
MINUTE 18 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Form of Panel Facilitated Conference
Central and Southern Block Mining Project [FTAA-2512-1153]

(7 July 2026)

- [1] The purpose of this Minute is to provide further details and explanation regarding the Panel Facilitated Conference (Conference) to be held at the Distinction Hotel, 100 Garnett Avenue, Te Rapa, Hamilton on Wednesday and Thursday 22 and 23 July 2026, commencing at 9.00am each day.
- [2] The Panel's intention is that the focus of the Conference will be on the changes sought by the commenting parties to the Applicant's proposed conditions of consent (being for the RMA Approvals, the Archaeological Authority and the Wildlife Approval) (Amended Conditions).
- [3] The form of the Conference will be a "sleeves rolled up" workshop with expert opinion being sought by the Panel on the content and respective merits of the Amended Conditions being requested by the commenting parties, alongside those proposed by the Applicant. The Conference is not mediation and it is not for the parties to make any submissions. Put another way, the Conference will be an expert rather than party centred process.
- [4] The Panel may however allow the parties to suggest questions to be put to the experts during the Conference.
- [5] The Panel may also allow the parties to respond to the outcomes of the Conference in terms of any Amended Conditions agreed between the respective experts, or on issues that are not resolved between the experts on Amended Conditions sought by the commenting parties. Whether there is any need for such a response can be determined once the Conference is concluded, and raised with the Panel at that point.
- [6] The Panel considers adoption of this process to be consistent with direction in the Panel Convenor's Practice and Procedure Guidance to adopt innovative approaches to determination of the issues raised by a Fast Track application and comments received (for example, noting clause 17.5).
- [7] The focus on conditions at the Conference should not be seen as indicative that

the Panel has reached any decision on the approvals being sought. Rather it is to test whether the conditions of consent as proposed by the Applicant are adequate and appropriate to address the adverse effects of the proposed activities on the environment, or should be amended in the manner sought by the commenting parties. The Panel would then apply the outcomes of the Conference to our deliberations on whether the Substantive Application should be granted, having regard to relevant effects as addressed (avoided, remedied, mitigated or offset), through conditions in that form.

- [8] The Panel is currently preparing a document to guide the day that records the Amended Conditions sought by the commenting parties on what the Panel considers to be the *principal* issues in contention. This document will be distributed shortly, and will essentially comprise the agenda for the Conference.

- [9] Specifically, for each Amended Condition on each principal issue in contention as summarised in the agenda document, the relevant experts will be asked to comment with their opinion as to the following matters:
 - (a) Whether the Amended Condition(s) in the form sought by the commenting parties is (or are) necessary to address a relevant resource management¹ issue raised by the Applicant.

 - (b) Whether the Amended Condition(s) is (or are) otherwise reasonable, workable, enforceable and appropriate in the expert's opinion, in preference to the condition(s) in the form proposed by the Applicant.

- [10] The Panel does not require the experts to produce any statements of evidence for the Conference, but does require preparation in relation to the issues and proposed Amended Conditions outlined in the agenda document. This will include ensuring each expert is familiar with the information in the technical reports supporting the Substantive Application, the comments received, and the Applicant's response to those comments, as relevant to the Amended Conditions within their field of expertise.

- [11] For the avoidance of doubt, the Panel intends using the conditions version as produced with the Applicant's response to comments as a working document (or starting point) for the Conference.²

- [12] The nature of the issues identified is such that the responses from the parties might be provided by one or more experts. Accordingly, at this point, it is not possible to provide any time frames for specific witnesses attendance. The Panel may be able to provide more guidance on this closer to the event. However, it is

¹ Or, in the context of the Wildlife and Archaeological approvals, as relevant under the requirements of the respective statutes under which they are sought.

² Similarly, in the context of the Wildlife and Archaeological approvals, the recommended conditions in the respective section 51 FTAA reports on these approvals.

clear that the planning witnesses, at least, will need to be in attendance for the whole two days.

- [13] The Panel has arranged for a Teams meeting with representatives of the parties to discuss the Panel's intentions for the Conference and any issues arising for the parties which they wish to raise in that context later this week, where the points made in this Minute can also be discussed in more detail.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Serjeant', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dave Serjeant

Central and Southern Block Mining Project Expert Panel Chair