Ministry for the Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

FTAA-2606-1247: Application received for referral of the project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 1 decisions

Project Name: Whangapouri Road

Date submitted:	29 June 2026	Tracking #: 26-BRF-01756	
Security level:	In-Confidence	MfE priority:	Urgent

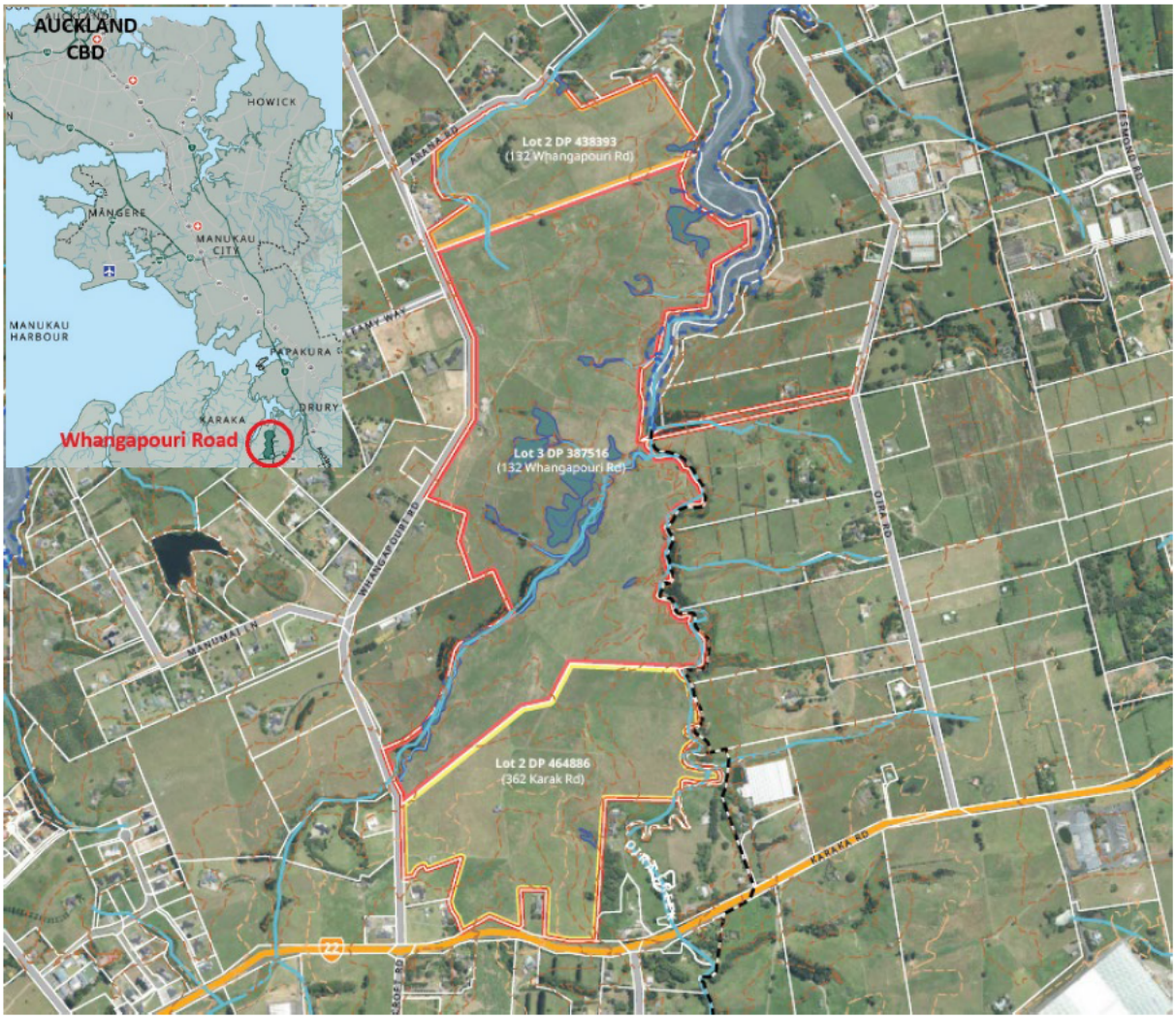
	Action sought:	**Response by:**
To Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations in Table A	4 July 2026

Actions for Minister's Office staff	**Return** the signed briefing to: *FTAreferrals@mfe.govt.nz* **Send** email to Ministers to invite written comments
Number of appendices: 3	Appendices: 1. Statutory framework summary 2. Application documents for Whangapouri Road 3. List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Ministry for the Environment contacts:

Position	Name	Cell phone	1st contact
Principal Author	Antonia Croft		
Manager	Stephanie Frame	s 9(2)(a)	✓
General Manager	Ilana Miller	s 9(2)(a)	

Project location



Key messages

1. This briefing seeks your initial decisions on an application from 132 Whangapouri Drury Limited (the applicant) to refer the Whangapouri Road project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process.

