
MINUTE 1 OF THE PANEL CONVENER
Convener's Conference [Green Steel] [FTAA-2506-1074]
(25 August 2025)

Purpose of conference

[1] A conference will be held on **Thursday 4 September at 10 am**, a notice will shortly issue.

[2] The purpose of this conference is to gather participant views on matters arising under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA). These views will inform two decisions I must make as panel convener regarding:

- (a) Appointment of panel members (FTAA, schedule 3).
- (b) The timing of the panel decision (FTAA, section 79).

[3] I note that the assessment of time for a decision must be made ahead of a panel being set up and acknowledge that the panel can set its own processes. Additionally, there may be persons not invited to this conference, subsequently invited by the panel to comment, who may have different views on process.¹ Your participation is essential to determining the time frame for the decision.² Not participating risks:

¹ Persons commenting under s 53 may be requested to provide further report or information pursuant to s 67 and evidence pursuant to s 58.

² Including whether the standard timeframe of 30 days should apply, or an alternative timeframe is more appropriate - see s 79.

- (a) Insufficient time being allowed, impacting the quality of the decision-making and leaving the decision susceptible to appeal or review.
- (b) An overallocation of time which would not satisfy the procedural principles in section 10 of the Act.

Participants at the panel convener's conference

[4] The following persons are invited to attend the conference:

- (a) The authorised person or applicant - Craig Shearer - National Green Steel Limited
- (b) Relevant iwi authority and relevant Treaty settlement entities (see Schedule 3).³
- (c) Relevant administering agency - Ministry for the Environment
- (d) Relevant local authority -
 - (i) Waikato Regional Council
 - (ii) Waikato District Council
- (e) Waikato River Authority as a statutory entity having specific powers in relation to resource consents within the Waikato River catchment.⁴

Accessibility and recording of the panel convener's conference

[5] The conference will be held online via Microsoft Teams. The conference will be recorded, and a copy of the recording will be made available on the fast-

³ FTAA, ss 18(2)(a). Section 7 states, relevantly, all persons performing and exercising functions, powers, and duties under this Act must act in a manner that is consistent with—the obligations arising under existing Treaty settlements. The panel has a discretion to invite the iwi authorities and the Treaty settlement entities together with other Māori groups with a relevant interest to comment.

⁴ The Waikato River Authority is listed as a relevant entity under Schedule 3 and identified in the section 18 report prepared by MfE. However, it has specific powers of appointment and procedure under various co-governance and joint management arrangements with the relevant local authorities. For that reason, it is identified separately, and I make specific requests for information from the WRA and the local authorities in Minute 2.

track website.

[6] The application documents can be viewed on the fast-track website here:

[Substantive application | Fast-track website](#)

Schedules and Appendices

[7] To inform decisions on time frame and panel composition, all participants are to provide the information sought in Schedules 1 and 2 **attached**.

[8] Schedule 3 is the relevant iwi authority and Treaty settlement entities.

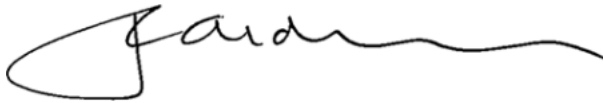
[9] Information from EPA on cost recovery in the context of the convener's conference is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Preparation – All participants

[10] In the interests of taking all practical steps to use timely, efficient, consistent and cost-effective processes, I ask that participants take time to consider the range of matters set out in Schedule 1 and 2 to this minute and be prepared to discuss their views on those matters.

Direction

[11] The participants are to file a written response to the matters set out in Schedules 1 and 2 attached to this Minute. Responses are to be filed by **Monday 1 September 2025**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Caldwell', followed by a vertical line.

Jennifer Caldwell

Associate panel convener for the purpose of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Appendix 1: Information from EPA on cost recovery in the context of the convener's conference

Administered by the EPA, cost recovery is provided for under the Act and its Regulations. However, not all costs are recoverable from applicants. With respect to the convener's conference, only the actual and reasonable costs incurred in relation to panel conveners in performing or exercising their functions, duties, and powers under the Act in respect of an application will be recoverable under s 104(2)(b) of the Act.

Actual and reasonable costs for preparing and attending this conference can be cost recovered. Costs should be directly related, and proportionate, to the two decisions being made by the panel convener following the conference (on time frame and panel composition), noting that all Schedule 1 and 2 matters are designed to assist the convener in deciding these matters.

Reasonable preparation time may vary depending on the complexity and range of issues engaged. All actual time spent at the conference can be cost recovered.

Costs charged at the individual's usual charge out rate (or at a reasonable rate considering relevant experience, if there is no usual rate) will be considered reasonable.

The EPA does not recover costs incurred by other parties in consulting and providing assistance to a prospective applicant before the application is lodged.

Schedule 1 – Matters to consider when preparing for conference

Approvals

[1] The number and range of approvals sought.

