as part of the IAIA process. It is notable that many IAIA informed SIA frameworks, such as the New South Wales Social impact significance matrix (DPHI 2025) place less emphasis on Likelihood and more on Consequence (referred to as Magnitude).

Additionally, the IAIA terminology is notably different in tone to that typically used to inform AEE within the New Zealand planning regime.

5.9 Reporting

This technical report was developed by EMM's senior social performance and assessment practitioners. Further information on the Authors is set out above in Section 1.2.

5.10 Assumptions and limitations

- This SIA has been based on the Project design and wider information made available to EMM at the time of writing (September 2026). Any substantial changes to the Project design, construction methodology, operational arrangements, or surrounding context may alter the findings of this assessment.
- Cultural effects and effects on cultural values are to be assessed separately by tangata whenua themselves. Accordingly, this SIA does not provide information or discussion of cultural matters and effects, except where relevant to understanding broad community perspectives.

- Economic effects have been assessed separately through a dedicated Economic Impact Assessment. This SIA considers economic matters only to the extent that they may influence social outcomes, such as employment, population change, housing demand, community wellbeing, and access to services.
- This SIA draws upon the findings of technical studies prepared by other technical specialists. EMM has not independently verified those assessments and has relied on them as provided.
- This SIA reflects the information available at the time of preparation (September 2026) and should be read in conjunction with the supporting technical studies and project documentation referenced throughout this report.
- Engagement feedback drawn upon in this report includes insights from stakeholder and community engagement activities. While these provide valuable perspectives, they may not be representative of the views of all community members.
- Much of the engagement activities and feedback drawn upon for the SIA was not undertaken directly by EMM. As such the engagement data outside of specific SIA interactions is considered a secondary data source within this report.
- Baseline demographic and socioeconomic data have been sourced from the most recent publicly available datasets, including the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings (the Census). These datasets represent a point-in-time snapshot. However, social characteristics and community conditions are dynamic and may have changed since data collection. Additionally, the Census is self-enumerated and, while it is designed to minimise respondent error, it is subject to a degree of inaccuracy.
- Social effects were identified from the lens of the relevant affected stakeholder group(s) or receptors as they experience them. Therefore, this assessment recognises that the experience of social effect is subjective; that is, different people experience and perceive changes to the social environment and their effects on them differently.
- A proportion of the Project Site is owned by private individuals. Rua Gold is in discussions with three landowners (196, 258, and 300 Soldiers Big River Road) to purchase the properties. This study assumes these residences will be empty having been voluntarily left by the current owners/occupiers under legal and freely negotiated settlement. Similarly, the study assumes that the former education site will be available to Rua Gold for the project.

6 Social baseline and context

In order to identify and assess the potential social effects of the Project, it is necessary to understand the existing baseline environment. This provides a basis for describing the likely change to baseline conditions due to the Project and quantifying the significance of resulting effects to the communities. This section provides community profiles and baseline condition assessment across the SIA study area (as defined below).

6.1 SIA study area

The SIA study area is defined with reference to community members who could be directly or indirectly affected by the Project. This includes nearby landowners, community members businesses, service providers, and Ngāi Tahu. The SIA study area identifies the social and geographic areas for this SIA and takes into account:

- the nature and sale of the proposed Project, including associated infrastructure
- the scope of the potential social changes throughout the Project life cycle
- the location and characteristics of potentially affected communities
- availability of infrastructure and essential services.

The local area consists of the nearby community of Reefton, which is likely to experience direct social changes from the Project (i.e. local social infrastructure, roads, workforce, local business and industry and housing). The SIA study area has considered nearby urban areas and communities within commutable distance of the Project Site which may experience direct or indirect social changes; however, no additional communities were identified.

Buller District is also considered in the SIA study area as the district that will experience both direct and indirect social effects. Such indirect social changes are associated with use of supply chains, roads, transportation of goods, materials and equipment, the movement of workers (some of which may operate on a drive-in, drive-out (DIDO) basis) and cumulative effects arising from other projects in the area.

The urban area of Greymouth in the wider West Coast region is also considered as part of the social context for this SIA as it serves as the key administrative centre for the region where essential services may be accessed and is likely to provide a degree of worker accommodation, workforce and supply of goods and services.

The SIA study area has been mapped to the New Zealand Statistical Standard for Geographic Areas 2023 (SSGA23) (Stats NZ 2022), presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 SIA study area

SIA study area	Geographic area	SSGA23 code	Relevance
Local area	Reefton	Urban Rural 2056	The Project is located in close proximity to the urban area of Reefton. Local residents and business owners are expected to experience potential Project benefits and effects including changes to local infrastructure, roads, businesses and industry and housing.
Urban area	Greymouth	Urban Rural 2058	Greymouth is considered the key administrative centre for the West Coast region, inclusive of the Buller District. As such, residents and workers in the local area may access goods and services that may be difficult to access in Reefton.
District area	Buller District	Territorial Authority 055	The Project is located within the Buller District. It is likely that the district will experience social effects on a more indirect and regional scale.
National	New Zealand	-	Used as a comparator for relevant datasets.

6.2 Overview of key characteristics

6.2.1 Buller District

The Buller District is characterised by a dominant agriculture industry with a focus on dairy cattle farming, livestock farming and horticulture and fruit growing. The Buller District stretches across 8,874 square kilometres (km^2) and is host to two national parks, one forest park and two heritage sites (Buller District Council 2026a). With an estimated residential population of 10,650 in 2025, the district is sparsely populated – at 1.3 persons per km^2 on average. Buller District's administrative centre of Westport is host to a large portion of the population (4,600 residents) and Reefton is the second largest town in the district, with a population just over 1,000 residents.

There are a number of attractions in the Buller District which drive tourism, such as walking trails, museums, and recreation areas.

The Buller District has a relatively high deprivation index, indicating high levels of socioeconomic deprivation in core social indicators of internet access, income, employment, education, and living conditions. It also has a constrained housing market, with increasing rental prices impacting vulnerable households and low housing availability. Other key challenges of the district include climate and flood risks and support for the ageing population (The Spinoff 2025).

6.2.2 Reefton

Reefton is an inland town located within the Buller District, approximately 70 km north-east of Greymouth and 85 km north-west of the region's administrative centre, Westport. Reefton is located on the intersection of State Highway 7 and State Highway 69, which connects the town to key administrative centres.

Reefton is a historic gold mining town known as 'the town of light', as it was the first place in the southern hemisphere to have public supply of electricity and street lighting in 1888, due to the wealth bought by mining (Reefton Inc 2026).

Gold mining was at its peak in Reefton during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the town has since experienced a series of changes in mining activity and associated boom-and-bust cycles. Underground gold mining declined during the first half of the 20th century, with the 1951 closure of the nearby Waiuta mine. Coal mining remained an important part of the local economy for a period thereafter, alongside the growing importance of forestry and other industries. Gold mining later returned at scale with the Globe Progress Mine, which operated near Reefton from 2007 to 2016, followed by rehabilitation and closure activities. More recently, mining activity has again increased in the area, including development of the Snowy River Mine.

In recent times, Reefton has experienced an increase in domestic lifestyle tourism. There are several historic landmarks and tourism businesses associated with the town's history, such as mining museums and the Reefton Power Station.

Reefton's current social context can be characterised as an ageing population, increasing levels of tourism, which can be seen in the rising prominence of the Accommodation and Food Services industry. A large proportion of the population lives and works within Reefton, with a third of residents working at businesses registered in the town.

6.2.3 Greymouth

The urban area of Greymouth is approximately 70 km south-west of Reefton in the Grey District. Connected by State Highway 7, Greymouth is an hour's drive from Reefton. Greymouth is the largest town in West Coast Region and as such is host to a range of infrastructure which service the broader West Coast population, including the Buller District and Reefton. Greymouth is a coastal town set on the banks of the Grey River which backs on to conservation estate areas, which makes up more than half of the Grey District.

Greymouth was founded during the West Coast Gold Rush in the late 19th century before shifting to coal mining and native timber forestry until the late 20th century. Presently the economy has shifted toward tourism and its role as an administrative, retail and service hub.

Te Nīkau Hospital & Health Centre in Greymouth is the main hospital for the West Coast region. The hospital has 56 beds and provides services such as emergency medical care, a GP clinic and other specialist care (Health New Zealand 2026). There are various medical centres and mental health providers available in Greymouth. Other social infrastructure includes education providers, a library, sports and recreation facilities and community spaces in the form of community halls.

6.3 Community profile

The following sections provide an overview of key social characteristics of the SIA study area. Detailed data used to inform the community profile is available in Appendix A.

6.3.1 Demographics

In 2025, Reefton had an estimated resident population of 1,050 with a median age of 54. Reefton is second most populated town in the Buller District, second to Westport. The Buller district has a total population of 10,650 with a median age of 52. The study area has an ageing population, with over a quarter of both the Reefton and Buller District's population aged 65 years and over. The median age has increased over the past decade along with the proportion of elderly (65+) residents, accompanied by a decrease in the youth (15 to 29 years) population. This indicates that the region is attractive to older residents, however, is not ideal for youth.

This trend was similar in the key administrative centre of Greymouth, which had an estimated population of 8,610 residents in 2025 and a median age of 45 at the 2023 Census.

There were 1,380 Māori residents in the Buller District in 2023, of which 150 resided in Reefton. The Māori population is younger than the total population, with a median age of 31 in Reefton and Buller and 27 in Greymouth.

Most of the study area's population identified as European, with most residents identifying as New Zealand European. A small proportion of the population spoke a non-English language; of which, Te Reo Māori was the most common.

There was a total of 489 households in Reefton in 2023, with just over half consisting of family households. There were 75 households with at least one Māori resident. Henceforth, a "Māori household" will refer to households with at least one Māori resident.

6.3.2 Labour force, business and industry

i Labour force status

In 2023, New Zealand had an unemployment rate of 3.0%, which was similar to Buller and Reefton. Although unemployment was similar, there was a higher proportion (8.3%) of Māori residents unemployed in 2023, which was a significant increase from the 2018 figure of 3.3%. In the Buller District, there was a higher proportion of males (3.7%) who were unemployed than females (2.1%). In comparison, Greymouth had a lower unemployment rate of 2.2% in 2023; however, the town also had higher Māori and male unemployment.

There were also a higher number of residents who are not in the labour force. In Reefton, 41.4% of residents were not in the labour force compared to 32.4% of New Zealand residents. This may be due to the ageing population contributing to a high population of retirees.

Of workers in Reefton, over three quarters (78%) live and work within Reefton. Of Reefton residents who travel for work, most travel to the surrounding Inangahua area, whilst a small percentage (3%, or 12 people) travel to Greymouth Central for work (Stats NZ 2025). There are approximately 3,000 people who travel to Greymouth central for work from around 20 nearby areas (Stats NZ 2025).

ii Business and industry

In 2023, the most prominent industry of employment in Reefton was construction followed by mining, with over one quarter of the town's population working in either industry. In the broader Buller District, agriculture was the most prominent industry, followed by construction.

The most prominent industries differed slightly between employment and business in Reefton. The most prominent industry of business in Reefton was Accommodation and Food Services, followed by construction and retail trade. In the Buller District, Agriculture was the most prominent industry for businesses as well as employment.

The number of registered businesses in both Buller District and Reefton has fluctuated in the past ten years. There were 114 businesses in Reefton in 2025, which is an increase of 8.6% (+9 businesses) in the past year. Despite recent growth in Reefton, the Buller District experienced a decline of 2.0% in the same period.

iii Qualifications

There was a low proportion of post-school qualifications in the SIA study area, with the highest proportion (one quarter) of residents having no qualification. Of those with a qualification, the highest proportion has a Level 1 certificate. Only 12.2% of Reefton had a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 16.4% in the urban area of Greymouth and 27.1% in New Zealand.

iv Income

In 2023, both Reefton and the broader Buller District had lower personal and household incomes when compared to the national average. Reefton had a median before-tax household income of $49,800, which was almost half of the New Zealand average of $97,000.

