
MINUTE 8 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Taranaki Conference with
Invited Participants
Taranaki VTM Project [FTAA-
2504-1048]

(10 October 2025)

[1] The time for the filing of comments on the substantive application by invited commenters expired, under s 54(1) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA), at midnight on 6 October 2025. A total of 56 comments were received.¹ They were forwarded to the Applicant in accordance with s 55(1) FTAA.

[2] The Applicant may provide the EPA with a response to the comments not later than 5 working days after **6 October 2025**; that is, by **13 October 2025**.

[3] The purpose of this Minute is to invite selected commenters and the Applicant to participate in a three-day overview conference with the Expert Panel in Taranaki on **21-23 October 2025**.

[4] The broad purpose of the conference is to familiarise the Expert Panel with:

- (a) the content of the comments received about the substantive application;
- (b) suggestions regarding the content and structure of proposed conditions, including management plans and strategic plan, and drafting style;

¹ A comment from the Minister for Māori Development was submitted a few hours after the expiry of the time period, but the Panel resolved to receive it: Minute 7 of the Taranaki VTM Expert Panel, dated 7 October 2025.

- (c) key points of evidence (technical reports, assessments, and other supporting information); and
- (d) relevant legal tests and legal issues that are in contention.

[5] We anticipate that, during the briefing:

- (a) the invited participants will present high-level overviews of their comments;
- (b) the Expert Panel will have the opportunity to ask questions about the comments; and
- (c) participants may raise other relevant matters they wish to bring to the Panel's attention.

[6] The Panel anticipates that, during the briefing, it is inevitable that reference will be made to the participants' views on the merits of the application. Nevertheless, the conference will not be a hearing conducted under ss 57 and 58 of the FTAA. It is intended that the briefing will inform the procedural decisions the Panel may make about those issues for which a hearing may be appropriate.

[7] The Applicant is also invited to attend the conference. The Panel offered the Applicant the opportunity at the conference to speak to its responses to the comments, but it believes they will not need any further explanation. The Applicant will be given five working days after the conference to respond to any new information provided by participants at the conference that was not included in, or apparent from, their submitted comments.

[8] The Panel is grateful for the assistance it will obtain from all comments, but we do not think that it is necessary to receive an overview of comments that are very succinct. We have decided that, although the participants listed at the end of this paragraph are welcome to attend the briefing conference, we do not need to hear further from them at this stage. Their comments will be given full consideration by the Panel before it makes its decision on the application:

- Luigi Muollo, CBC Seafoods
- Giles Kidman, Aotearoa Clam Holdings Ltd
- Whanganui Port Limited Partnership
- Hollings Resource Management Ltd
- Environmental Protection Authority
- Horowhenua District Council
- Opunake Boat & Underwater Club Inc
- South Taranaki District Council
- Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure
- Hon Nicola Willis, Minister for Economic Growth
- Hon James Meager, Associate Minister for Transport
- Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity
- Hon Tama Potaka, Minister for Conservation, Māori Development, and Māori Crown Relations
- Hon Shane Jones, Minister for Resources, Regional Development, and Oceans and Fisheries

[9] The Panel proposes to request further information from the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) relating to the matters, datasets and methods referred to by the Hon Shane Jones in his capacity as Minister for Oceans and Fisheries' comment (with any limits on disclosure noted).

[10] All participants who provided comments to the Panel, and who are not listed at [8] above, are invited to attend the Taranaki conference. The invited participants who wish to attend and to speak **must complete the questionnaire attached to this Minute** and return it by email **no later than 4pm on Wednesday, 15 October 2025** addressed to the Panel's Application Lead, Elliott Dennett, at info@fasttrack.govt.nz.

[11] It is likely that other participants, in addition to MPI will receive a request for information for written or oral response at the conference. Any such request will be made by Minute but sent directly to those participants promptly. The conference will be recorded and a transcript placed on the Taranaki VTM website. Any further information produced at or following the conference in response to any RFI or questions from the Panel will also be uploaded to the Taranaki VTM website.

[12] The Panel anticipates that, during the briefing, reference will be made inevitably to the participants' views on the merits of the application. Nevertheless, the conference will not be a hearing conducted under ss 57 and 58 of the FTAA. It is intended that the briefing will inform the procedural

decisions the Panel may make about those issues for which a hearing may be appropriate.

[13] The conference will be held at the **TSB Hub, Camberwell Road, Hāwera** on **21, 22 and 23 October 2025**. Further details, including the starting times and a proposed agenda, will be distributed to the invited participants in a Minute to be issued next week.

[14] If you require any further information about the briefing conference, please contact the Elliott Dennett, who can be contacted at: info@fasttrack.govt.nz.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kit Toogood', is positioned above the printed name.

Hon. Kit Toogood KC
Taranaki VTM Expert Panel Chair

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS
WISHING TO ATTEND THE TARANAKI VTM CONFERENCE
21-23 OCTOBER 2025**

**I/we wish to attend the Taranaki VTM Conference at The Hub, Hawera on
21-23 October 2025 and to be heard by the Expert Panel.**

Name of Participant:	
Name of Principal Representative	
Contact details: Email Mobile phone	

I am/we are ABLE to attend the conference at these times (please mark with a tick; leave blank times you cannot attend):

Tuesday, 21 October (morning)	Tuesday, 21 October (afternoon)
Wednesday, 22 October (morning)	Wednesday, 22 October (afternoon)
Thursday, 23 October (morning)	Thursday, 23 October (afternoon)

Please mark with a cross if you are unable to attend the conference at any time	
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Please return this questionnaire by email to the Panel's Application Lead, Elliott Dennett at info@fasttrack.govt.nz no later than 4pm on Wednesday, 15 October 2025.