
MINUTE OF THE PANEL CONVENER IN RELATION TO NEXT STEPS

Panel appointments and decision time frame

Takitimu North Link – Stage 2

[FTAA-2507-1085]

15 October 2025

Purpose of this Minute

[1] This Minute sets out the following:

- (a) A summary of the views expressed by participants after the Convener Conference held on 1 October 2025;
- (b) The appointment of Panel members under Schedule 3 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA); and
- (c) Confirmation of the decision-making timeframe under section 79 of the FTAA.

[2] In my previous Minute dated 2 October 2025, I issued a direction following the Convener Conference. That direction requested participants to confer and provide a memorandum by 10 October 2025, outlining their views on the appropriate process and timeframe for considering the management plans associated with the application.

Summary of Memoranda Received

[3] In response to the 2 October Minute, the following memoranda were

received:

(a) **Department of Conservation (on behalf of the Director-General of Conservation):**

The Director-General supports collaborative discussions on the draft Lizard Management Plan for the Takitimu North Link – Stage 2 project. These discussions should include all relevant parties, including hapū and Treaty partners, and may occur either before or during the Panel’s decision-making process, within the proposed timeframes.

(b) **Pirirākau Tribal Authority and Pirirākau PSGE:**

Pirirākau supports collaborative progress on the project but has submitted a memorandum to:

- Seek formal correction of Crown documentation;
- Ensure a fair and transparent pre-decision process; and
- Advocate for appropriate integration of hapū-led input before the statutory decision timeframe begins.

(c) **Joint Memorandum (on behalf of NZTA, BOPRC, WBOPDC, and HNZPT):**

While Pirirākau, Ngāti Taka, and the Department of Conservation provided separate responses, the joint memorandum signatories reaffirm their commitment to transparent engagement. They note that only two draft plans—the Lizard Management Plan and the Archaeological Management Plan—are currently included. The signatories do not consider that additional process or time is required before the Panel commences and support a decision-making timeframe of up to 50 working days as was noted at the Convener Conference.

(d) **Ngāti Taka Hapū**

Ngāti Taka does not oppose the substantive application and has engaged with the Applicant throughout the process. However, they have identified key issues, particularly regarding the scope, nature, and

role of Ngāti Taka in the development of management plans and consent conditions. They believe these issues can be resolved through open engagement and sufficient time for discussion.

Matter of the Section 18 Report

[4] As noted in my previous Minute, concerns have been raised about the way hapū are represented in the Section 18 report provided by MfE. In particular, it has been suggested that Ngāti Taka and Pirirākau, both of which hold Post-Settlement Governance Entity (PSGE) status, may more appropriately be identified as relevant iwi authorities and Treaty settlement entities under section 18(2)(a), rather than being listed as “other Māori groups with a relevant interest” under section 18(2)(k).

[5] Both hapū have formally requested that the report be corrected and reissued. The significance of this matter is acknowledged, and I have asked the EPA to continue to confer with MfE about this. Therefore, further engagement with MfE is anticipated to address these concerns.

Panel Appointments

[6] I confirm the appointment of the following members to the Expert Panel for the Takitimu North Link – Stage 2 project:

- (a) Mary Hill (as chair)¹
- (b) Julianne Chetham (Council’s joint nominee)
- (c) Euan Williams

[7] I am satisfied that the Panel collectively holds the necessary expertise and experience to assess the application. The Panel may engage technical or special

¹ Note Mary Hill was also a joint nominee, but I am required to choose one person.

advisors as needed once they have reviewed the application in detail.

Commencement and Timeframe

[8] The Expert Panel will commence on **28 October 2025**.

[9] I recommend that the Applicant continue constructive engagement with the Councils and hapū to identify or narrow issues in contention, confer on draft conditions, and arrange for:

- (a) A Panel briefing session, and
- (b) A site visit,

ideally both to occur prior to the invitation to comment being issued on 11 November 2025.

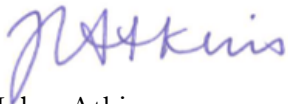
[10] Unless the application is suspended, the time for comments will extend until 9 December 2025 which incorporates and extend the timeframes proposed by Pirirākau.

[11] I therefore agree with signatories to the Joint Memorandum that it is not necessary to include an additional process, or time to consider the two draft management plans (and/or management plan related conditions) either in advance of panel commencement or as part of the panel's decision-making timeframe.

[12] The participants have all confirmed at the Convener Conference and in their memoranda that they intend to continue the constructive engagement, and I recommend that this occurs in a timely manner to ensure that outcome of it is able to be appropriately communicated to the Expert Panel.

[13] I consider a decision-making timeframe of **50 working days** from the date that invited comments is due to be appropriate. Subject to any suspensions under section 60 of the FTAA and comments being invited on 11 November 2025, the

Panel's decision will be due by **11 March 2026**.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'H. Atkins', with a stylized, cursive script.

Helen Atkins

Panel convener for the purpose of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024