Māori residents were disproportionately affected by lower incomes in Reefton at $35,800 for adults aged 30 to 64 years, compared to $39,400 for all of Reefton.

6.3.3 Economics

The most prominent industries in Buller in terms of economic output are agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and electricity, gas, water and waste services. In 2025, the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry contributed $145.6 million to New Zealand's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This was closely followed by mining, which contributed $134.9 million (Infometrics Ltd 2026a).

In the past ten years, the mining industry has significantly contracted in Reefton. In 2015, mining contributed around $250 million, which decreased to a low of $94 million in 2018 before steadily rising again.

The Buller District experienced a decline in growth of -$27.5 million between 2024 and 2025. In this time period, mining was the largest detractor for growth, declining by -$17.1 million.

The industries which experienced the highest growth were dairy cattle farming, property owners and real estate services, followed by poultry, deer and other livestock farming. This was similar to the Greymouth urban area, where dairy cattle farming also had the highest contribution to growth.

6.3.4 Housing availability and affordability

i Housing stock and occupancy

The Reefton area had a housing stock of approximately 603 private dwellings in 2023. Both Reefton and the broader Buller District had relatively high proportions of unoccupied dwellings, around 17%. Typical housing stock has between 2.5% to 3.5% unoccupied dwellings; however, it is noted that large geographic areas with low populations (such as the Buller District) often experience higher proportions of unoccupied dwellings (Wise Group 2018). In comparison, the percentage of unoccupied dwellings was high nation-wide, with New Zealand having a proportion of 10.9%.

Of unoccupied dwellings, 57 (or 9.5% of total private dwellings) in Reefton were recorded as empty on Census night. The Buller District had a similar proportion of empty houses, with 555 empty dwellings (9.2%). Empty dwellings are defined as dwellings with no current occupants, including existing dwellings undergoing renovations and holidays homes with no occupants on Census night. In 2018, Reefton recorded a proportion of 14.6% empty dwellings, indicating a decrease of approximately 5% which is reflective of the tightening housing market.

At the time of the 2023 Census, there were no new houses under construction in Reefton. In 2025, there were seven new dwellings consented in Reefton, which is an increase of two from the year before. This uptick in new houses has been echoed in recent media publications, with representatives indicating that demand is above supply in Reefton because of the mining boom (1News 2026a).

At the end of May 2026, there were 22 properties for sale on the market in Reefton, with a further 38 sold in the last 12 months (realestate.co.nz 2026). There was one property for rent in May.

ii Tenure and affordability

In 2023, the majority of residents in Reefton and the Buller District owned their homes. For Māori households, less than half owned their homes.

Housing costs are lower in Reefton compared to New Zealand's average costs, with the average sale price for a house in New Zealand reaching $750,000 in August 2026 (REINZ 2026). Average weekly rent is approximately $564 per week (p/w) in New Zealand (Infometrics 2026b).

In the past 12 months, median asking prices have risen by 22% to $450,000 in Reefton. In the same time period, the median rent was $360 p/w, which is an increase of 44% from $250 p/w at the 2023 Census (realestate.co.nz 2026, StatsNZ 2023). The 2023 Census showed that Māori households pay slightly higher rent with a median of $270 p/w.

In March of 2026, the Buller District Council announced that rental prices for senior housing units will increase from July 2026. Rent prices will increase to $250 p/w from $165 p/w (up 52%). Two bedrooms units will increase by 16% whilst three-bedroom units will increase by 3%. This increase in rent is likely to affect vulnerable seniors, with media reporting this will consume nearly half of some pensioners weekly income and lead to major lifestyle changes (1News 2026b). The Buller District Council will work alongside the Ministry of Social Development to provide access to financial support.

6.3.5 Service availability

There are several local-level services available in Reefton, including education and medical care. Some services are integrated or operate at a limited capacity. An example of this is the Reefton Visitor and Service Centre, which is a Council-operated facility incorporating a visitor centre, Council services, the Inangahua County Library, Waka Kotahi/New Zealand Transport Agency and NZ Post services (Buller Distict Council 2026).

The local medical centre (Reefton Health Medical Centre) operates at reduced hours and is closed between 12:30 pm and 2:00 pm Monday to Friday. There is limited specialised care to meet the needs of the ageing community, with residents having to travel long distances to access care (1News 2026c). This comes after Reefton's elderly care home, Ziman House, permanently shut its doors in 2024, citing unsustainable staffing (RNZ 2024). The nearest hospital is located approximately an hour's drive away in Greymouth. Locally available emergency services include an ambulance and fire station.

There are two schools in Reefton and one pre-school. The closest tertiary education provider is the Tai Poutini Polytechnic Greymouth Campus which provides vocational training. Greymouth is the administrative centre of the West Coast region, as a result there are a range of services and social infrastructure available, including healthcare and education.

i Volunteer services

The *Reefton Who Cares House* is a charity organisation formed in 1986, run by a committee of local volunteers. The Who Cares House is a social support organisation dedicated to meeting community needs through the provision of spaces and events for community connection, a driving service and a food bank. The Who Cares House also partners with external organisations to connect people to financial support and healthcare services.

St John Ambulance and Reefton Volunteer Fire Brigade are volunteer-run emergency service providers which operate 24 hours per day, seven days a week. As well as emergency care, the St John Ambulance also provides a youth training program.

6.3.6 Vulnerability

The New Zealand Deprivation Index measures socioeconomic deprivation using several Census variables, such as income, unemployment, access to the internet, qualification level, and housing tenure (Atkinson, et al. 2024). The index measures deprivation on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being least deprived and 10 being most deprived.

In Reefton, three quarters of the population was considered a 9 on the Deprivation Index, whilst a further 10% were considered most deprived (10). The Buller District had a wider spread across the Index; however, the highest proportion of residents (28%) across the district were considered a 9 on the scale.

An average deprivation index is available at Statistical Area 2 (SA2)[1] level for the study area. Of the eight SA2s within the Buller District, five –including Reefton– were ranked at level 9, with the remaining three ranked at level 8 (Karamea), level 4 (Westport Rural), and level 6 (Charleston).

SA2 data are also available for Greymouth, with Greymouth Central recording an index of 7, whilst Greymouth Rural had an index of 6, revealing that the broader Greymouth area is less deprived than Reefton and Buller District.

Table 6.2 provides an overview of key vulnerability indicators in the SIA study area.

[1] The New Zealand Statistical Standard for Geographic Areas 2023 (SSGA23) defines an SA2 as an output geography for higher aggregations of population data than can be provided at an SA1 level. SA2's typically have 1,000 to 4,000 residents and represent suburbs or rural communities and reflect communities that interact socially and economically. (STats NZ 2026)

Table 6.2 Vulnerability indicators

Indicator	Description
Financial pressure on seniors	• New Zealand has an ageing population which is creating financial strain on seniors, with many working past retirement age (Te Ara Ahunga Ora Retirement Commission 2026). • Residents aged over 65 make up a large portion of the Reefton population. This age cohort has lower median incomes with almost half earning between $20,000 and $30,000 in 2023.
Access to telecommunications	• A higher proportion of residents have no access to telecommunications systems in Reefton compared to the Buller District, with Māori residents having a slightly higher rate than the general Reefton population.
Mental health	• The mental health presentation rate in New Zealand measures the proportion of the population accessing a mental health presentation session, which is used as an indicator for deprivation and overall mental health. • The Buller District had a higher proportion of people accessing a mental health presentation in June 2024 when compared to New Zealand (Infometrics Ltd 2026b).
Social connection	• Social connection is measured out of a score of 100 and comprises the indicators of work commuting time, dependency, internet access and truancy rate. • The Buller District had a social connection score of 36.9 in 2025, which is significantly lower than the national score of 75.4.
Access to healthcare	• There is limited healthcare availability in Reefton, with the town's medical centre operating at reduced hours. • In 2024, Reefton's hospital-scale aged care facility (Ziman House) permanently shut its doors.
Rental housing availability and affordability	• In Reefton, there was low availability of rental properties and increasing asking rent prices. • Māori households in Reefton had lower rates of home ownership and paid higher rent than the general population in 2023.

7 Engagement

7.1 Engagement overview

Rua Gold has undertaken ongoing stakeholder and community engagement during development of the Project. A detailed summary of engagement activities, participants, feedback received and Project responses are provided in the Auld Creek Project Consultation Summary (Rua Gold 2026), which should be read alongside this SIA.

By September 2026, Rua Gold had recorded more than 1,200 interactions with at least 100 stakeholder and community groups. Engagement has included Central and local government, iwi, landholders, businesses and potential suppliers, emergency services, community organisations and members of the Reefton community. Engagement methods have included direct meetings and briefings, site visits, public community events, newsletters and online information, together with ongoing access to Rua Gold through its Reefton office and public contact channels.

Engagement on ACP is driven by the Project-specific Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP, considered part of the wider SIMP).

The SEP considers cultural and legal considerations, including regional planning tools and Māori engagement protocols and will be reviewed and updated throughout the life of the Project to best reflect the stage of the Project, its effects and the parties interested/affected. It has been developed and delivered by a mix of senior project management and select community-focused staff to ensure consistency and quality of information.

7.2 Engagement to date

Feedback to through engagement has been predominantly positive, with a strong focus on ensuring the economic and employment benefits of the Project are realised locally.

Key matters raised by the community have included local employment and business opportunities, workforce residency and housing, recreational access, traffic and road safety, water and environmental management, and local services and infrastructure. Engagement with government, iwi and other organisations has covered many of the same matters, alongside the approvals process, biodiversity, infrastructure, workforce requirements, emergency planning, procurement and potential partnerships.

Engagement feedback has informed aspects of Project design and management planning, including site access, recreational access, local employment and procurement, housing and traffic management.

Further detail on engagement activity and feedback is provided in the Project Consultation Summary document, while the remainder of this chapter sets out additional engagement undertaken directly by EMM to inform this SIA, the key outcomes of Project engagement to date, and the plan for ongoing and future engagement.

7.3 Targeted SIA data collection engagement

In addition to public and small group engagement undertaken by Rua Gold, EMM engaged directly with a range of community members and stakeholders to help consolidate and test understanding from secondary sources. These conversations and semi-structured KIIs also provided an anonymous and independent opportunity for community members and stakeholders to feed into the SIA process directly.

The opportunity to register for an SIA interview was publicly advertised through online Project media, local print media and signage in the Rua Gold town centre shopfront window. Additionally, visitors to the Rua Gold office, individuals and members of community or interest groups known to have a likely interest were also contacted directly either verbally, by email or letter. Informal feedback was also sought through conversations across multiple site visits. This mixed approach was taken to ensure an open and transparent process whilst increasing likelihood of a range of voices with diverse interests and insights.

Interviews, and less formal conversations, were held with members or representatives of a broad range of community and stakeholder groups, including:

- business owners and organisations across a range of sectors including contracting/trades, mining, retail, hospitality, engineering and farming
- services including tourist advice, education, childcare, and emergency services
- sports clubs and volunteer groups (including heritage and youth/social work)
- property developers and accommodation providers
- government representatives and organisations
- residents of Reefton, Soldiers Big River Road and Blacks Point.

Where appropriate, feedback was provided to Rua Gold to facilitate future discussion or action during the finalisation of Project design and management planning; any ensuing outcomes are included within Table 7.1.

7.4 Engagement outcomes

Key Project design elements have been established to mitigate any potential social (and environmental) effects from mining the orebody. They have been designed drawing upon Rua Gold's aspirations to enhance social and environmental performance, optioneering outputs, early technical assessment and engagement with the local community and stakeholders.

At the quarterly community events held in Reefton in July and September Rua explained the developing Project Description, along with the main management measures proposed. The decision to reduce the mine footprint to the present Project Description, further limiting any environmental impacts, occurred after SIA data collection was undertaken, and was communicated via the September project Newsletter

Table 7.1 shows an overview of refined Project elements in alignment with key consultation themes.

