
MINUTE 25 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Commissioning of Specialist Advice: Air Quality
Central and Southern Block Mining Project [FTAA-2512-1153]

(3 September 2026)

- [1] The purpose of this Minute is to record the Panel's decision to commission a report pursuant to section 67(1)(b) of the Act on an issue relevant to the determination of the Substantive Application.
- [2] The matters that the report being commissioned by the Panel will address are as set out in Appendix 1 and relate to air quality (PM₁₀ discharges and associated health effects specifically).
- [3] The background to the Panel's decision to commission the report is as follows.
- [4] While the processing of the Substantive Application is otherwise suspended, the Panel has continued with its deliberations and decision writing process, in so far as it can pending receipt of the response to the Requests for Further Information addressed in the Panel's Minutes 22 and 24.
- [5] In relation to air quality matters and potential adverse health effects beyond the site, the Panel has reached a stage of its deliberations whereby the lack of information has become material, both as to the findings that the Panel must reach regarding the degree or significance of potential adverse air quality effects, and the nature of the conditions that should be imposed as necessary to manage those effects.
- [6] The Panel previously requested advice based on published emissions factors for mining activities to calculate how much PM₁₀ is discharged to air from the existing and proposed mining operations (in kg/ day and tonnes/year) from the proposed stages of mining operations in the Central and Southern Blocks.¹ The Applicant's air quality expert (Mr Curtis) declined to provide this information on the basis that, in his opinion, the published emissions factors would not provide a robust or useful basis for assessing potential air quality effects from PM₁₀.
- [7] The Panel disagrees, noting an estimate of robustness may be prepared from published emission factor certainty ratings. The Panel considers quantifying PM₁₀ emissions to be helpful for understanding the scale and significance of discharges to air from proposed operations.
- [8] Given that the information requested has not been received, the Panel must proceed as if the

¹ Panel's request for information dated 29 June, item 61.

request for further information had been declined (under s 67(6) of the Act).

- [9] The report being commissioned to address the matters covered in Appendix 1 is intended to remedy the Applicant's refusal to provide this requested further information, regarding what the Panel considers to be a material issue, and on which it does not yet have adequate information to complete its deliberative and decision-making functions.
- [10] Appendix 1 sets out required tasks and potential options for the independent air quality expert who would be retained to prepare the report. The Applicant is invited to select any preferred expert from this list and advise the EPA by 11.59 pm on Friday 4 September of its preference in that regard (if any).
- [11] The report being commissioned will be due on Wednesday 30 September and hence received at approximately the time previously directed for the Applicant's response to the further information requested in Minutes 22 and 24. The Applicant would of course be able to respond to any matters raised in the report as part of its right of reply as due on 6 October (with the in-person presentation scheduled for 13 October).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Serjeant', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dave Serjeant

Central and Southern Block Mining Project Expert Panel Chair

Appendix 1 Independent Air Quality Expert Report

Tasks

1. Expert to undertake a site visit and review the following (non-redacted version) documents:

- Applicant's Substantive Application including:
 - Appendix G – Key issues table
 - Appendix J – Site Project Map
 - **Appendix S – Air Quality Assessment**
 - Appendix T – Draft Environmental Management Plan
 - Appendix N – Hydrogeology Assessment at Appendix B: Mining Sequence and Dredge Path Central Block (only)
- Comments by s53 parties:
 - Roy Wetini Trust s53 comments dated 20 May 2026 (including appendices)
 - WRC s53 comments including Appendix A – Memo from Peter Stacey
- Applicant's response to s53 comments including:
 - Memorandum of Counsel dated 22 June 2026
 - **Attachment J – Air Quality Response**
 - Attachment O – Updated set of conditions
- Applicant's response to RFI including:
 - Attachment 1 – TIL's response to the Panel's RFI Updated 23 July 2026
 - Appendix J – Aerial mining activities 2023-2025
- Presentation by Taharoa Lakes Trust during Hui at Aaruka Marae on 6 June 2026 (including video)

2. Expert to prepare a report for the Panel addressing the following:

Using published emissions factors for mining activities please calculate how much PM₁₀ is likely to be discharged to air from the existing and proposed mining operations (in kg/day and tonnes/year) for each of the proposed stages of mining operations in the central and southern blocks.

In doing so, identify PM₁₀ discharges to air from existing consented activities (Pit 1 and Te Mania Extension) separately.

Please include:

- summary table for all sources with key metrics² to inform scale and significance;

² e.g., hectares of non-tracked exposed ground, hectares of tracked exposed ground, km of sealed road, km unsealed road, tonnes of dry material moved, tonnes of stockpile loaded/unloaded, kg or tonnes per year PM₁₀ emitted.

- emission factor certainty ratings (with explanation); and
- estimates of robustness of emission calculations.

Considering the scale, extent and type of PM₁₀ emission sources and information from the above documents and site visit, provide an independent expert opinion on:

1. Whether there is potential for adverse health effects from daily and annual PM₁₀ concentrations at the nearest neighbours including in Taharoa village. This should explicitly address:
 - a. the likelihood of exceeding the NZ daily PM₁₀ standard,³ the NZ annual PM₁₀ guideline⁴ and the WHO annual PM₁₀ guideline⁵;
 - b. the likely contribution of 'background' sources of PM₁₀ to daily and annual levels at these locations; and
 - c. the extent and degree of potential effects on people exposed to PM₁₀ as determined under (a) and (b) (i.e. whether negligible, minor, moderate, or significant).
2. A rationale for, and ordered priority of, PM₁₀ emission sources for mitigation and/or rehabilitation in the event of any measured exceedance of the standard and guidelines referred to in 1(a).
3. A recommended location with rationale for a 'background' PM₁₀ monitoring station to confirm background sources of PM₁₀ for future monitoring and compliance purposes.

Suggested Experts

- **Air Matters** – Nigel Goodhue (Bay of Plenty): [REDACTED]
- **Air Quality NZ Ltd** – Duncan Backshall (Auckland): [REDACTED]
- **Jacobs** – Tracey Freeman (South Island): [REDACTED]

³ 50 µg/m³ with one permitted exceedance every 12-months

⁴ 20 µg/m³ with no permitted exceedances

⁵ 15 µg/m³ with no permitted exceedances