2. At this stage you can either decline an application for the reasons set out section 21, or provide the application to, and invite comments from, the parties identified in section 17. If you do not decline the application, you will receive a further briefing following receipt of comments, to inform your final decision on whether to refer the project.

3. The project is for a residential development of approximately 99.58 hectares on the northern side of SH22, near the intersection with Whangapouri Road and Bycroft Road, west of Drury in the Auckland region.

4. The project consists of three main components:

    a. residential development - with a total of approximately 1,050 to 1,150 dwellings comprising:

i. approximately 850–950 dwelling lots (82%) between 300–500 m², with a smaller proportion of higher-density and larger lots; final yield and mix subject to change through detailed design, and

ii. approximately 200 retirement village dwellings set within a total 11.9-hectare retirement village

b. a local centre - in the northern portion of the development that provides opportunities for mixed use and employment activities, including approximately 0.7 hectares of commercial floorspace; and

c. associated infrastructure - including transport, water, wastewater, stormwater, energy, and supporting civil works required to service and enable the development)

5. The project will require the proposed approvals:

   a. consents under the Resource Management Act 1991

   b. permits under the Wildlife Act 1953

6. The project may also require approval or dispensation under regulations 42 or 43 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 in respect of a potential complex freshwater fisheries activity. This has not been confirmed and is subject to further detailed design and assessment.

7. The application identifies that the site contains LUC 2 (at 89% of the site) and 3 land, indicating that Highly Productive Land is present. While the applicant notes that the Mixed Rural Zone may limit the direct application of the NPS-HPL, they undertake an assessment on a precautionary basis and acknowledge that the proposal does not strictly meet the NPS-HPL criteria.

8. We have undertaken initial analysis of the referral application, and this is presented along with our considerations and recommendations in Table A.

9. We have decided the application is complete and complies with section 14 of the Act, as the application complies with section 13 requirements, may be capable of satisfying the criteria in section 22 and does not appear to involve an ineligible activity. The applicable fee and levy have been paid.

10. We recommend you progress consideration of the referral application to the next stage of analysis (Stage 2) and invite written comments from the parties prescribed in section 17(1) of the Act being:

    a. Auckland Council as the relevant local authority

    b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development

    c. the Associate Minister of Housing, The Minister of Conservation and the Minister for Seniors as the other relevant portfolio Ministers

    d. Department of Conservation as the relevant administering agency

    e. the parties in Appendix 3 as the other identified Māori groups.

11. We recommend that you invite written comments as an additional person under section 17(5) of the Act from:

    a. the Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency

    b. the Chief Executive of KiwiRail

c. the Minister for Economic Growth

12. The project's design appears to be linked to reliance on transport infrastructure, including upgrades to State Highway 22 and future public transport provision (including the Ngākōroa rail station and associated bus network), which are not yet confirmed or fully funded. We recommend that, under section 20, you request further information from the applicant on the extent to which the project could proceed ahead of, or in the absence of, these upgrades and infrastructure, as set out in Table A.

Action sought

13. Please indicate your decisions on the recommendations in Table A.

Signature



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Table A: Stage 1 analysis

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Project details</td><td>Project Name</td><td>Applicant</td><td colspan="4">Project Area</td></tr>
<tr><td>Whangapouri Road</td><td>132 Whangapouri Drury Limited
C/- Barker and Associates Limited</td><td colspan="4">A total of 99.58 hectares and is located on the northern side of State Highway 22 near the intersection with Whangapouri Road and Bycroft Road, west of Drury in the Auckland region.
• Lot 3 Deposited Plan 387516 132 Whangapouri Road, Karaka
• Lot 2 Deposited Plan 438393 8 Arana Drive, Karaka
• Lot 2 Deposited Plan 464886 Karaka Road, Karaka</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project description</td><td colspan="5">The project is for a residential development.