Table 7.1 Outcomes of engagement

Key themes	Project refinements/activities
Economic effect and employment	• The Project will prioritise local employment and procurement. • The strategy for workforce accommodation will include encouragement of residential workers to encourage contribution to the local community and economy.
Environment and amenity	• Only underground mining methods will be used, rather than any open-cut mining (used in previous projects in the area). • The Project will produce dry-stack tailings which will be returned underground, reducing need for a conventional wet 'tailings dam' and limiting material on surface at end of Project. • The mining method will include no use of cyanide at the processing plant. • The location selected for SIS -with community input- is outside of a forested area, in a sparsely populated location with natural sound protection from the topography. • The footprint of Project activities and infrastructure in DoC land has been designed to be minimal. • The mine access route selected, with community input, is in an unpopulated location to further reduce the likelihood of effects/nearby receptors. • Project offered to purchase those properties closest to the Project Site and access route/public road detour.

Key themes	Project refinements/activities
Access and traffic	• A mine access road will be constructed from Quigleys Road to limit effects to public traffic on Soldiers Big River Road. • To reduce noise, light and traffic effects to residential receptors on the initial access to SIS, a revised access route with safer access and fewer affected residences (via Quigleys Road) has been selected. • Construction and operation of the ventilation adit will not impact access to local leisure trails. • Project has offered to purchase three properties in the vicinity.
Housing and services	• The SIS has been carefully selected, it includes three private dwellings and a former educational establishment and understood to be of limited ecological or community value at this time. • The Project will prioritise existing residents for employment and encourage long-term residency in its workforce.
Community investment	• Community investment and sponsorship activities have commenced early in the assessment phase of the Project. • Project commits to a dedicated community investment budget determined each year, and focused mindful of input from community.
Community engagement	• Ongoing and accessible community engagement through online forums, newsletters, an office in Reefton and regular community events. • Specific engagement sessions upon request. • Public reporting of complaints and environmental data. • Additional technical work and engagement activities were undertaken in the planning phase in response to enquiries/requests.
Other	• Commissioning a formal SIA to ensure all viewpoints and effects are understood and can be managed. • Key commitments made to stakeholders/community will be documented and formalised wherever possible to ensure they are followed throughout the Project. • Social considerations will form part of the closure review when that is triggered.

7.5 Ongoing and future engagement

The Project's approach to stakeholder engagement (set out within the SIMP and detailed SEP) will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is always appropriate for the latest upcoming activities and effects. It will be comprehensively reviewed ahead of construction should the Project be approved to ensure it is up to date and reflects the latest Project information and local context.

Under the current SEP, engagement includes continuation of open community events at least every quarter, provision of key up to date information online via social media and the comprehensive project website, and a regular cadence of meetings with key stakeholders.

Outside of planned community events, Rua Gold remains open to community feedback through phone and email 24 hours a day. The community office established in Reefton, open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm, is also expected to remain operational for the foreseeable future.

Feedback on opportunities to mitigate or enhance any Project will continue to be considered throughout the life of the Project. Similarly, the public grievance mechanism already in place will continue to be operate.

8 Social impact management

A range of effect mitigation measures have been factored into the physical Project design (see Chapter 3).

Additionally, further measures have been identified and set out within the draft SIMP (taken to include the draft SIMP and associated SEP).

Core social effect management measures within the draft SIMP are provided in Table 8.1. The draft SIMP is a working document and will be finalised iteratively in consultation with key stakeholders such as community, industry and public authorities.

The listed examples are not exhaustive, and a full list will be detailed within the final SIMP ahead of construction should the Project be approved.

Table 8.1 Key social management measures

Theme	Relevance to social effects	Example measures in draft SIMP
Stakeholder engagement	Supports effective relationship management, community participation, and transparent and effective management of stakeholder concerns and grievances.	• Frequent information sharing and community engagement, including quarterly public meetings, a set cadence of meetings with key stakeholder groups/bodies, site visits, newsletters, and digital and print media. • Public disclosure of social and environmental performance. • Formal grievance mechanism accessible by phone and email.
Local procurement	Promotes local economic participation, business opportunities, and distribution of Project benefits within the local community.	• Tailored local procurement approach, committed to maximising opportunities for New Zealand businesses (underpinned by the existing Rua Gold Local Procurement Policy). • Priority of focus and contract award to be given in the order of local, regional, then national suppliers. • Actively identify and engage capable suppliers in local area as a priority and ensure timely awareness of opportunities. • Where practical provide support to develop potential supplier capability to meet requirements.
Workforce management	Manages employment, workforce wellbeing, worker behaviour, and direct workforce-related effects on local communities.	• Implementation of family-friendly practices to promote resident workforce (existing or otherwise). • Mandatory worker code of conduct. • Skills and growth programme (apprenticeships, graduate programme, iwi initiatives).
Worker accommodation	Manages potential effects on housing availability, affordability, community cohesion, and local services and infrastructure.	• Promotion/prioritisation of residential workforce including transitional arrangements. • Limited offering of employee accommodation/housing. • Alignment or partnership with local businesses and authorities to support capacity of community and infrastructure. • Provision of shuttle bus to key locations will help promote accommodation selection.
Community Investment	Supports community development, social wellbeing, local priorities, and enhancement of positive Project benefits.	• Community investment will focus upon the Reefton Community and then the wider West Coast region. • Protected budget to be set aside annually, with senior Rua personnel accountable for delivery. • Funding decisions will be transparent, aligned with community priorities and communicated periodically.

Social management measures are supported by strong environmental ones, such as those set out in Table 8.2. These pertain to both the natural and lived environment.

Table 8.2 Key relevant environmental management approaches

Theme	Relevance to social effects
Water quality	Protecting water resources and aquatic environments relied on or valued by local residents, recreational users, fishers, and environmental stakeholders.
Noise and vibration	Minimising noise and vibration effects on nearby residents, visitors, recreational users and others who value the amenity of the local area including any fauna who may be affected by this.
Air quality	Minimising air quality effects on community health, amenity and the enjoyment of local outdoor environments.
Traffic/transport	Minimising traffic delays and safety risks to road users/those interacting with the local road network, in particular on Soldiers Big River Road.
Biodiversity	Protecting local flora, fauna and environmental values enjoyed by those who may pass through or use the area to enjoy the local environment.
Visual effect	Minimising visual effects on nearby residents, visitors, recreational users and others who value the character and amenity of the local area; for example, through presence of infrastructure or use of light.
Cultural heritage	Protecting heritage places and values important to community identity, history and connection to place.

It was flagged in community feedback that the community has experience of changing their approach to environmental or social management/understood commitments following a change in staff or circumstances. To allay any community concerns that the Project may do this, Rua Gold proposes its core effect management principles and activities be made conditions of the planning consent.

To ensure relevance, and ensuring compliance with any such conditions, we recommend that the SIMP be reviewed annually and following any major changes to Project design, incidents or feedback. We recommend that the SIMP be reviewed comprehensively reviewed for effectiveness and appropriateness ahead of construction commencement, transition from construction to operations and prior to closure.

9 Identification and assessment of social effects

9.1 Introduction

Assessment of social effects considers direct and indirect (i.e. via effects on the surrounding environment) social effects, of both a positive (benefits) and negative (effects) nature.

Effects are discussed in terms of scale, nature and magnitude of effect, and are assigned a significance rating inclusive of expected management measures.

Possible cumulative effects of note are considered and discussed in Section 9.2.1.

Project effects have been assessed for significance both without any management or enhancement measures, and with those the Project expects to implement at this time.

All IAIA SIA themes[2] have been considered in the development of this SIA. However, expected social effects are presented in this assessment within the following themes for ease of reference to the broader New Zealand FTAA/RMA regulatory framework:

- employment and economic wellbeing
- housing and accommodation
- community infrastructure and services
- population and cohesion
- environmental amenity
- traffic, connectivity and access
- other.

The following section of this chapter sets out the assessment of effects in sequence, identifying the nature, classification and significance of each effect. A combined summary table setting out the assessed significance of all effects is provided at the end of this section.

9.2 Assessment of effects

9.2.1 Employment and economic wellbeing

i Regional and national economic health

A strong and resilient economy benefits community wellbeing through improved financial surety and security, and improved resources available to support public services.

[2] Way of Life; Community; Environment; Wellbeing; Personal and property rights Fears and aspirations

According to the Project's Economic Assessment (Eaqub & Eaqub Limited 2026), the Project is expected to generate substantive economic benefits at local, regional and national levels through investment, employment, expenditure and taxation. In total the Project is expected to contribute an estimated $988 million to New Zealand GDP. This is the Central case, covering direct and indirect effects over the life of the mine. In present value terms the national contribution is $674 million, and in a full production year the national figure averages about $108 million.

At the regional level, the Economic Assessment estimates that Project-related activity would contribute approximately $581 million to Buller District GDP over the life of the Project, based on the Central case. This reflects the mining contractor's roster, on which about half of the crews live in Reefton. This represents a substantial contribution relative to the size of the district economy. The extent of benefits realised locally will depend in part on workforce residency and the location of mining contractors and other suppliers.

A further $29 million is estimated to accrue to the rest of the West Coast through supplier and induced effects.

Regional (and local) suppliers are expected to service a substantial share of Project requirements, particularly construction, engineering, logistics, catering and equipment maintenance firms. As the Project commits to preferencing local and regional suppliers, and potentially further supported to tender or deliver work, it is considered the Buller economy's share of the economic benefit could well be even higher. This will be further compounded by the likelihood of some specialist nationwide suppliers establishing local facilities.

Additionally, over the life of the Project, the Economic Assessment estimates approximately $24 million in Crown revenue from royalties and company tax, alongside a further $74 million in PAYE associated with employment at the mine and its suppliers. Rua Gold will contribute $359 million to the Crown through royalties, company tax and PAYE from direct employees. It should be noted, however, that this money is controlled centrally and does not automatically flow back to the regional authorities, who are responsible for increased public service and infrastructure demands such as sewerage, roads, and permitting. To help minimise any impact from Project-induced infrastructure demand (discussed elsewhere), Rua Gold is currently in discussion with BDC regarding financial support toward the cost of water/sewerage upgrades in Reefton.

Table 9.1 Significance determination for effect on regional and national economic health

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Reg/National	Long-term	High	Medium	Almost Certain	Major	Extreme

ii Local business income

Mining projects offer potential income for local businesses through direct contracting, extended supply-chain opportunities and spending by workers and their households. It is expected that the Project will spend $600 million with NZ suppliers/producers across the life of the Project, operating a 'local-first' procurement approach to maximise benefit to locally based businesses. The majority of this spend will be with the mining contractor.

The Reefton business landscape currently comprises approximately 114 businesses (per 2025 data) - an increase of 8.9% on the previous year and counter to the 2% drop across West Coast in general over the same period. It is expected that businesses in Reefton, and farther afield, offering construction, engineering, maintenance, transport, fuel, accommodation, food, retail and other services are likely to particularly benefit from the Project. The scale of this substantive economic benefit will depend on the extent to which goods, services and labour can be sourced locally. Through its Local Procurement Policy, the Project will actively prioritise local businesses in procurement decisions. It is also investigating early opportunity sharing/procurement awareness mechanisms and capacity building opportunities to support local firms to tender and deliver for likely works packages required.

Engagement feedback identified a strong desire for the Project to contribute to the local economy without overly detracting from its current development focused around outdoor/historic charm tourism, leisure and lifestyle. Due to the Project Site location effectively hidden from the town, and its commitments to strong environmental practice this is not expected to notably effect the character of the Reefton itself or its attraction to visitors. The journey to Alborn car park (used as a trailhead) via the new Quigleys Road diversion will not dramatically affect journey time, nor is the Project expected to affect the quality of hunting or fishing experience in the area, or the businesses involved with it.

Short stay accommodation for workers will be delivered in close consultation with local community/businesses to ensure opportunity to maintain sustainable levels of accommodation for leisure visitors in peak times such as school holidays, summer weekends and the passing through of the Tour Aotearoa throughout February.

