

## Gold execs visit Bay

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Two senior directors from the Australian company seeking to mine gold at Sam's Creek visited Golden Bay recently for closed meetings with selected representatives of the community.

On Friday, 30 August, Siren Gold's CEO Victor Rajasooriar and technical director Paul Angus held informal discussions with the Golden Bay Community Board (GBCB) before meeting with a group of concerned citizens now known as Sam's Creek Collective (SCC).

The wider community, including *The GB Weekly*, was not provided with any prior notice of, or invitation to join, either meeting.

Save Our Springs campaign coordinator Kevin Moran is unhappy about the clandestine approach. "My concern is the optics of the [community board] meeting. It looks really bad that it's being hidden. That only creates suspicion and distrust in the community. It would have been better if the community board had been open about the meeting and issued a statement following the meeting about what was discussed."

Commenting on GBCB's meeting, board chair Abbie Langford said the company directors indicated that "they were very open to having a meeting with the community... They're saying they are very transparent and doing what's best for the community and the environment".

According to Abbie, a number of key points emerged from the discussion, including:

- Siren Gold has a joint venture partner – OceanaGold (18.1 per cent shareholding) – in the Sam's Creek/Barrons Flat operation.
- Siren Gold has recently fully divested its gold mining interests at Reefton to RUA Gold.
- Siren Gold expects to lodge an application for a mining permit shortly as its exploratory permit expires on 25 March 2025.
- Siren Gold has no detailed plan in place regarding the mining operation at Sam's Creek/Barrons Flat.
- The application for a mining permit could potentially be lodged to cover all of Siren Gold's mining interests in the area (including Barrons Flat). Before that time, the company intends to drill some deeper exploratory holes to test what appear to be particularly encouraging...

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...results in one part of the exploratory area, which may provide evidence that the mineral resource is greater than currently indicated for the project to be deemed viable.

The discussion between Siren Gold's directors and Sam's Creek Collective was "civil, friendly and courteous," according to Teri Sawers, one of four group members who attended the meeting. "The meeting gave us the opportunity to introduce ourselves, have a constructive first discussion, share concerns and ask some initial questions."

Given the uncertainty around the proposed project, the directors were not currently in a position to provide any details about the possible mining operation. "They weren't able to answer some questions at this time given that plans aren't advanced enough," said Teri.

Despite the unanswered questions, Teri said SCC was pleased to have the opportunity to discuss its concerns with Siren Gold. "We appreciated the meeting and opportunity to establish a channel for further communication, while communicating that there are serious community concerns about the mine proposals, particularly relating to mining waste safety measures and the potential risk to our water."

The mining company directors envisage more such meetings, said Teri. "Siren said they would be fully engaging with the community during future visits, including with the Community Board, Tasman District Council, other groups such as ours, and public forums."

The discussions in Golden Bay followed a meeting on 28 August between Siren Gold, TDC staff, and key regulatory agencies. The meeting was organised by New Zealand Petroleum and Minerals, in accordance with Section 33D of the Crown Minerals Act, to discuss progress with exploratory permits for Sam's Creek and Barrons Flat.

Regarding the Government's progress with its Fast-track Approvals Bill, the Select Committee is due to report back to the House on 18 October. Until then, it is not known whether Siren Gold's application will be processed under that bespoke legislation. But in any case, the company expects to have to follow the established procedures set out in the Resource Management Act.

In the meantime, SCC is building its campaign and raising funds to protect the ecology and water resources of the Tākaka Valley and its catchment. The group has created a website where people can find out more about the proposed mine and join the SCC mailing list.

For more information go to:

<https://samscreek.nz/>

<https://www.sirengold.com.au/site/content/>