

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

MINUTE 1 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Request to agencies and timing of invite to comment
Hananui Aquaculture Project
[FTAA-2511-1138]

20 March 2026

Project overview conference

[1] The Hananui Aquaculture Project Expert Panel (the Panel) commenced its appointment under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) on 16 March 2026.

[2] On 17 March 2026, the Panel attended an online project overview conference, during which the Applicant and their experts provided an overview of the application. Relevant administering agencies, local authorities, Treaty settlement entities, iwi authorities, and other Māori groups were also invited to attend. The Panel appreciated the effort that had been put into the presentation and the useful manner in which the information was presented.

[3] Due to timing constraints, a further online conference will be held on 26 March 2026 to cover the remaining relevant legal and planning matters for the application.

[4] Recordings of both conferences will be made available on the fast-track website as soon as practicable.

Request to agencies and councils

[5] During the conference on 17 March, it was noted that some of the relevant

administering agencies and local authorities have already commissioned or prepared expert reports or advice in their consideration of the application.

[6] Such information would be of immediate assistance to the Panel, and it would be preferable that it be made available prior to comments on the application being filed, so that those making comments had the benefit of this information before they filed their comments.

[7] The Panel therefore requests that, to the extent that they have prepared information that is intended to be made available to the Panel, the following agencies and local authorities provide that information as soon as possible, and no later than **5pm on 25 March 2026**:

- (a) Department of Conservation
- (b) Environment Southland
- (c) Ministry for the Environment
- (d) Ministry for Primary Industries
- (e) Southland District Council

[8] Some of that information has been made available to the Panel already, and the Panel is grateful for that.

Timing of the invitation to comment

[9] Under section 53 of the Act, the Panel must invite comments on the application no later than 10 working days after its appointment commences. Comments for this application must therefore be invited no later than 30 March 2026.

[10] As this application seeks an approval for aquaculture activities, the Panel must also direct the EPA to notify the chief executive of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) of the date on which the Panel will invite comments at least one day beforehand, in accordance with section 48 of the Act.

[11] The Panel therefore directs the EPA to notify MPI that comments will be invited on **30 March 2026**.



Bal Matheson KC

Hananui Aquaculture Project Expert Panel Chair