Table 9.2 Significance determination for effect on local business income

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Community	Long-term	High	Very high	Almost Certain	Major	Extreme

iii Access to employment and household income

The Project is expected to increase access to employment and income for people in Reefton and the wider Buller and West Coast labour market. It will contract up to 150 construction workers at a time across a 15-month construction phase and directly employ up to 200 people in a range of semi- to highly skilled roles during operations. These are the Project Description figures. The Economic Assessment models an on-site estimate of approximately 130 to 160 people in the main production years (Rua Gold's own staff plus the mining contractor's crews of 80 to 110) and a construction peak of 210 to 260 people on site in 2028, which includes the contractor's crews and Rua Gold's staff alongside the construction contractors.

The residential population of Reefton is approximately 1,050 (StatsNZ 2023), with approximately 60% or higher being of working age, equating to approximately one job opportunity on the Project for every three potential workers in Reefton during the six to eight years of operations.

Mining jobs are typically comparatively highly paid, with roles often earning more than $100,000 per year, compared to the average annual earning per worker in BDC of $66,000. (Eaqub & Eaqub Limited 2026). Engagement identified strong interest in local people being able to access these opportunities, including women, and young people who may otherwise leave Reefton because of limited skilled employment options.

Engagement feedback also suggested Rua Gold arrange school-based career exposure, work experience and other pathways into mining employment, as well as flagging early what skills will be needed and prioritising local recruitment.

Enhancement measures will include employment practices preferencing existing community members in the local, then regional community. Minibuses will be provided to nearby communities to help facilitate residential workforces and policies will be implemented to encourage people to move to the area long-term/permanently and engage with the community. A preferred mining contractor, based in Reefton, has already been identified.

The benefits may not necessarily be shared evenly, however, as Reefton has pockets of poverty and economic stress, meaning some households may experience wider changes associated with a higher-income workforce (e.g. local commodity price rises) without themselves obtaining benefit of new employment or enhanced salary.

To help manage this the Project's community investment activities should consider programmes which look to support those who might otherwise struggle to access/benefit from the job opportunities created on the Project, with its suppliers or providing goods and services to the workforce.

Table 9.3 Significance determination for effect on access to employment and household income

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Community	Long-term	High	Very high	Likely	Major	Extreme

iv Access to skills and development

The Project has the potential to increase access to skills development and career progression for the local and regional workforce. This is achieved through increased opportunity for employment with the Project, its suppliers and those providing goods and services to workers. Through the Project's commitment to educational investment initiatives such as apprenticeships and student sponsorships access will also be enhanced for those in or seeking education of various forms. Where practicable, the Project will also work with local business to help them develop the staff, skills and organisational capacity and capabilities to tender for Project contracts.

Engagement feedback also highlighted a desire for the Project to help create pathways for local people beyond Project employment opportunities alone, so that the community has a range of skills to develop opportunities not dependent on direct mining employment or the mining industry. This is considered in the Project's community investment approach.

Table 9.4 Significance determination for effect on access to skills and development

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Focused	Long-term	Medium	Medium	Likely	Minor	High

9.2.2 Housing and accommodation

i Access to long-term/permanent housing

The Project has an aspiration of 50% of the workforce to be resident locally, to help meet community requests and maximise economic and community vitality benefits.

-This aspiration is consistent with the Economic Assessment, which applies residency assumptions at two levels. For Rua Gold's own staff, 80% are assumed to live in Buller (15% in Grey), reflecting Rua Gold's stated intention in the Project Description. For the underground mining contractor's crews, the Economic Assessment uses the contractor's roster, on which about half live in Reefton. Blended across the on-site production workforce, this equates to about 60% living locally, which is close to the 50% aspiration for the workforce as a whole.

It is unlikely all roles will be filled by current residents, so the Project is expected to increase demand for permanent housing in Reefton (and commutable areas) if workers and their families choose to settle. This would provide income to property owners and support bringing vacant, underused or additional properties into use. However, it could also reduce availability and/or increase housing costs for existing residents.

Alongside economic opportunity, housing was one of the most consistently raised issues during SIA engagement. Participants described a rental crisis and limited current availability existing alongside latent capacity in vacant buildings, as well as land that could be used for in-fill housing. Only one rental property was observed on the market to rent in Reefton (May 2026) despite owner opportunity from rising rental income opportunity and a recorded empty housing stock level at a high level (50+ properties).

Many also referenced the construction of a worker camp in Reefton for the Snowy River mine, noting that a camp will keep people out of the rental market, but the occupants would not spend any money locally or integrate into the community. Whilst Rua Gold proposes the opposite, to limit DIDO workers and strongly promote a residential workforce in Reefton, this may not be desired by all workers. Some who base in the area may choose to live in Greymouth for example – as was the case on previous mines in the vicinity.

The effect on housing supply/cost will, therefore, depend substantially on workforce residency and whether additional housing capacity can be made available ahead of demand. Due to the high number of properties understood to be vacant in Reefton there is a real opportunity to accommodate workers locally without reducing the volume of property available for existing residents. Management measures should also consider vulnerability of specific groups to small increases in housing costs. This is particularly important noting Reefton (and Buller District as a whole) has a high deprivation index score and a housing pattern in which Māori members of the community are far less likely to own their home, and also typically pay higher weekly rents (StatsNZ 2023).

The Project's proactive measures are expected to reduce the significance of this effect. This entails ongoing discussions to take on the lease of a small number of Reefton properties from Snowy River's operators once they move staff to the new Worker Camp in late 2026 or early 2027 – effectively maintaining baseline conditions. Rua Gold has also provided some local landlords comfort of long leases to allow them to upgrade previously vacant homes for current staff accommodations.

It is also important to note that access to housing is a long-term and pre-existing issue in Reefton. Successfully addressing the existing issue is likely to involve management of the underlying access/affordability challenges by the relevant authorities. Rua Gold is in dialogue with developers, council, Development West Coast and community organisations to seek aligned direction on Reefton housing development. This has included dialogue with the developer of the Reefton 'land release' on the type of house stock required to best cater to the different needs of expected Project workers (a mix of family sized homes, medium density, townhouses). Rua has also provided formal support to the re-zoning application of land in Reefton required to enable this 110-property residential development.

Table 9.5 Significance determination for effect on access to long-term/permanent housing

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Community	Long-term	Medium	High	Possible	Moderate	High

ii Access to short-term/visitor accommodation

Construction workers, contractors and visiting personnel may also increase demand for Reefton's limited short-term accommodation. This is particularly true in the planning and construction phases where specific skills/individuals are required for short periods. This has been witnessed in Reefton recently with construction workers on a solar farm in the region seeking hotel or other leisure accommodation for long periods. Some visitor accommodation has also reportedly been effectively taken off market by particular organisations operating in the area.

Whilst accommodation businesses may benefit from this extra demand, it has potential to reduce availability and affordability of rooms to existing visitor type (e.g. domestic tourists and haulage-drivers), risking long-term visitor numbers and the incomes of businesses benefitting from them.

Management of this effect is possible through careful, collaborative and/or minimised use of short-term visitor accommodation options – for example, agreeing no Project bookings longer than a week at a time. This impact may also be minimised through use of a small number of company-leased properties without taking from current stock (e.g. those currently used by the Snowy River workforce, currently unoccupied properties, spare rooms or new accommodation).

Table 9.6 Significance determination for effect on access to short-term/visitor accommodation

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Focused	Medium-term	Low	Medium	Possible	Minor	Moderate

9.2.3 Community infrastructure and services

i Physical infrastructure performance

The Project would increase usage of physical public infrastructure such as power, sewers and roads, both through its construction and operational activities, as well as the activities of its workforce outside of working hours and through an increase in the population of Reefton.

Whilst road usage will increase because of the Project this increase will be well within the tolerances/capacity of the road network (Stantec New Zealand Limited n.d.).

The Project will require substantial electrical power and water for industrial processes. To manage this, Rua Gold will arrange its own connection to the electrical grid via a new transmission corridor, and will utilise water from the nearby river network, treating it onsite before returning it to the river network. It will also require a much smaller degree of power, potable water and sewerage for its workforce onsite. To manage this, the Project will use the same electrical connection, establish a potable water connection to the municipal water source in Reefton, and process its own sewerage on site. None of this is expected to be detrimental to the experience of utility/infrastructure provision available to the local community.

It is, however, understood the Reefton sewage network is not in a state sufficient to operate in the event of a population increase in the town. Rua Gold has been engaging closely with BDC in this regard and has supported Council's efforts to identify and source public funding for the sewerage system to be upgraded in time for the arrival of the Project workforce – or properties being speculatively developed and plumbed in with the aim of supporting it. Rua has offered to make voluntary development contribution during consultation with BDC which could be used to assist with sewage/wastewater infrastructure.

It is understood prevention/management measures will be sought collaboratively and in a timely manner to ensure the sewage system in Reefton does not stop functioning for existing residents.

An improved network of an appropriate scale, and in a timely manner, would facilitate the development of proposed individual and at-scale housing developments proposed in Reefton by local residents and businesses in anticipation of Project approval. The timing and coordination of sewage network upgrades are ultimately the responsibility of BDC in response to anticipated growth, whether that is from the Project or other causes of growth in Reefton.

Table 9.7 Significance determination for effect on physical infrastructure performance

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Community	Long-term	High	Medium	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate

ii Access to facilities and services

An increase in residents, by way of in-migrating residential workers and their households, would increase demand for services such as education, childcare, healthcare and emergency services, as well as increasing the number of users and participants at local facilities.

Whilst this is true in Greymouth and Westport as well as Reefton, the regional centres with greater density and range of facilities and services are expected to much easier absorb a comparatively small increase in populations.

SIA feedback indicated that childcare and education facilities in Reefton will be able to adapt relatively readily to increased demand -with notice. Conversely, healthcare and emergency response were identified as already constrained, with feedback highlighting difficulty getting medical appointments, and maintaining sufficient daytime ambulance coverage through volunteers. As well as an absence of dental services in Reefton.

There was a repeated sentiment expressed that the doctor's service at the local clinic – Reefton Health Medical Centre– is already oversubscribed and an increase in residents to work on the Project would add to the demand on the centre. Health New Zealand maintains ongoing review of medical services across the country and determines the clinic staffing and capabilities based on its own expert judgement and metrics, understood to heavily involve population/clinic registration levels. Rua Gold is working with the Buller District Council, sharing Project details so they can plan for this. There has also been a degree of Project engagement with central government agencies to ensure it is understood that the township and services will need to evolve to accommodate the growing mining workforce.

The Project will additionally operate its own first aid and emergency-response capability for incidents at site, limiting effect on scheduled and emergency healthcare provision. Though it is likely transport from site to hospital would be undertaken by the public emergency services if required.

The Project's proactive measures such as strong communication, on-site medical care/attracting additional medically trained personnel to the community, and potential targeted community investment are expected to help limit the significance of this effect arising from its workforce who chose to base within the community (in particular).

Table 9.8 Significance determination for effect on access to facilities and services

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Community	Long-term	Low	Medium	Possible	Minor	Moderate

9.2.4 Population and cohesion

i Population level and vitality

The Project has the potential to help retain or increase Reefton's population, by creating employment that enables people to remain in, return to or move to the area. This is particularly relevant as younger members of the community were reported to commonly leave for study and employment. Reefton also has a very high rate of volunteerism, such that many key services are effectively volunteer-dependent, and additional members for these groups was keenly sought.

Engagement identified an increase in integrated community members, and a reduced desire to leave by younger residents, as a key potential benefit of the Project. Many were clear in wanting workers and families to settle locally and contribute to schools, businesses, clubs and volunteer organisations rather than simply travel to Reefton for working hours and then either travel home or eat/sleep in an accommodation camp.

There is considerable uncertainty over the scale of this effect. Participants drew on previous mining experience to suggest that many workers may commute or retain homes elsewhere; some feedback suggested around half the Globe Progress mine workforce lived locally, while others described more limited settlement associated with previous mines. However, it was a common sentiment that attracting residents, rather than simply attracting workers, is important if the Project is to make a sustained contribution to Reefton's vitality.

The Project is clear in its commitment to promoting and supporting non-local workers to move to the area and integrate into the community, long-term or permanently. This will include family-friendly policies to promote movement of whole households to Reefton rather than individual workers/DIDO employment patterns. Such enhancement measures are expected to increase the effect of this potential benefit.