The project consists of three main components:
• residential development - with a total of approximately 1,050 to 1,150 dwellings made up of:
- approximately 850–950 dwellings lots (82%) between 300–500 m², with a smaller proportion of higher-density and larger lots; final yield and mix subject to change through detailed design, and
- an approximately 200 retirement village dwellings set within a total 11.9-hectare retirement village
• a local centre - in the northern portion of the development that provides opportunities for mixed use and employment activities, including approximately 0.7 hectares of commercial floorspace; and
• associated infrastructure - including transport, water, wastewater, stormwater, energy, and supporting civil works required to service and enable the development)
The project will require the proposed approvals:
• consents under the Resource Management Act 1991
• permits under the Wildlife Act 1953

The project may also require approval or dispensation under regulations 42 or 43 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 in respect of a potential complex freshwater fisheries activity. This has not been confirmed and is subject to further detailed design and assessment.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Notification and/or consultation undertaken</td><td colspan="5">As required by section 11, the applicant has:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Notified in writing,
the relevant local authorities</td><td>Notified in writing,
the relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities</td><td>Consulted,
the relevant MACA groups</td><td>Consulted,
ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou</td><td>Notified in writing,
the relevant administering agencies</td><td>Notified in writing,
the holder of land to be exchanged</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Auckland Council</td><td>• Ngāti Tamaoho
• Ngāti Te Ata
• Te Ahiwaru – Waiohua
• Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki
• Ngāti Maru
• Te Ākitai Waiohua</td><td>N/A</td><td>N/A</td><td>Department of Conservation</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Section 22 assessment criteria</td></tr>
<tr><td>The project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits [section 22(1)(a)]</td><td colspan="5">The Minister must consider a relevant Government policy statement (GPS) [s22(1A)]
The only current relevant GPS is the Government Policy Statement on Grocery Competition. The project does not include commercial activities will include a supermarket development or grocery related activities; therefore we consider the Government Policy Statement on Grocery Competition is not relevant to your decision.

You may consider any of the following matters, or any other matters the Minister considers relevant:

Will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020) [s22(2)(a)(iii)]
The applicant states that the Whangapouri Road project proposes a residential community extending the existing urban area, enabling approximately 1,050–1,150 dwellings, comprising around 850–950 dwellings and a 200-unit retirement village. This represents a substantial contribution to dwelling capacity in southern Auckland and improves the responsiveness of the local housing market to demand growth.
The project provides a range of dwelling typologies, including retirement living, standalone homes of varying sizes and configurations, and terraces/duplexes, supporting a range of needs and preferences. This increases both housing supply and choice in an accessible southern Auckland location, contributing to a well-functioning urban environment.
The applicant states that the site has a number of locational attributes that support this conclusion:
• Although currently zoned rural, the site adjoins the rural–urban boundary and is within an area undergoing significant urban transformation. Its long-term development enables integration with the planned urban environment and supports efficient use of infrastructure investment in the wider Drury–Ōpaheke growth area.
• The site is located opposite the proposed Fisher and Paykel Healthcare campus (Plan Change 121), which is anticipated to become a significant employment anchor, accommodating approximately 16,200 FTEs by 2070.
• The proposal includes direct connections to Oira Road and existing developments to the east, including the Waipupuke Precinct and Auranga, which will provide a primary and secondary school and a town centre.
• The site is well connected to the wider region, being approximately 1,600 m from the proposed Ngākōroa (Drury West) train station and less than 3.5 km from the State Highway 1 (SH1) interchange.
• The site also has access to the Drury Metropolitan Centre currently under development in Drury East.

Will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]
The applicant's Economic Assessment identifies that the proposal will deliver significant economic benefits, including:
• Total direct capital expenditure (excluding land) of approximately $770 million;
• Approximately 3,075 Full Time Equivalent-years of employment across Auckland over the development period, equivalent to around 440 Full Time Equivalent jobs per annum over the seven-year construction programme;
• Additional household incomes of over $275 million;</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">

- One-off economic benefits arising from construction activity and supporting services;
- Ongoing local employment opportunities associated with operation of the local centre; and
- Enabling the land to be utilised at its highest and best use, supporting economic efficiency in the underlying land market.

Will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions [s22(2)(a)(vii)]
The proposal promotes reduced reliance on private motor vehicles by enabling sustainable transport choices. It incorporates an integrated active mode network and is strategically located opposite the proposed Fisher and Paykel Healthcare campus and near the proposed Ngākōroa train station, resulting in increased housing within walking distance of major employment.
Future transport investments, including the Ngākōroa railway station and associated bus interchange, will significantly improve accessibility and support higher public transport use compared with typical greenfield developments.
In addition, the proposal includes ecological enhancement of the site through extensive native planting.

Will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards [s22(2)(a)(viii)]
The applicant states the project supports climate change adaptation through flood risk management, transport design, and ecological enhancement, while incorporating measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Climate change is addressed in the stormwater design, which will account for climate-adjusted rainfall data and manage development layout to locate impermeable surfaces and structures away from identified flood-prone areas.
Development works will mitigate downstream effects associated with 1% AEP events, with detailed design informed by flood modelling to safeguard people and infrastructure against future extreme storm events.