Complexity

[2] The level of complexity will have a bearing on the appropriate frame for decision making and may include:

- (a) Legal Complexity: novel or difficult legal issues -
 - (i) involve untested law or interpretation of statute;
 - (ii) involve application for multiple approvals;
 - (iii) interface with two or more statutes; and
 - (iv) engage constitutional law and public law.
- (b) Evidentiary Complexity: stemming from the volume, type, or technical nature of evidence -
 - (i) include challenges like managing expert reports or dealing with conflicting factual or opinion evidence; and
 - (ii) often involve technical or scientific analysis.
- (c) Factual Complexity: arises from the volume and nature of evidence -
 - (i) requires careful management of extensive information or reports, including expert opinion in specialised fields; and
 - (ii) necessitates analysis if technical, scientific, or highly specialised subject matter are involved.

Issues

[3] Issues identified by the applicant and other participants:

- (a) during consultation; and
- (b) any disputed fact or opinion, or legal issue, that is or is likely to be of consequence to the determination of the application.

Panel membership

[4] Consider:

- (a) the knowledge, skills and expertise required to decide the application under clause 7(1) of Schedule 3.⁵
- (b) whether there are factors that warrant the appointment of more than four panel members, such as:
 - (i) the circumstances unique to a particular district or region; or
 - (ii) the number of applications that have to be considered in that particular district or region; or
 - (iii) the nature and scale of the application under consideration; or
 - (iv) matters unique to any relevant iwi participation legislation.

Tikanga

[5] Iwi authorities and Treaty settlement entities are invited to advise:

- (a) whether tikanga is relevant to any aspect of the applications for approval.
- (b) how the panel might receive assistance on those matters.
- (c) the time required to adequately respond.

Procedural requirements

[6] Consider and prepare to indicate:

- (a) willingness to engage directly with the panel as necessary to advance progress of the application efficiently (briefings, meetings, conferencing).

⁵ FTAA, schedule 3, cl 3(7).

- (b) likelihood of any form of hearing process being required and, if so, time that should be allowed for such process in the time frame allocated by the panel convener. Forms of hearing include:
 - (i) Disputed fact or opinion or
 - (ii) Selected topics or issues which the panel seeks clarification (whether disputed or not).
 - (iii) Proposed conditions.
 - (iv) Legal issues.

Anything else?

[7] Is there any other information needed to decide time frames or panel composition?

Schedule 2: Participants' estimated timeframe⁶

Task	Working days	Date
Panel commencement	N/A	XXX 2025
Invite comment from relevant parties	10 W/D later	XXX 2025
Comments close (ss 53 & 54)	20 W/D later	XXX 2025
Comments close for applicants (s 55)	5 W/D later	XXX 2025
Any other procedural step and evaluation	XXX W/D (say)	XXX 2025
Draft decision is to approve		
Draft conditions to participants (s 70)	XXX W/D (say)	XXX 2025
Participant comments on draft conditions (s70(2))	XXX W/D later	XXX 2025

⁶ Note: a draft decision to decline is not included in this timeframe. If the statutory timeframe it is insufficient, the applicant will need to apply to suspend the application under s 64 FTAA.

Applicant response to participants on conditions (s 70(4))	5 W/D later	XXX 2025
Draft decision to Ministers (s 72)	XXX W/D (say)	XXX 2025
Response from Ministers (s 72)	10 W/D later	XXX 2025
Applicant response to Ministers (allow)	W/D later (say)	XXX 2025 (approx.)
Evaluate	W/D later (say)	XXX 2025 (approx.)
Any other procedural step and evaluation.	W/D later (say)	XXX 2025 (approx.)
Decision release	W/D later (say)	XXX 2025

Schedule 3: relevant iwi authorities and relevant Treaty settlement entities

- (i) Te Whakakitenga o Waikato
- (ii) Ngāti Tamaoho Trust
- (iii) Hako Tūpuna Trust
- (iv) Ngāti Maru Rūnanga Trust
- (v) Waikato Raupatu River Trust
- (vi) Waikato River Authority
- (vii) Ngāti Tamaoho Settlement Trust
- (viii) Pare Hauraki Cultural Redress Trust/Pare Hauraki Whenua Limited Partnership/Pare Hauraki Ngahere Limited Partnership
- (ix) Ngāti Koheriki Claims Committee
- (x) Ongā Muka Development Trust

Groups that may have interests suggested by the section 18 report)

- (xi) Ngāti Naho
- (xii) Ngāti Te Ata
- (xiii) Ngāti Paoa
- (xiv) Ngāti Tamaterā
- (xv) Ngaati Whanaunga
- (xvi) Ngāti Hine (ki Waikato)
- (xvii) Horahora Marae (Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Naho and Ngāti Pou)
- (xviii) Maurea Marae (Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Naho and Ngāti Pou).