The Project is also expected to support population retention and vitality as a result of increased opportunity – for example an increased number and range of job opportunities for those from Reefton.

Table 9.9 Significance determination for effect on population level and vitality

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Community	Long-term	Medium	Medium	Likely	Minor	High

ii Community cohesion

A proportionally high influx of workers to the community could cause social friction. However, Reefton is experienced in the scale of the mining industry. Proactive management measures such as extensive community engagement and prioritising existing local workers and firms is expected to help the Project workforce to be positively received and integrated. Promoting long-term residency amongst workers and opportunities to get involved in community will support this integration and further reduce the potential risk to community cohesion.

It is important to note the Project workforce would arrive in Reefton after Endura mine open their accommodation camp in the town, so would likely be adding to a substantial number of new workers. However, all will be in the mining industry, a common and historic one in the area which binds much of the community. Rua Gold is also committed to a Worker Code of Conduct to help ensure community friendly behaviours by all of its workforce and contractors.

Table 9.10 Significance determination for effect on community cohesion

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Community	Medium-term	Low	Low	Unlikely	Minor	Low

iii Community identity and sense of place

Reefton has a strong self-identity as a mining town, reflected in both its history and the industry's continuing importance within the region. It actively draws upon this history in its tourism, leisure and lifestyle offer; through museums, mining history notice boards, and golden era aesthetic on the main street.

By continuing Reefton's long-held identity as a mining town the Project serves to reinforce this community identity. However, it must be careful to do so without risking its emerging one as lifestyle option/destination. This was clearly expressed within the feedback received for the SIA – the Project should support the town in its development, not overly dominate it or consider itself as 'saving' Reefton.

Using active community and stakeholder engagement to help shape Project decisions and actions, the Project has reduced the likelihood of impacts on community identity or sense of place associated with any perceptions that the Project has been imposed on the community. Integration of workers into the community as much as possible will also help existing community feel they have retained a sense of control, identity and ownership of their home.

It is important that broad social management measures such as tailored engagement be inclusive and responsive to community desires. They should also be cognisant that a mine may not be considered a defining factor in identity or place for all parts of the community, and that industrialisation of country can damage that sense of place for those who feel particularly connected to it.

Table 9.11 Significance determination for effect on community identity and sense of place

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Community	Long-term	Low	Low	Possible	Minor	Moderate

iv Labour availability

The Project will create substantial demand for workers in a relatively small labour market. Engagement indicates that some local employers already have difficulty finding staff for building and hospitality or service work, and that retaining people can be difficult. The Project could, therefore, increase competition for existing employees and contractors, particularly given the comparatively high wages expected for mining employment, thus reducing their availability to the rest of the community.

Conversely, the Project is also likely to attract a range of additional workers to the area, for example partners or family members of employees wanting to enter the wider local workforce, or speculative workers looking for employment.

This will be supported by the Project's local-first procurement and employment policy. Family-friendly employment practices and the community investment strategy will also be informed by feedback from community identifying women constrained by childcare and/or with extensive skills not widely sought in Reefton at this time, as an underutilised part of the labour force which Rua Gold could focus upon.

There is already a significant lack of workers in some industries, with workers being bought in from other communities to fill roles in demand. The Project is likely to both increase supply and demand for workers of various types in Reefton, balancing as a neutral or insignificant effect overall.

Table 9.12 Significance determination for effect on labour availability

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Focused	Short term	Low	Low	Possible	Insignificant	Low

9.2.5 Environmental amenity

i Air quality amenity

The Project has undertaken a detailed Air Quality Assessment (Tonkin & Taylor Ltd 2026a) . The assessment predicts that air quality effects such as particulates and combustion emissions and dust will be low/slight or negligible, subject to the proposed controls in the Air Quality Management Plan.

There was limited concern raised about air quality matters during SIA or broader engagement, on the understanding dust and emissions would be closely controlled and demonstrably remain within legal requirements.

On this basis, no social effects associated with changes in air quality are expected.

Table 9.13 Significance determination for effect on air quality amenity

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Focussed	Long-term	Low	Low	Likely	Insignificant	Moderate

ii Noise and vibration amenity

A detailed Noise and Vibration Assessment has been undertaken for the Project (Tonkin & Taylor Ltd 2026b). Construction noise effects were considered negligible. Subject to building façade upgrades to sleeping areas at 73 Harwood Road, funded by the Project, operational noise effects were also considered negligible at all receptors.

Project noise effects will, however, be perceptible. They will be most noticeable at the residences at 73 Harwood Road) and 2484 Ikamatua Highway. Construction noise at these properties will be audible but within applicable limits and temporary in nature.

To help ensure operational noise at 73 Harwood Road remains below night-time limits upgrades will be made to the façade of sleeping areas at the property prior to commencement of 24-hour operations. With these measures in place, noise effects are manageable at both properties.

Effects will be managed through the Noise, Vibration and Blast Management Plan, including proactive scheduling and community engagement and the implementation of the façade upgrades at 73 Harwood Road.

Limited concern was raised during the SIA regarding noise; where raised, it was in the context of the experience of local hiking tracks. Some localised and transient construction noise will be audible to users of the Globe Hill Track close to the ventilation adit; similarly, the section passing within 75 metres (m) of the adit is likely to experience notable noise, whilst the vast majority of the track is unaffected. Noise effects on track users are considered negligible.

On this basis, very limited and localised social effects associated with changes in the noise or vibration environment are expected. These primarily being interactions with the Project to proactively limit exposure to noise, and potential awareness of nighttime noise outside of sleeping areas in a very small number of locations.

Table 9.14 Significance determination for effect on noise and vibration amenity

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Localised	Long-term	Low	Low	Likely	Minor	High

iii Landscape and visual amenity

A detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Project (Wayfinder Landscape Planning & Strategy Ltd 2026).

The assessment determined that whilst the introduction of industrial facilities into the location of the Project would be a noticeable change, the 'contained nature of the visual catchment' means notable visual effects are expected limited to 'locations close to the Project's Surface Infrastructure Site and diminish rapidly with distance'.

'Overall visual effects within the visual catchment are assessed as moderate during construction, operation and closure of the ACP… trending to low over time, as the site returns to a more natural state, with lower human influence' following closure/rehabilitation'.

The Project 'is assessed as resulting in moderate landscape effects', noting landscape effects within/as viewed from the more natural Victoria Forest Park environment remain very localised when considered in the context of the broader Victoria Forest Park landscape.'

The Project location and principal mining/processing activities are not likely to influence visual amenity of the historic areas of the main Reefton township. Whilst the Project's above-ground elements, are likely to 'reduce perceptions of naturalness and remoteness' for some recreational users/visitors to the Surface Infrastructure Site location, this is not expected to have major effects on community enjoyment of the wider landscape and broader region's attractiveness for leisure tourism and usage including hiking, cycling trails, fishing or hunting.

With careful management and engagement, it should be possible for the SIS to become part of the identity of modern Reefton's mining culture, without feeling imposed within its setting/on the community or preventing users and potential visitors from wishing to enjoy the area. Management measures to help minimise industrial appearance include careful selection of materials, colours and shapes of infrastructure components.

Table 9.15 Significance determination for effect on landscape and visual amenity

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Localised	Long-term	Medium	Low	Almost certain	Minor	High

iv Waterway amenity and use

It is understood the Project will have no significant detrimental impact upon the local water system or the ecology which live in or rely upon it. Water management, e.g. extraction, collection and return, will be carefully controlled under defined management plans to ensure no negative effects on river health or wildlife in terms of flow, or quality. As such no effect is expected to those who utilise or rely upon the local water system for drinking water, fishing or viewing pleasure. It is important to note, however, that water courses typically have strong cultural importance, which will be addressed in the separate Project review document by tangata whenua.

Table 9.16 Significance determination for effect on waterway amenity and use

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Localised	Short term	Low	Medium	Likely	Insignificant	Moderate

v Flora and fauna

It is understood the Project will have no significant detrimental impact on local flora and fauna. Ground clearance, blasting and other Project activities will be carefully managed through defined management plans to avoid or minimise effects on ecological values and wildlife, including through controls identified in the ecological assessment. As such, no material effect is expected on the community's ability to enjoy or value the local natural environment and wildlife. It is important to note that flora and fauna may also have cultural importance, which will be addressed in the separate Project review document by tangata whenua.

Table 9.17 Significance determination for effect on flora and fauna amenity

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Localised	Short term	Low	Medium	Likely	Insignificant	Moderate

9.2.6 Traffic, connectivity and access

i Traffic and road users

A detailed Transport Assessment was undertaken for the Project (Stantec New Zealand Limited n.d.) as it:

> …involves closure of part [2 km] of Soldiers Big River Road to the general public south of Harwood Road … with public access to the southern section of the Soldiers Big River Road being provided via Quigleys Road. This involves widening of Quigleys Road and construction of a new section of road linking Quigleys Road to meet Soldiers Big River Road south of the processing plant. The State Highway 7 (SH7)/Quigleys Road intersection will be upgraded

The detour is understood to have limited effect on journey times or wider social implications for drivers using the current road. Feedback was if Soldiers Big River Road is also used by walkers, -dogwalkers and horses at present, as well as those driving to properties at the early section of the road. Safe access will be maintained during construction and operation through existing passing locations and controlled driver behaviour. Once the road is closed to the public/Project traffic starts using the Quigleys Road access route these users will experience less traffic than at present when using the initial portion of Soldiers Big River Road.

Whilst noticeable and having a (small) environmental/environmental amenity effect, the increase of vehicles past properties on Soldiers Big River Road during the early months of construction is not expected to meaningfully affect access or journey times. Similarly, the 100 to 120 vehicle movements per day (peaking at 30 to 40 vehicles per hour at shift change) will be perceptible on Quigleys Road and State Highway 7 but are not expected to limit access or cause traffic delays.

Table 9.18 Significance determination for effect on Traffic and road users

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Localise	Long-term	Medium	Medium	Almost certain	Minor	High

9.2.7 Other

i Community health and safety

The Project has the potential to affect community health and safety through vectors such as increased traffic and heavy vehicle movements, environmental emissions and discharges, worker welfare and increased demand on health and emergency services. These pathways are considered principally through the relevant specialist assessments and other SIA effects, including traffic and road safety, air quality, noise and vibration, waterways, and access to community services.

The specialist assessments do not indicate any material community health effects from Project activities, subject to proposed control measures.

Engagement similarly identified limited concern regarding environmental health effects. Although some participants sought assurance regarding environmental management. More tangible concerns included reference to road safety on Soldiers Big River Road and the capacity of local health and emergency services.

Table 9.19 Significance determination for effect on community health and safety

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Localised	Long-term	High	Low	Unlikely	Minor	Low

ii Social experience upon mine closure

We understand that it is Rua Gold's intention to continue exploration across the substantial exploration permits they currently hold across the Reefton Goldfield. It is intended that if further mineral deposits be found, and that these be processed at the ACP processing plant. As such it is envisaged that the end of the Project may well not mark the end of Rua Gold's operations in Reefton, and the associated jobs and other socioeconomic benefits arising from operations at the processing plant.

However, mine closure can produce a marked social transition where employment, local spending and population associated with the operation decline, affecting workers, families, businesses, housing demand, clubs and community confidence. This is particularly relevant if a town has adjusted to a substantially increased level of employment and economic activity over the mine life to a point of dependency. It should be noted, however, that the social effects of closure are expected to be more notable following the positive predicted impacts than they are when assessed against the current baseline social conditions, which is the focus of this SIA.

The Project's proactive management measures are expected to have a significant effect in minimising the potential negative experiences upon closure. By looking to address the boom-and-bust cycle from the outset –in collaboration with key stakeholders and community members– this should limit the effect of mine closure at the point of Project completion. Key tenets of this will be ongoing community engagement, long-term strategic community investment, and capacity building support through local industry and skills support, or other partnerships/memberships. Of note is the Project's commitment to a comprehensive SIMP update ahead of closure.

