
MINUTE 18 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Suspension of processing and expert conferencing
Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
Ashbourne [FTAA-2507-1087]

(23 February 2026)

Suspension of processing

1. On 20 February 2026, the Panel received a Memorandum of Counsel on behalf of the Applicant requesting a suspension of processing to allow time for it to consider the storm water issues raised by Mr Williamson and for expert conferencing to be undertaken.
2. As part of that request the Applicant advised that it gave approval for the Panel to continue to incur costs in relation to the application while it was suspended.
3. The Panel grants the requested suspension of the application from Friday 20 February until Friday 27 February 2026. The application will recommence processing on the 2 March 2026.

Expert conferencing on groundwater/stormwater issues

4. Following the latest advice from Jon Williamson and the Applicants memorandum dated 20 February 2026, the Panel grants the Applicants request to undergo expert conferencing to resolve the issues identified in Mr Williamson's advice in relation to Basin A and the absence of appropriate conditions together with issues related to location and operation and maintenance of proposed subsoil drains required to limit elevation of groundwater levels within the proposed residential subdivision.
5. The conferencing is to be undertaken as follows:
 - a. Expert conferencing is to be undertaken generally in accordance with the Protocol for Expert Witness Conferences attached as Annexure 3 to the Environment Court Practice Note 2024, unless otherwise directed below.
 - b. Expert conferencing is to occur between the dates of Monday 23 February to Wednesday 25 February 2026. The parties are to confer and agree the dates that conferencing will occur within these dates and shall report this date to the EPA in advance.

- c. The draft agenda for the conference will be provided separately.
- d. A Signed joint witness statements are to be filed with the EPA no later than 5pm Wednesday 25 February 2026, but ideally by the end of the business day on which the conference is held.
- e. For the avoidance of doubt, experts from the following parties are to attend conferencing on these topics:
 - The Applicant;
 - Jon Williamson (Panel expert);
 - Waikato Regional Council; and
 - Matamata Piako District Council.

Correspondence received

6. On 20 February 2026, the EPA received correspondence from the owners of Lot 5 DP 365568 (0 Odlum Drive) regarding the inclusion of this property in the January 2026 version of the SMP (in the Table 2 at page 6).
7. The Panel directs the Applicant to confirm whether this property has been included in the SMP in error, and if so, please confirm that the inclusion of the site has not informed any aspect of the calculations contained in the SMP, and provide a corrected version that excludes this property as forming part of the site.
8. The Panel directs this information to be provided by close of business 24 February 2026.



Sue Simons
Expert Panel Chair