Is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)]
The applicant states that the proposal is generally consistent with relevant local and regional planning documents, including the RPS, Future Development Strategy, Southern Rural Strategy, and Southern Auckland Economic Masterplan, and identifies alignment with the strategic direction for growth in southern Auckland.
This includes reference to urban expansion adjacent to the rural–urban boundary, integration with planned infrastructure and the wider Drury area, and delivery of additional housing capacity.

Any other matters that may be relevant [s22(2)(b)]
The applicant indicates that earthworks in or around potential natural inland wetlands may be identified at a later stage, which could trigger a prohibited activity under the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F). This is a potential reason you may decline a referral application under section 21(5) of the Act. However, we note section 21(7) of the Act states that the presence of a prohibited activity does not, in itself, prevent you from accepting a referral application.

The applicant also identifies the site as comprising LUC 2 and LUC 3 land, which is considered highly productive land under the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022. While the applicant considers the site appropriate for urban development, the proposal would result in a permanent loss of highly productive land, when considered alongside other development proposals in rural and rural-urban interface areas, this may raise potential cumulative effects on highly productive land. This may be raised in feedback from invited parties.
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]</td><td colspan="3">

Would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes [s22(1)(b)(i)]
The applicant states that the fast-track process will enable the project to be processed in a timelier and cost-efficient manner than under the normal process, for the following reasons:

- Under the Act, expert panels will consider required approvals as a single application package, as opposed to the normal process where several applications would be required for the different activities and to different authorities;
- Under the Act, public and limited notification is precluded, expert panels are only permitted to invite comments from specified persons who have a short timeframe to provide comment. Given the scale of this development, it would likely be a fully notified application under the Resource Management Act 1991 which would significantly slow down the consenting process and add to cost;
- Under the Act, timeframes are shorter and stricter than that of the normal process resulting in significant less time for obtaining resource consent and efficiencies for the project; and
- There is resourcing in place to process the application efficiently and certainty around timeframes for the applicant to ensure the project remains ‘shovel ready’.

Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]
The project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process. Assessment of the proposal is considered to be relatively straightforward and unlikely to require additional resourcing given it does not raise novel issues, and the effects are known and easily quantifiable.
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minister invites comments</td><td>

*You **must** copy the application to, and invite written comments from [s17(1)]:*

a. relevant local authorities:
   – Auckland Council

b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development

c. other relevant portfolio Ministers:
   – the Associate Minister for Housing
   – the Minister of Conservation
   – the Minister for Seniors

d. relevant administering agencies:
   – Department of Conservation

e. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3
</td><td>

*You **may** copy the application to, and invite written comments from, any other person [s17(5)]:*

We recommend you invite comments from the following additional persons, for the specified reasons:

a. the chief executive of the NZ Transport Agency as the as the projects direct interface with, and reliance on, State Highway 22.
b. The chief executive of KiwiRail
c. Minister for Economic Growth
</td><td>

The Minister may request further information about a referral application from the applicant, the relevant local authorities, or the relevant administering agencies to be provided within the time frame specified in the request.

The applicant-The applicant – to provide further information on the status and timing of:

- transport upgrades to State Highway 22; and
- proposed public transport and active mode infrastructure (including the Ngākōroa rail station and bus interchange, future feeder bus network, and planned walking and cycling connections), and
- to explain the implications of any delay or uncertainty for the project’s construction programme (including sequencing and dependencies); and whether and how the project would proceed in the absence of those upgrades and infrastructure.
- The applicant should also identify the parties responsible for funding and delivering these upgrades and infrastructure.
</td></tr>
</table>