The social effect upon closure will depend heavily upon community and stakeholder behaviours/actions as well as activities by the Project. The community and various key stakeholders all have a key role to play during the life of the Project help ensure the development of skills, industries and opportunities that can be sustained outside and after completion of the Project. If this is effective, then the significance assessment below may prove overly negative.

Engagement identified an existing desire in the community for social closure planning from the outset. This included supporting complementary or alternative skills and economic activities capable of continuing beyond the Project life from the outset. As well as more post-closure phase tasks such as retaining or incorporating tourist and leisure facilities into the decommissioning/rehabilitation, e.g. new bike tracks.

It is noted the Project Economic Assessment (Eaqub & Eaqub Limited 2026), estimates closure activities at the end of Operations are expected to cost $12 m; this spend and associated employment will to a degree naturally help lessen the abrupt end of Project contribution to local economy and employment market.

Table 9.20 Significance determination for effect on social experience upon mine closure

Extent	Duration	Severity	Interest/concern	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Region	Permanent	High	Medium	Likely	Moderate	High

9.3 Cumulative effects

In August 2026, Bathurst Resources lodged an FTAA Substantive Application for the Buller Plateaux Continuation Project. It is understood from SIA feedback that if that project goes ahead their Stockton Mine will require a larger number of mining/mine associated workforce than they currently employ. Conversely, if the expansion does not go ahead this could lead to a rapid halt in production and comprehensive reduction of their workforce in 2027. The effect of these potential outcomes being a decreased or increased cohort of skilled and experienced workers based in and around Westport looking for jobs and, therefore, the likely proportion of the Project workers who are based in Reefton vs commuting from the regional centres.

The key future potential cumulative effects of relevance to this study, and a regular topic of focus in the feedback received, is the upcoming operational phase of the Snowy River mine. In particular, the opening of a 100+ bed camp in the centre of Reefton for their DIDO operational staff. This self-contained accommodation camp is currently under construction and expected to be operating at the end of 2026.

The decision to house Snowy River staff put its staff in a catered camp facility was expressed with disappointment by several stakeholders interviewed for the SIA. It was felt likely to limit interaction and integration with the community, and to be a failure to deliver on previous expectations or commitments to a residential workforce. However, this approach significantly limits the potential cumulative effect of two projects seeking local worker housing at once.

It does not, however, reduce the effect of the two workforces on infrastructure such as the sewerage system, which is expected to be over capacity when both workforces are resident. There is also potential to maximise community benefits through complementary or aligned approaches to community investment and other workforce or procurement practices.

Looking further to the future, is also worth noting Rua Gold envisages the ACP as the first of a series of gold mining projects in the region should it be approved. Whilst there are no other formal proposals in place the cumulative effects worthy of consideration at this point are two-fold:

- The importance of understanding that this is viewed as a positive by the community and should be set up as an example, with clear company and approvals commitments to ensure the company meets environmental and social performance it and the community is targeting from the beginning and in a manner that can scale with future operations.

- There is a high degree of benefit expectation in parts of the local community; whilst this is valid optimism it is possible to be over optimistic which can lead to grievance or loss of trust if individual or collective expectations aren't met. The idea this is will be the start of multiple/multi-generational gold mining in the region may be compounding such expectation.

When considering cumulative effect with understood future projects/phases of work at major operations the potential for financial/employment benefits are increased and the potential for impacts to sewer operations and social cohesion are increased. However, in each case the change is not considered significant enough to change the initial significance determined.

9.4 Summary of effect significance

Table 9.21 sets out the assessed significance of social effects expected from the Project. These include a number of large-scale positives, in particular around various indicators of economic improvement, as well as a wide range of low significance negative effects typical for such a project.

The IAIA significance rating reflects both consequence and likelihood and is heavier weighted toward likelihood than other frameworks. Several effects can be seen as rated High in significance because they are likely or almost certain to occur, despite being predicted to have only Minor social consequences.

Table 9.21 Summary of effect significance

Effect on:	Likelihood	Consequence	Significance (IAIA)
Employment and economic wellbeing			
Regional and national economic health	Almost Certain	Major	Extreme (positive)
Local business income	Almost Certain	Major	Extreme (positive)
Access to employment and household income	Likely	Major	Extreme (positive)
Access to skills and development	Likely	Minor	High (positive)
Housing and accommodation			
Access to long-term/permanent housing	Possible	Moderate	High (negative)
Access to short-term/visitor accommodation	Possible	Minor	Moderate (negative)
Infrastructure and services			
Physical infrastructure performance	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate (negative)
Access to facilities and services	Possible	Minor	Moderate (negative)
Population and cohesion			
Population level and vitality	Likely	Minor	High (positive)
Community cohesion	Unlikely	Minor	Low (negative)
Community identity and sense of place	Possible	Minor	Moderate (positive)
Labour availability	Possible	Insignificant	Low (negative)
Environmental amenity			
Air quality amenity	Likely	Insignificant	Moderate (negative)
Noise and vibration amenity	Likely	Minor	High (negative)
Landscape and visual amenity	Almost certain	Minor	High (negative)
Waterway amenity and use	Likely	Insignificant	Moderate (negative)
Flora and fauna amenity	Likely	Insignificant	Moderate (negative)
Traffic, connectivity and access			
Traffic and road users	Almost certain	Minor	High (negative)
Other			
Community health, safety and wellbeing	Unlikely	Minor	Low (negative)
Social experience upon mine closure	Likely	Moderate	High (negative)

10 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

10.1 Overview

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes will be implemented to track progress, test assumptions and support continuous improvement in the planning and delivery of measures to manage social effects associated with the Project.

The monitoring and evaluation approach is designed to support accountability, learning and shared ownership of changes because of Project impacts and benefits. Results will inform decision-making, be communicated in accessible formats, and, where practicable, be discussed directly with local stakeholders to ensure Project activities remain locally informed, evidence-based and responsive.

The Project SIMP will set out a detailed monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework guiding practical delivery.

The monitoring, evaluation and reporting process will be informed by the IAIA SIA Guidance (IAIA 2015) which outlines the steps for monitoring programs as Phase 4 of the SIA process, and comprises the following tasks:

- Develop indicators to monitor change over time.
- Develop a participatory monitoring plan.
- Consider how adaptive management will be implemented and consider implementing a social management system.
- Undertake evaluation and periodic review (audit).

Monitoring should be driven by social indicators used to measure likely social changes that may be of concern to stakeholders. These should integrate quantitative indicators with qualitative information. It is important to ensure there are appropriate measures in place to track effects on known vulnerable groups, such as identified in Section 6 of this SIA.

It is recommended that key stakeholders are involved in the identification of final indicators, the methods of management and how results will be reported. This will ensure that the monitoring process is viewed as a participatory process rather than a tick-box exercise (IAIA 2015). Community members and stakeholders may also wish to be actively involved in data collection (e.g. traffic counts or air quality sampling), which can prove an effective community relationship tool.

Social performance indicators in the draft SIMP include:

- Stakeholder engagement: compliance with plan, participation rates, number of grievances received and addressed in line with commitments, number of complaints, feedback themes and nature.
- Local procurement: procurement spend in local area; number of local suppliers/partnerships; iwi business participation level.
- Employment: % local workforce; % iwi employees; training hours; staff retention.
- Employee accommodation/behaviour: % residential staff/contractors; no. behavioural incidents; Code breaches or whistleblower events effecting local community.
- Community investment: budget and spend.

The nature and frequency of monitoring and reporting activities should also be designed to align with public engagement and reporting commitments and aspirations, such as annual reporting on complaints or environmental performance, shareholder reporting requirements, or conditions of schemes such as the Global Reporting Initiative.

10.2 Approach

Examples of potential social performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities are provided in Table 10.1. Monitoring is expected to utilise metrics measuring the level of Project activity as well as indicators of scale of impact, drawing upon community and stakeholder feedback and publicly available metrics such as the Census and NZ deprivation Index data as well as internal data.

Table 10.1 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Measure/indicator	Evaluation and reporting method	Responsible party	Frequency
Volume and nature of complaints/feedback	Assess if there is any reoccurring feedback within the same themes (e.g. multiple complaints regarding traffic). Reporting to key stakeholders or the public on complaints and how they are being addressed, e.g. via newsletter or online update.	Rua Gold	Quarterly
Number of engagement activities	Number and nature of interactions logged in engagement tracker/database. Reporting to key stakeholders or the public on complaints and how they are being addressed, e.g. via newsletter or online update.	Rua Gold	Quarterly
Environmental, health, safety and wellbeing performance	Number of incidents. Reporting to key stakeholders or the public on complaints and how they are being addressed, e.g. via newsletter or online update.	Rua Gold	Quarterly
Community investment spend/activities	Number, nature and overall value of community investment activities. Reporting to key stakeholders or the public on complaints and how they are being addressed, e.g. via newsletter or online update.	Rua Gold	Quarterly
Evidence of strategic social management planning	SIMP to be revised yearly following review of management measures and input from key stakeholders and community. Closure SIA at agreed timeframe.	Rua Gold	Annually
Performance against SIMP	Annual evaluation, with headlines shared with stakeholders / community.	Rua Gold	Annually
Proportion/levels of local and regional spend	Evaluation of annual spend in Reefton including where funds have been allocated/beneficiaries of community grants and sponsorships. Reported in annual report published on website.	Rua Gold	Annual
Local and regional employment levels/proportion	Summary of where workforce is sourced from (proportion of local and non-local workers considering both Reefton, Buller District and the broader West Coast region). Reported in annual report published on website.	Rua Gold	Annual
Workforce place of residence and accommodation/rotation type	Summary of worker location of residence (whilst working), and the proportion/number of workers in brief stay, short- and -long-term accommodation or permanent residences.	Rua Gold	Annually

Measure/indicator	Evaluation and reporting method	Responsible party	Frequency
Public data pertaining to activities and socioeconomic activities in Reefton	Identification and comparison of potential indicators. If dramatic change is noted key stakeholders, including BDC, to be informed and a collective approach to be agreed if Project is a key contributor to change. Example metrics: • NZ Deprivation Index scores • Visitors to visitor centre • Bookings/sign-ins at Old Soldiers Hut • Short stay accommodation prices • Property purchase and rental availability and price trends • Waiting times/provision for healthcare and education • Proportion of social care/unemployment/homelessness/school lunches	Rua Gold	Annually

11 Conclusion

This SIA finds that, with ongoing engagement and effective management, the Project is expected to deliver significant economic and employment benefits while keeping adverse social effects limited. Negative effects during construction and operation are largely expected to be minimal and localised.

This SIA identified 20 social effects associated with the Project. The Project's most significant social effects are Extreme positive effects. Potential adverse effects of the Project are assessed as a mix of High, Moderate and Low significance.

This assessment identified:

- Three Extreme significance effects, all of a positive nature – regional and national economic health, local business income, and access to employment and household income.
- Seven High significance effects– two positive (access to skills and development, and population level and vitality) and five negative. The most consequential (Moderate consequence) of which were assessed to be social experience upon mine closure, and access to long-term/permanent housing, with all others being considered Minor.

All remaining effects were assessed as Moderate or Low. This includes potential effects associated with environmental amenity, services and infrastructure, community identity, cohesion, health and safety.

The IAIA significance classifications are substantively driven by the relatively high Likelihood rating of most impacts, arising from the level of planning, investigation and understanding of the effects and management approaches expected. When considering consequence alone, i.e. how an effect will be experienced, should it happen:

- 14 of 20 impacts are predicted to have Low or Insignificant social consequence
- three effects are considered to have Moderate (negative) consequences should they occur: social experience upon mine closure, access to long-term/permanent housing, physical infrastructure performance
- the most consequential effects are predicted to be positive, with Major positive consequences assessed for regional and national economic health, local business income, and employment and household income. No negative effects are assessed as having Major social consequences, should they occur as expected.

The socioeconomic benefits from the Project are likely to be substantial, supported by an estimated NZ$988 million in GDP over the life of the Project (direct and indirect); $674 million in present value, averaging about $108 million in a full production year, including $581 million within Buller District over the life of the Project. Beyond the economic contribution, increased employment, household incomes and local business activity have the potential to support population retention, community vitality and opportunities for local people and families.

