

My name is Andrea Milovan, and I whakapapa to Croatia. Belonging to a Croatian heritage, especially here in Kaitia, that is shaped by Māori/Croatian ancestry, I feel connected to this purpose. I aspire to be an ally, as we all should be, the WBF Ltd and this Council, to move forward uniformly. I hold a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Cultural Encounters from Roskilde University in Denmark, Master's degree in Philosophy of Indigenous Studies in Tromsø, Norway, and I am currently a PhD candidate at the School of Science and Society at Wellington University. Additionally, my expertise includes fieldwork research conducted at Te Wai Pounamu, in relation to Ngai Tahu rights to manage their land within the Mt Aspiring region, and I am an author of a chapter within the upcoming Springer's World Sustainability book series, called the Indigenous Right to bio(secure) the land in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

When I met Waiaua whanau, they felt and were (still are) under-resourced. Therefore, we tried to find ways to put forward their voices and provide a space for their complete autonomy. A PhD was a way to provide those missing resources, speaking of the fact that the relationship with WBFL is not well-established and that the whanau has felt misplaced by them.

Our (co-created with Waiaua whanau) PhD research will be focused on the overall impact of WBF Ltd developments at Waiaua Bay. The upcoming Social Impact Assessment study will measure the cultural, political, economic, and environmental impacts, as well as the impact of developments on future generations. By working alongside the Waiaua whanau, I aspire to co-create reports and amplify the importance of an active consultation with those who have interacted with Waiaua from time immemorial, whose ancestors are buried in those cliffs, who survived and thrived from the resources that the ocean and the forest provided. I also want to emphasize that none of the experts hired by the Rosewood Group, nor I, is an expert on tikanga. Waiaua whanau is tangata whenua of Waiaua Bay, the sole experts on their culture, the only ones able to measure the impact on the past, present, and future generations.

My education has taught me that all land is first and foremost Indigenous land; therefore, when mana whenua of the land claim that further cultural and environmental studies need to be conducted in order to mitigate present and future impact, the system is obligated to listen to those voices. Especially when the applicant, WBF Ltd, is claiming to have established a 'Sense of Place' philosophy directed at caring for native cultures. Waiaua whanau, as the native culture does not feel cared for. They are spiritually and ancestrally connected to the place, while the ownership of WBF Ltd is continuously going to change, as well as the members of this Council. Through our submissions, we have demonstrated tangata whenua's right and obligation to autonomy and

guardianship, protected within Te Tiriti, the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Moreover, under the Resource Management Act, sections 6,7 and 8, tangata whenua have the right to manage and protect archaeological sites, such as waahi tapu, the stream, the bay, the physical and metaphysical resources connected to the place, as well as the ones they know exist but have not been recorded and mapped out yet.

The lack of a Cultural Impact Assessment Report, as well as the lack of usage of any mechanisms to protect Waiaua whanau rights, voices, and fears in regards to the existing and planned developments, is absolutely unacceptable. As an outsider, I had a preconceived notion of Aotearoa setting the global standard for the promotion of equity between the settlers and the Indigenous peoples. A perspective that changed almost instantly upon my arrival here – seeing the efforts of the current government to undermine Te Tiriti, and UNDRIP – mechanisms aimed at protecting Māori fundamental rights to exercise tikanga, rangatiratanga, and kaitiakitanga upon their resources. Working with Waiaua whanau, it is clear to me that iwi and hapu cross-nation are still fighting for their very basic rights – to be recognized as kaitiaki, to freely manage their resources, to have a say, to be asked, to be involved.

On Saturday, I had the privilege to visit Waiaua Bay with some of the members of Waiaua whanau. Seeing how many of the members came together in a matter of half an hour when finding out that the gate would be open, their joy when they walked on their whenua, and the youngest generations asking the hard questions and already being concerned about the future of their land, the importance of preserving the Bay's natural character was undeniable. I wish your hearts were open to recognize the spiritual and cultural connection that this whanau holds to their whenua. I wish you had to be faced with a young boy asking if Kauri Cliffs is going to take his land, seeing fear in his eyes as he understands that his whakapapa is under threat. To quote Moana – their wish to protect this whenua has nothing to do with money, and everything to do with preserving its history, its natural character, its spirit – intact. The maps that we have submitted are undisputable evidence of a much larger historical presence than acknowledged by WBF Ltd. There are sites that even the whanau does not know the location of, because their realities and beliefs do not revolve around disclosing all the sacred sites. It is about recognizing the value in those sites that carry an energy, a spirit important to the whanau, connecting them with themselves and each other. We need time and resources to find ways to convey this generational knowledge in accordance with the system, the system that was never made to cater to Māori practices, traditions, and worldview. Ultimately, it

is the governmental system that needs to remedy the grievances going forward, to hold space for those who have settled at this Bay way before these structures were ever created. Through different claims, encompassing Waitangi tribunal, Māori Land claims, and all the submissions made by Waiaua whanau opposing these and other applications, it is upon the Council to recognize the need for time, resources, and representation that Waiaua whanau is currently trying to obtain. Thus, we once more ask the Council to acknowledge all these concerns, and evidence that we have forward today, and many other times before, and allow for equity, allow for a chance to mitigate the potential issues, before they become detrimental to all generations of Waiaua whanau.