Recommendations	Minister's decision
a. **Note** that section 25 of the Act permits you to decline the referral application without inviting comments from the parties under section 17.	Noted
b. **Note** that you have not yet provided the application to, nor sought any written comments on it from, the parties listed in section 17(1) but that you are required to do so if you do not decline the application under section 21 of the Act.	Noted
c. **Note** that section 17(5) of the Act permits you to forward an application to, and invite written comments from, any other person.	Noted
d. **Note** that if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame you are required to consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.	Noted
e. **Note** that section 20 of the Act permits you to request further information from the applicant or relevant local authorities or relevant administering agencies at any time before you decide whether to accept or decline an application.	Noted
f. **Agree** to progress the Whangapouri Road project to our Stage 2 analysis (invite written comments and request section 18 Treaty report).	Yes / No
g. **Agree** to provide the application to, and invite written comments from: i. Auckland Council as the relevant local authorities under section 17(1)(a) ii. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development under section 17(1)(b) iii. the Associate Minister for Housing the Minister of Conservation and the Minister for Seniors as the other relevant portfolio Ministers under section 17(1)(b) iv. the Department of Conservation as the relevant administering agencies under section 17(1)(c) v. the parties in Appendix 3 as the identified Māori groups under section 17(1)(d) vi. any parties you are required to invite comments from under section 17(1)(d) and (e) who may be subsequently identified	 Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
h. **Agree** to provide the application to and invite written comments from the following additional persons under section 17(5): i. the chief executive of the NZ Transport Agency ii. the chief executive of KiwiRail iii. Minister for Economic Growth	 Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
i. **Agree** to seek further information from the applicant – to provide further information on the status and timing of: i. transport upgrades to State Highway 22; and ii. proposed public transport and active mode infrastructure (including the Ngākōroa rail station and bus interchange, future feeder bus network, and planned walking and cycling connections), and, iii. to explain the implications of any delay or uncertainty for the project's construction programme (including sequencing and dependencies); and whether and how the project would proceed in the absence of those upgrades and infrastructure. iv. The applicant should also identify the parties responsible for funding and delivering these upgrades and infrastructure.	Yes / No
j. **Note** that you have agreed to delegate to the Secretary for the Environment your responsibility to send all correspondence, other than to Ministers.	Noted
k. **Agree** to send the email to invite written comments from Ministers.	Yes / No

Signed:

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure **Date:**

Appendix 1: Statutory framework summary

1. You are the sole decision maker for referral applications. If you accept a referral application, then the whole or part of the project will be referred to the fast-track approvals process.
2. If a Treaty settlement, the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019, a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe or a joint management agreement provides for consideration of any document or procedural requirements, you must, where relevant:
    a. give the document the same or equivalent effect through this process as it would have under any specified Act; and
    b. comply with any applicable procedural requirements.
3. You must decline a referral application if:
    a. you are satisfied the project does not meet the referral criteria in s22
    b. you are satisfied the project involves an ineligible activity (s5)
    c. you consider you do not have adequate information to inform your decision.
4. You may decline an application for any other reason, including those set out in s21(5) and even if the application meets the s22 referral criteria.
5. You can decline an application before or after inviting comments under s17(1). However, if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame, you must consider them, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.
6. If you do not decline a referral application at this initial stage you must copy the application to, and invite written comments from:
    a. the relevant local authorities
    b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
    c. any other relevant portfolio Ministers
    d. the relevant administering agencies
    e. the Māori groups identified by the responsible agency
    f. the owners of Māori land in the project area (if applicable)
    g. you may provide the application to and invite comments from any other person.
7. You can request further information from an applicant, any relevant local authority or any relevant administering agency at any time before you decide to decline or accept a referral application (see section 20 of the Act).
8. However, if further information has been sought and provided within the required time frame you must consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.

Appendix 2: Application documents for Whangapouri Road project

Appendix 3: List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Whangapouri Road – list of relevant Māori groups

Name of group	Type of group (section of Act)
Ngāti Tamaoho Settlement Trust	iwi authority (s18(2)(a)), Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a)
Te Ākitai Waiohua Waka Taua Inc	iwi authority (s18(2)(a))
Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Trust	iwi authority (s18(2)(a)), Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a)
Ngāti Maru Rūnanga Trust	iwi authority (s18(2)(a)), Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a)), mandated entity (s18(2)(d))
Ngāti Tamaterā Settlement Trust	iwi authority (s18(2)(a)), Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a)), mandated entity (s18(2)(d))
Ngāti Te Ata Claims Support Whānau Trust	iwi authority (s18(2)(a)), mandated entity (s18(2)(d))
Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Incorporated	iwi authority (s18(2)(a)), Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a)); mandated entity (s18(2)(d))
Te Ākitai Waiohua Settlement Trust	Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a)), mandated entity (s18(2)(d))
Tūpuna Taonga o Tāmaki Makaurau Trust/ Whenua Haumi Roroa o Tāmaki Makaurau Limited Partnership	Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a))
Taonga o Marutūāhu Trustee Limited/ Marutūāhu Rōpū Limited Partnership	Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a)), mandated entity (s18(2)(d))
Ngāti Koheriki Claims Committee	Mandated entity (s18(2)(d))
Ngāti Paoa Iwi Trust	Other group with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))
Hako Tūpuna Trust	Other group with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))
Te Ahiwaru Waiohua	Other group with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))