Potential social effects arising from changes to the physical environment – including noise and vibration, visual, air quality, waterways and flora and fauna amenity – are all limited assuming implementation of management measures.

Effects on housing access and from eventual mine closure, however, are complex and potentially significant. Both are influenced by factors beyond the Project alone and will require coordinated management with the community, local authorities and other stakeholders.

The Project is in ongoing discussions with key stakeholders on housing and supports a potential new housing development proposed in Reefton – offering of a voluntary development contribution toward sewer infrastructure needed to service it.

It is hoped by Rua Gold that the Project will prove to be the start of long-term investment in the area, including additional future Projects using the Processing Plant. Alongside exploration activity to try and make that a reality, closure planning and management measures will be developed over the Project life, informed by ongoing engagement and the latest social context.

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Appendix A
Baseline data

EMM
creating opportunities

A.1 Demographic indicators

Table A.1 Estimated resident population

Area	2023 Census usually resident population count	Estimated resident population at 30 June 2025
Reefton	1,026	1,050
Greymouth	8,337	8,610
Buller district	10,446	10,650
New Zealand	4,993,923	5,324,700

Source: Estimated resident population (ERP), adjustments to derive ERP at 30 June 2023 (from census usually resident population) (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.2 Māori ethnic group population of Reefton, 1996–2023

Year	Estimated resident population	Census usually resident population count
1996	110	
2001	100	
2006	110	
2013	130	114
2018	130	123
2023	150	150

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.3 Māori ethnic group population of Buller District, 1996–2023

Year	Estimated resident population (Buller District)	Census usually resident population count (Buller District)
1996	920	
2001	840	
2006	850	
2013	1,090	963
2018	1,140	1,077
2023	1,380	1,362

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.4 Median age of population, 2018–2023 Censuses

Year	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller
2018	51.9	44.8	49.6
2023	54	45	52
Māori population			
2018	32.3	24.7	28.7
2023	31.9	27.1	31.3

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.5 Age cohorts

Category	2018 (Reefton)	2023 (Reefton)	2018 (Greymouth)	2023 (Greymouth)	2018 (Buller District)	2023 (Buller District)
Under 15 years	14.2%	13.7%	17.6%	16.6%	16.5%	14.7%
15–29 years	12.9%	10.8%	17%	15.5%	12.8%	11.5%
30–64 years	48.9%	48.2%	44.9%	45.4%	47.5%	47.5%
65 years and over	23.9%	26.9%	20.6%	22.5%	23.2%	26.3%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.6 Gender by age cohort

Category	Male / Tāne (Reefton)	Female / Wahine (Reefton)	Another gender / He ira kē anō (Reefton)	Male / Tāne (Grey-mouth)	Female / Wahine (Grey-mouth)	Another gender / He ira kē anō (Grey--mouth)	Male / Tāne (Buller District)	Female / Wahine (Buller District)	Another gender / He ira kē anō (Buller District)
Under 15 years	8.2%	5.3%	0%	8.4%	8%	0.1%	7.5%	7.2%	0%
15–29 years	5%	5.6%	0%	8.3%	7%	0.2%	5.9%	5.4%	0.2%
30–64 years	24%	24.6%	0.3%	22.2%	23%	0.1%	23.8%	23.5%	0.1%
65 years and over	14.6%	12.6%	0%	10.4%	12%	0%	14.1%	12.2%	0%
Total	51.8%	48.1%	0.3%	49.3%	50%	0.4%	51.3%	48.3%	0.3%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.7 Ethnicity

Category	2018 (Reefton)	2023 (Reefton)	2018 (Greymouth)	2023 (Greymouth)	2018 (Buller District)	2023 (Buller District)
European	90%	87.1%	90.8%	89.3%	91.8%	90.6%
Māori	13.3%	14.6%	10.6%	12.4%	11.2%	13%
Pacific Peoples	1%	1.5%	1.5%	1.7%	1.4%	1.7%
Asian	2.9%	3.5%	3.8%	5.4%	2.4%	3.3%
Middle Eastern / Latin American / African	0%	0%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%
Other Ethnicity	2.6%	3.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	2.2%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.8 Percentage of population that identify with each ethnic group (level 2), Reefton and Buller District, 2023 Census

Category	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District
European nfd[3]	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%
New Zealand European	82.7%	85.6%	86.2%
Other European	4.4%	4.4%	4.9%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.9 Non-English languages spoken

Category	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District
Māori	2.9%	2.1%	2.3%
Samoan	0%	0.2%	0%
Northern Chinese	0%	0.2%	0.1%
Hindi	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
French	0.9%	0.5%	0.7%
Yue	0%	0.1%	0.1%
Sinitic not further defined	0%	0.1%	0.1%
Tagalog	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%
German	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Spanish	0.6%	0.3%	0.7%
Afrikaans	0.3%	0.8%	0.4%
Tongan	0%	0.1%	0%
Panjabi	0%	0.1%	0.1%

[3] Not further defined

Category	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District
New Zealand Sign Language	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%
Other	2.3%	3.1%	2.6%
None (e.g. too young to talk)	0.9%	1.6%	1.2%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

A.2 Labour force indicators

Table A.10 Percentage of population by work and labour force status, Reefton and Buller District, 2013–2023 Censuses

Category	2018 (Reefton)	2023 (Reefton)	2018 (Greymouth)	2023 (Greymouth)	2018 (Buller District)	2023 (Buller District)
Employed Full-time	38.3%	40%	47.9%	47.3%	40.4%	39.3%
Employed Part-time	14.7%	14.6%	15.5%	14.3%	16%	15.2%
Unemployed	3%	3.7%	3%	2.2%	3.7%	3%
Not in the Labour Force	43.6%	41.4%	33.6%	36.2%	39.8%	42.4%
Māori population						
Employed Full-time	43.3%	36.1%	48.7%	49.2%	40.8%	41.9%
Employed Part-time	16.7%	13.9%	19.3%	17.2%	19.2%	15.8%
Unemployed	3.3%	8.3%	6.4%	4.2%	5%	5.3%
Not in the Labour Force	40%	38.9%	25.7%	29%	35.4%	37%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.11 Percentage of population by gender, by work and labour force status, Reefton and Buller District, 2023 Census

Category	Male / Tāne (Reefton)	Female / Wahine (Reefton)	Another gender / He ira kē anō (Reefton)	Male / Tāne (Grey-mouth)	Female / Wahine (Grey-mouth)	Another gender / He ira kē anō (Grey-mouth)	Male / Tāne (Buller District)	Female / Wahine (Buller District)	Another gender / He ira kē anō (Buller District)
Employed Full-time	46.3%	33.1%	-	55.5%	39.3%	55.6%	45.1%	33.3%	27.3%
Employed Part-time	9.4%	20.7%	-	9.3%	19.1%	22.2%	9.9%	20.9%	9.1%
Unemployed	4%	3.4%	-	2.6%	1.8%	11.1%	3.7%	2.1%	18.2%
Not in the Labour Force	40.3%	42.1%	-	32.5%	39.9%	22.2%	41.3%	43.7%	36.4%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.12 Percentage of population in workforce by industry, Reefton and Buller District, 2023 Census

Industry	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5.6%	2.2%	13.6%
Mining	12.3%	2%	5.1%
Manufacturing	5.6%	10.2%	5.1%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	0%	1%	1.1%
Construction	14.8%	11.8%	10.7%
Wholesale Trade	1.9%	4.8%	2.8%
Retail Trade	11.1%	11%	8.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	11.7%	6.9%	7.8%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	1.2%	5%	3.5%
Information Media and Telecommunications	0.6%	1.1%	1.1%
Financial and Insurance Services	1.9%	1.5%	3.3%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	2.5%	1.4%	2.9%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3.1%	4.6%	6.2%
Administrative and Support Services	2.5%	2.7%	3.1%
Public Administration and Safety	3.1%	8.6%	3.6%
Education and Training	6.8%	6.6%	6.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	9.9%	12.8%	9.1%
Arts and Recreation Services	1.2%	1.6%	2.5%
Other Services	2.5%	4.1%	2.8%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.13 Median personal income by age cohort

Category	2018 (Reefton)	2023 (Reefton)	2018 (Greymouth)	2023 (Greymouth)	2018 (Buller District)	2023 (Buller District)
15–29 years	$13,600	$17,700	$19,800	$28,100	$15,400	$23,900
30–64 years	$29,100	$39,400	$41,700	$52,900	$31,200	$38,900
65 years and over	$22,000	$24,900	$21,700	$25,200	$20,000	$24,500
Māori population						
15–29 years	$13,200	$9,000	$15,700	$21,400	$13,300	$19,500
30–64 years	$27,600	$35,800	$34,500	$46,900	$26,900	$36,500
65 years and over	$21,100	$24,800	$20,800	$25,700	$18,600	$23,400

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.14 Median household income

Year	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District	New Zealand
2013	$52,500	$57,800	$53,300	$63,800
2018	$39,700	$57,500	$40,600	$75,700
2023	$49,800	$72,400	$51,800	$97,000

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023); Household income and housing-cost statistics: Year ended June 2018 (StatsNZ 2018)

Table A.15 Qualifications

Qualification level	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District
No qualification	28.8%	24.3%	27.1%
Level 1 certificate	13.5%	13.7%	14.4%
Level 2 certificate	12.8%	11.5%	11.4%
Level 3 certificate	10%	11.3%	11.2%
Level 4 certificate	11%	12.4%	11.1%
Level 5 diploma	5%	5.9%	5.8%
Level 6 diploma	3.6%	4.4%	4.1%
Bachelor's degree and Level 7 qualification	6.4%	8.6%	6.7%
Post-graduate and honours degrees	4.3%	3.7%	3.4%
Masters degree	1.1%	1.8%	1.9%
Doctorate degree	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%
Overseas secondary school qualification	3.2%	2%	2.6%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

A.3 Housing indicators

Table A.16 Percentage of households by tenure type, Reefton and Buller District, 2013–2023 Censuses

Category	2018 (Reefton)	2023 (Reefton)	2018 (Greymouth)	2023 (Greymouth)	2018 (Buller District)	2023 (Buller District)
Owned	61.1%	69.3%	59.3%	66.3%	60.5%	68.1%
In family trust	4.7%	2.5%	7.9%	6.1%	7.5%	6.2%
Not owned	34.9%	28.2%	32.8%	27.6%	31.9%	25.6%
Māori population						
Owned	45.5%	48%	53.2%	62.4%	50.5%	62%
In family trust	4.5%	0%	2.9%	3.6%	3.8%	4.1%
Not owned	50%	48%	42.4%	33.9%	45.6%	33.9%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.17 Number of private dwellings by dwelling occupancy status, Reefton and Buller District, 2018–2023 Censuses

Category	2018 (Reefton)	2023 (Reefton)	2018 (Greymouth)	2023 (Greymouth)	2018 (Buller District)	2023 (Buller District)
Occupied Dwelling	453	501	3,357	3,456	4,458	4,941
Unoccupied Dwelling	120	105	384	426	1,113	1,083
Residents away	39	48	-	-	510	525
Empty dwelling	84	57	-	-	603	555
Dwelling Under Construction	3	0	12	6	18	30
Total Private Dwellings	573	603	3,753	3,891	5,589	6,054

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.18 Number of new dwellings consented, year ended March 2013–2025

Year	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller
2013	3	22	87
2014	4	18	55
2015	2	18	36
2016	1	22	22
2017	1	24	24
2018	3	15	27
2019	5	20	39
2020	3	24	57
2021	1	22	50
2022	11	42	97
2023	2	40	103
2024	2	15	104
2025	7	61	63

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.19 Median weekly rent

Year	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District
2013	$200	$200	$198
2018	$180	$230	$180
2023	$250	$280	$250

Year	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District
Māori population			
2018	$180	$248	$180
2023	$270	$300	$300

