
MINUTE 03 OF THE PANEL CONVENER
Convener's Conference Twizel Solar [FTAA-2604-1217]
15 July 2026

[1] Nova Energy Limited has applied for approvals to install and operate a solar farm on the 868 ha site located on State Highway 8, Twizel. The project is to generate up to 300 megawatts of renewable electricity.

[2] A conference will be held on **Tuesday 28 July 2026 at 10am**. A MS Teams invite will shortly be sent.

[3] The purpose of this conference is to gather participant views on matters arising in relation to the application filed under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. Your views will inform two decisions that I must make as panel convener regarding:

- (a) the appointment of panel members;¹
- (b) the timing of the panel decision.²

Timeframe for a decision

[4] The Panel Convener decides the appropriate timeframe for release of the decision on the application. The Convener does so having had regard to the scale,

¹ FTAA, schedule 3

² FTAA, section 79

nature, and complexity of the approvals sought (among other matters).³ Complexity is in part a function of the issues that arise on this application.

[5] If the timeframe for a decision is not appropriate, this risks -

- (a) insufficient time being allowed, impacting the quality of the decision-making;
- (b) not adequately engaging with the wider requirements of public law leaving the decision susceptible to appeal or review; or
- (c) an overallocation of time which would not satisfy the procedural principles in section 10 of the Act.

The conference

[6] In deciding the timeframe for a decision, I will be assisted most by genuine engagement with the matters in issue rather than general or formulaic responses.

[7] At the conference participants are invited to:

- (a) comment on the extent of engagement by the applicant both before and following lodgement of the application;
- (b) the applicant aside, identify in-house experts and external consultants engaged on this project;
- (c) where there is a difference of opinion between the applicant and any other participant, identify:
 - (i) the principal *issues* in contention; and
 - (ii) those *issues* capable of resolution through conditions of approval.
- (d) record processes agreed with the applicant to narrow or reduce any *issues* relevant to the application and the decision that the panel is required to make;

³ FTAA, section 79.

- (e) identify any changes made, or currently underway, to the application since lodgement, whether as a result of engagement with participants or other work undertaken by the applicant, including any new or supplementary reports and draft conditions;
- (f) describe the *complexity* of this application;
- (g) state whether the drafting of proposed consent conditions (including any draft management plan filed) is accepted; and
- (h) propose efficient processes to enable the panel to understand, resolve or narrow the scope of any likely *issues* and indicate how these processes may be accounted for under the decision timeframe.

[8] It is anticipated that the local authorities will obtain input from planning and technical advisors to identify the likely issues. However, an assessment of merits is not required at this stage. For information about cost recovery, please refer to the EPA's cost-recovery policy (details below).

Participants at the panel convener's conference

[9] Schedule 1 includes a list of persons⁴ invited to attend the conference.

[10] Schedule 2 is a draft timetable which participants are invited to complete having regard to the matters in paragraph [6].

Accessibility and recording of the panel convener's conference

[11] The conference will be held remotely, with access provided to participants. The conference will be recorded, and a copy of the recording will be made available on the fast-track website.

[12] The application documents can be viewed on the fast-track website here - <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/twizel-solar-project>

⁴ These people are referred to as 'statutory participants' in the Guidance Note.

Cost recovery

[13] Cost recovery for participation in fast-track processes is determined by the FTAA and the Fast-track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025.

[14] Costs for preparing and attending this conference are described in the policy. For information on costs recovery, the link to the policy is found [here](#).

Directions

[15] I direct:

- (a) The participants are to file a written response to the matters set out in this Minute, including Schedules 1 and 2 (attached).
- (b) Written responses and confirmation of attendance are to be filed by **10:00am on Thursday 23 July 2026**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane'.

Jane Borthwick

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

Schedule 1: Persons invited to attend the conference

The following relevant iwi authorities and relevant Treaty settlement entities⁵ invited to attend the conference:

- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- Te Rūnanga o Waihao
- Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua
- Te Rūnanga o Moeraki

Copy to: Other Māori groups with relevant interests⁶

- ✓ Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited
- ✓ Aukaha

The following persons are invited to attend the conference:

- The authorised person or applicant – Bob Warnock (Nova Energy) and Cam Twigley (BTW Company Limited).
- The relevant iwi authorities and relevant Treaty settlement entity.
- Relevant administering agency – the Department of Conservation
- Relevant local authorities – Canterbury Regional Council and Mackenzie District Council.

⁵ 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 must invite iwi authorities and the Treaty settlement entities and adjacent landowners and occupiers to comment on the application. The panel may also invite other Māori groups with a relevant interest to comment.

⁶ FTAA, s 18(2)(k)

Schedule 2: Participants' estimated timeframe^{7, 8}

Task	Working days	Date
Panel commencement	N/A	31 August 2026 (nominal)
Invite comment from relevant parties	10 W/D later	14 September 2026
Comments close (ss 53 & 54)	20 W/D later	12 October 2026
Comments close for applicants (s 55)	5 W/D later	19 October 2026
Any other procedural steps, evaluation and decision writing	XXX W/D (say)	
Draft decision is to approve		
Draft decision and conditions to Ministers (s 72)	XXX W/D (say)	

⁷ Note 1: a draft decision to decline is not included in this timeframe. If the statutory timeframe it is insufficient for applicant to respond, the applicant will need to apply to suspend the application under s 64 FTAA. Consideration should also be given to the timing of ss 70 and 72 steps.

⁸ Note 2: the order of ss 69, 70 and 72 steps may differ case-by-case. On a decision to approve, sequencing s 72 before s 70 is simplest, albeit requiring more time than running ss 72 and 70 steps in parallel.

Response from Ministers. (s 72)	10 W/D later	
Applicant response to Ministers comments (if any)	XXX W/D later	
Draft conditions and decision to participants (s 70(1))	XXX W/D (say)	
Participant comments on draft conditions (s70(2))	XXX W/D later	
Applicant response to participants on conditions (s 70(4))	5 W/D later	
If not agreed, procedural step in relation to draft conditions.	XXX W/D (say)	
Evaluate and finalise decision	W/D later (say)	
Decision release	W/D later (say)	