
MINUTE 6 OF THE EXPERT PANEL
Record of Site visit, Information Requests and Technical Reports
Alternative to Brynderwyn Hills [FTAA-2603-1178]
[10 August 2026]

Site Visit (Wednesday 5 August 2026)

[1] The Panel, accompanied by its Special Adviser and Technical Advisers, undertook a site visit on 5 August 2026 to view locations associated with the Alternative to the Brynderwyn Hills proposal. This minute records the key procedural aspects of that visit.

Mihi Whakatau

[2] Before commencing the site visit, the Panel and its advisers attended a mihi whakatau in Brynderwyn to welcome the waewaetapu (new visitors) to the rohe and whenua.

[3] E tika ana mātou ki te tuku mihi nunui ki a koutou e te hau kāinga o Te Uri o Hau, e Patuharakeke, me te Kaitono, me ā rātou kaitohutohu, e pā ana ki tō koutou manaaki, whakatau hoki i a mātou i tērā wiki. The Panel wishes to acknowledge the generosity and hospitality shown by Te Uri o Hau, Patuharakeke, the Applicant, and all those involved in organising and participating in the occasion at short notice. An invitation was extended to Te Parawhau, but they were unable to attend at short notice.

[4] The mihi whakatau provided an opportunity for the Panel and its advisers to be welcomed onto the whenua and to begin their work in a manner that recognised

and respected tikanga. The occasion involved karakia, mihi, introductions, and shared kai.

[5] Those in attendance included:

- (a) The Expert Panel;
- (b) The Panel's Special Adviser and Technical Advisers;
- (c) Representatives of the Applicant, including members of the project team and technical experts; and
- (d) Representatives of Te Uri o Hau and Patuharakeke.

[6] While cultural matters relevant to the proposal are addressed in material before the Panel, including the Cultural Impact Assessments prepared by Te Uri o Hau and Patuharakeke and included within Volume B of the application, discussion of the proposal and its cultural effects was intentionally not part of the mihi whakatau. This applied equally to formal and informal kōrero, including speeches, introductions, acknowledgements, and mihi delivered in either te reo Māori or English.

Site visit details

[7] Following the mihi whakatau and a health and safety briefing, the Panel and its advisers commenced the site visit accompanied by three consultants engaged by the Applicant, whose role was to drive the Panel and its experts to various sites that had been selected by the Panel. No representatives from the Applicant company (NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi) attended the site visit.

[8] The visit followed the proposed corridor from the southern end of the Brynderwyn area towards Waipū and included a range of locations selected by the Panel to assist the Panel's understanding of the project and its environmental setting. These locations included:

- (a) the proposed Baldrock Road tie-in and associated highway works;

- (b) the proposed SH12 interchange area and surrounding valley landforms;
- (c) proposed wetland enhancement and mitigation areas;
- (d) the Piroa Stream catchment and Outstanding Natural Landscape area;
- (e) the Zentral Estate forestry block;
- (f) Kahikatea & Totara forest blocks (north of Brynderwyn / Te Mano Hiwa Ariki);
- (g) proposed bridge crossing locations;
- (h) the Waihoihoi River corridor; and
- (i) the proposed Northern Mitigation Site.

[9] Throughout the day the Panel and its advisers viewed a range of physical features relevant to the proposal, including transport corridors, waterways, wetlands, existing vegetation, forestry land, proposed mitigation and offset areas, and surrounding rural properties. The visit assisted the Panel in understanding the geographic relationship between different components of the proposal and the characteristics of the wider receiving environment.

[10] Questions were asked of the Applicant's consultants during the course of the visit. The Panel is satisfied that those discussions were limited to site orientation, factual clarification, and identification of information already contained within the application material.

[11] Other than certain geotechnical information (addressed below) the Panel does not consider that any new substantive information was presented during the site visit (or the mihi whakatau) that requires separate circulation or response.

Information requests

[12] At the request of the Panel, the Applicant's geotechnical consultant attended the site visit. This enabled the Panel's technical adviser on geotechnical matters to ask the Applicant's expert some questions relating to geotechnical conditions in situ. The Panel's technical adviser has prepared advice for the Panel, dated 7

August 2026 (**Geotechnical Advice**).¹

[13] The Geotechnical Advice will be published on the Fast-track Website and provided to the Applicant. The Geotechnical Advice identifies certain information relating to geotechnical matters that was not provided with the application material, which the Panel's geotechnical adviser considers is necessary in order for the Panel to make a fully informed decision in relation to geotechnical matters. The Panel agrees. The Panel has directed the EPA to request the further information listed at Section 4 of the Geotechnical Advice from the Applicant pursuant to section 67 of the FTAA.

[14] For ease of reference, that information is listed below. The Applicant's response to the information request will be published on the Fast-track Website. Given that information will not be made available prior to the deadline for invited parties to provide comments on the application (Wednesday 12 August), the Panel will be providing an opportunity for the relevant local authorities and relevant administering agencies to provide limited comments on the new information by any technical advisers with geotechnical expertise, as well as any other invited party who has engaged a technical expert in relation to geotechnical matters. The Panel will issue a further minute inviting those comments once the Applicant has provided its response. The Panel will also provide an opportunity for a limited response by the Applicant in relation to any comments received on the geotechnical information. Expert conferencing might also be arranged, if the comments or response received indicate any outstanding issues to be resolved by the Panel.

Information requested

[15] Based on the Geotechnical Advice, the Panel has directed the EPA to request the following information from the Applicant, to be provided within 10

¹ Baseline Geotechnical Limited letter of advice to the Panel dated 7 August 2026.

working days, being no later than **Monday 24 August**:

- Geotechnical Factual Report (GFR) or equivalent document;
- Geotechnical Interpretive Report (GIR). This would be expected to include:
 - A geomorphological plan/landslide map within the designation, presenting the findings from the remote mapping and terrain assessments, and historical aerial photograph interpretation.
 - Analytical work that supports the cut/fill sketches in the geotechnical drawing set, including assumed material parameters.
 - Analytical work that demonstrates that effects arising from the proposed construction (i.e. slope instability) are not expected to extend beyond the designation boundary. This includes both the alignment cuts and fills but also potential spoil sites.
 - Preliminary assessment of seismic/liquefaction risk for the alluvial deposits in the norther lowland area near Waipū.
- An assessment of the Project against the National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards 2025, including but not limited to an assessment of natural hazard risk in relation to geotechnical matters including landslide and liquefaction.

[16] The Panel will have further information requests for the Applicant arising out the site visit and the comments received on the application. However, the Panel is content to await the Applicant's response to those comments before making further information requests, in line with the approach proposed in the Applicant's Memorandum to the Panel dated 14 July 2026. The Panel has issued the geotechnical information request prior to the receipt of comments and the

Applicant's response because its technical adviser has identified gaps in the application material which the Panel considers should be provided as a matter of priority, with an opportunity for further limited comment on that information to be provided as outlined in paragraph [14] above, following a further minute to be issued by the Panel.

Technical reports

[17] The Panel expects to receive preliminary reports from its hydrogeology, freshwater ecology, and stormwater advisers this week. These will be published on the Fast-track website together with further information requests (as required) in due course.



Mary Hill
Alternative to Brynderwyn Hills Expert Panel Chair