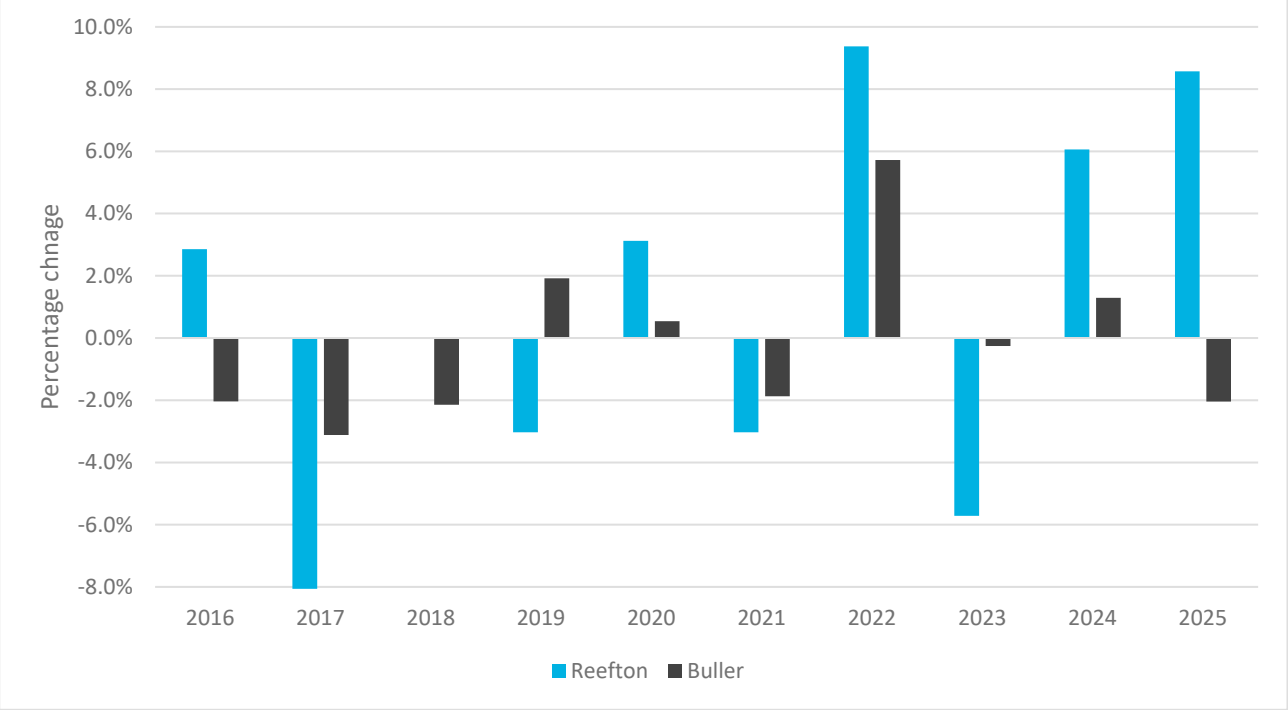
Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

A.4 Business and industry

Table A.20 Number of businesses, at February 2000–2025

Year	Number of businesses, Reefton	Number of businesses, Buller
2015	105	1,179
2016	108	1,155
2017	99	1,119
2018	99	1,095
2019	96	1,116
2020	99	1,122
2021	96	1,101
2022	105	1,164
2023	99	1,161
2024	105	1,176

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)



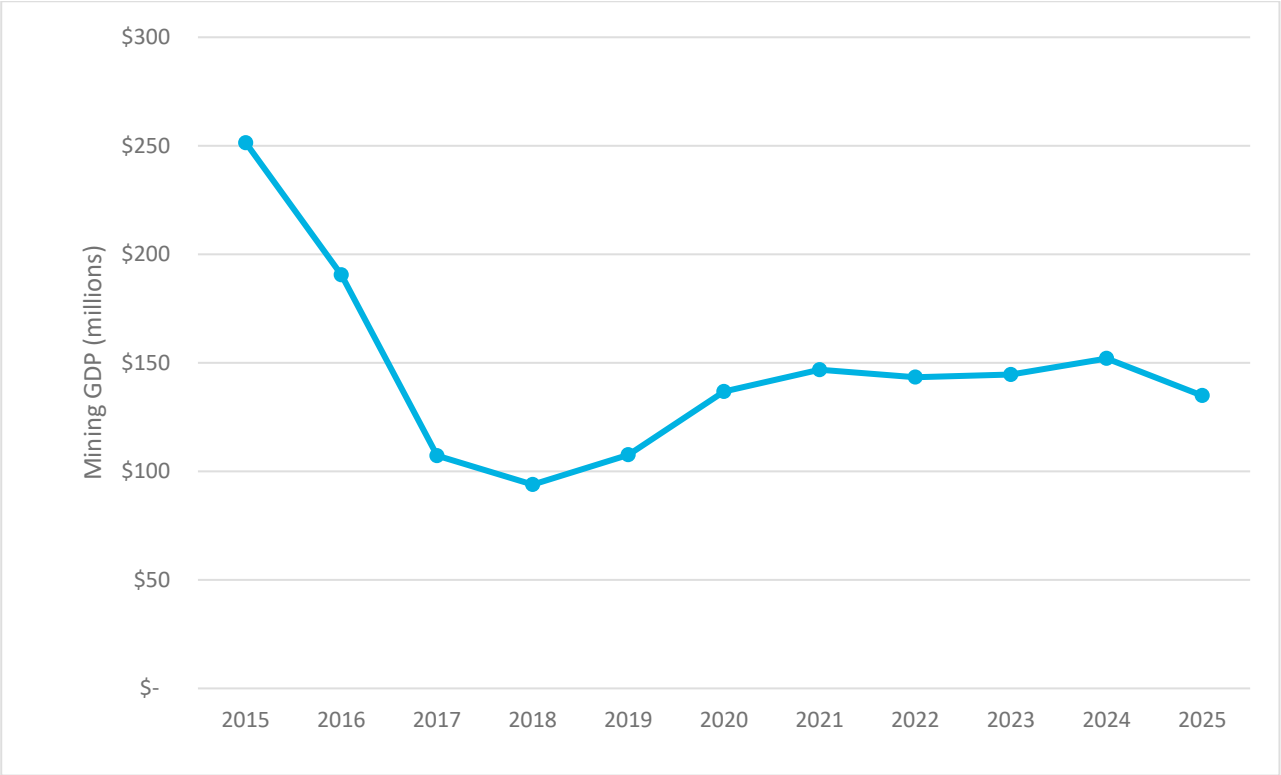
Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Figure A.1 Annual change to number of businesses, 2016–2025

Table A.21 Business by industry

Industry	Reefton	Buller District
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	7.9%	24.2%
Mining	2.6%	2.6%
Manufacturing	2.6%	2.6%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	-	0.3%
Construction	13.2%	11.7%
Wholesale Trade	-	2.6%
Retail Trade	10.5%	6.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	18.4%	8.6%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	2.6%	2.6%
Information Media and Telecommunications	-	0.8%
Financial and Insurance Services	-	2.6%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	5.3%	11.7%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2.6%	6%
Administrative and Support Services	2.6%	2.1%
Public Administration and Safety	-	2.1%
Education and Training	5.3%	2.1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	5.3%	3.1%
Arts and Recreation Services	5.3%	3.1%
Other Services	5.3%	4.4%

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)



Source: Buller District Regional Economic Profile, Contributors to economic growth (Infometrics Ltd 2026a)

Figure A.2 Mining industry GDP 2015–2025, Buller District

A.5 Vulnerability indicators

The New Zealand Index of Deprivation measures socioeconomic deprivation using the following indicators from the 2023 Census:

- People with no access to the internet at home.
- People aged 18 to 64 receiving a main means tested benefit.
- People living in equivalised households with income below an income threshold.
- People aged 18 to 64 unemployed.
- People aged 18 to 64 without any qualifications.
- People not living in own home.
- People aged <75 living in a sole parent family.
- People living in an equivalised household below a bedroom occupancy threshold (overcrowding).
- People living in dwellings that are always damp and/or always have mould greater than A4 size.

Table A.22 Socioeconomic deprivation

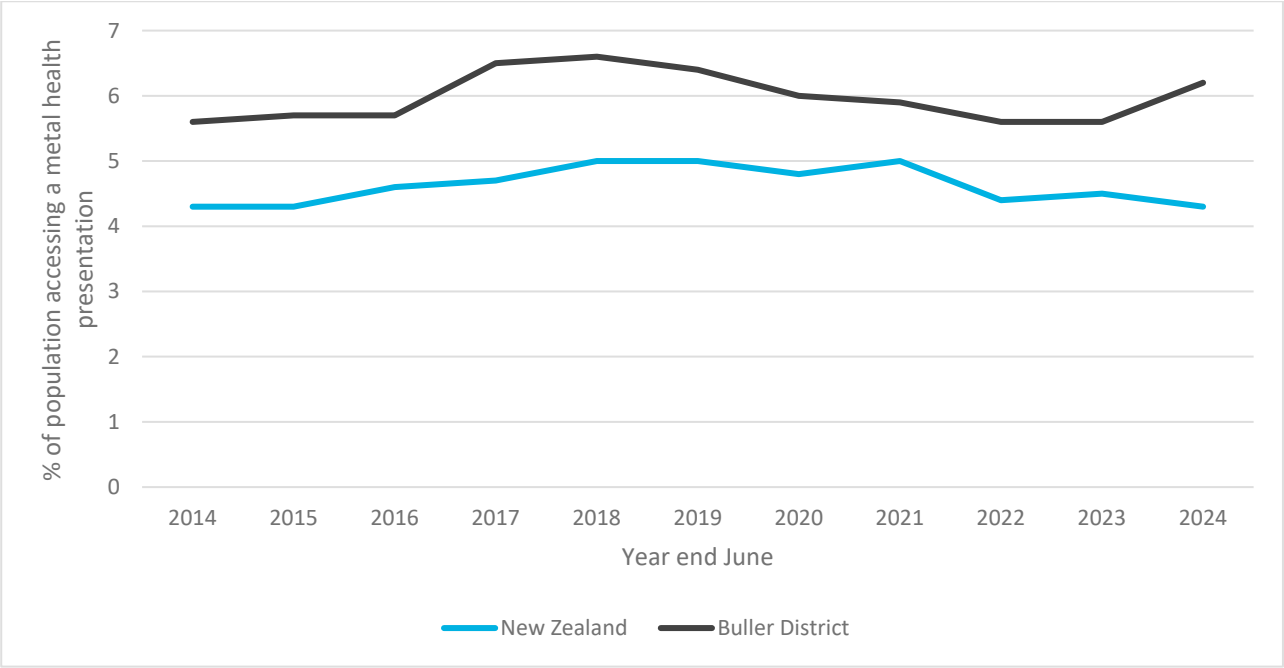
Category	Reefton	Greymouth	Buller District	West Coast region	New Zealand
1 – Least deprived	0	8.7	0	2.5	9.7
2	0	7.7	0	3.5	10
3	0	7.8	1.5	2.9	9.8
4	0	6.6	7	8.4	9.9
5	0	11.9	7.7	8.7	9.9
6	0	5.4	10.1	12.9	9.9
7	12.3	9.3	13.2	15.5	10.1
8	0	22.4	19.1	20.3	10
9	75.7	10.9	28	18.6	10.3
10 – Most deprived	11.7	9	13.4	6.8	10.5

Source: 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings (StatsNZ 2023)

Table A.23 Deprivation Indexes

Area	Index (ranked 1–10)
SA2s within the Buller District	
Westport North	9
Westport South	9
Buller Coalfields	9
Inangahua	9
Karamea	8
Westport Rural	4
Charleston	6
Reefton	9
Other relevant SA2s[4]	
Greymouth Central	7
Greymouth Rural	6

[4] Does not share the same boundary of Greymouth UR considered in the SIA study, however, is the most relevant area available for this dataset to capture Greymouth.



Source: Mental health presentation rate (Infometrics Ltd 2026b)

Figure A.3 Mental heath presentation, 2014–2024

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