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**TARANAKI VTM PROJECT**  
**[FTAA-2504-1048]**

**MINUTE 20 OF THE EXPERT PANEL**

Request for Information  
and Expert Conferencing and  
Joint Witness Statement:  
Economics

(10 November 2025)

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**Background**

[1] Minute 19 directed Tranche One conferencing and noted that Fisheries and Economics (Tranche Two) would follow by way of separate minutes before each conference. This Minute confirms both:

- a. A Request for Information (RFI) for further information that will assist in understanding economic effects; and
- b. The Panel's decision to call expert witness conferencing for Economics in accordance with this Minute 20.

[2] Economics specific RFI questions and expert conference topics are attached to this Minute as Appendices A and B respectively.

[3] As stated in Minute 19, expert conferencing assists the Panel to clarify agreements and differences, identify any material information gaps relevant to the EEZ Act and FTAA decision tests, and present information in a format aligned with those statutory frameworks. RFIs do not replace or diminish evidence already filed.

**Participation and facilitation at Expert Conference**

[4] Participation in the Economics expert conference is by invitation. The Economics experts identified for conferencing are:

- Ms Leung and/or Ms Ting (TTR)
- Dr Fairgray (Taranaki Regional Council)
- Mr Banks (Forest & Bird)

- Dr Nana (Te Kaahui o Rauru; Te Runanga o Ngāti Ruanui; Te Korowai o Ngāruahine)
- Mr Colegrave (Taranaki Offshore Partnership)
- Mr Fleming and/or Mr Buckwell (KASM & Greenpeace)

[5] If an invited expert is unavailable, a substitute with equivalent expertise may be proposed on notice. We note that Dr Nana is away overseas during this time. As the conferencing will be done online, we anticipate that this will assist his ability to attend virtually.

### **Procedure and timing**

[6] Parties are invited to indicate by **Tuesday 11 November** if they are available for the expert conference on the **17, 18 or 19 November**, or alternatively to identify availability close to these dates. The Panel will circulate conferencing links, and facilitation details. The Panel may amend scheduling to align with expert availability and cross-topic dependencies.

[7] All experts must comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in Part 9 of the Environment Court Practice Note 2023, adapted to the Fast-track context. Experts must provide evidence and reasons within their expertise and avoid expressing legal conclusions. Where views are expressed on consistency or existing interests, they must identify the facts, documents and tikanga or technical bases relied on

[8] This conference will be chaired by an independent facilitator appointed by the Panel. The facilitator will record agreed text and note divergent views. All experts must review and sign the final Joint Witness Statement (JWS) before it is lodged.

### **RFIs and JWS scope**

[9] Written responses to this RFI must be provided by 8.00 am, **Thursday 14 November**.

[10] Please structure any written response using the headings in the Attachment. Provide documents by link or as attachments. References to material previously provided must identify the document and relevant page or paragraph.

[11] RFI responses form part of the record to be relied upon during the expert conference and are not repeated in the JWS answers. Expert conferencing and JWS's prepared during the conference will be guided by the specific instructions and questions provided and focus on:

- a. effects and consistency findings under FTAA ss 7, 82–85.
- b. existing interests and the extent of adverse effects under EEZ ss 59–61 where applicable.
- c. any remaining uncertainties that could realistically change the findings under FTAA ss 7, 82–85 or EEZ ss 59–61, and whether they must be resolved before decision or can be addressed by enforceable conditions; and
- d. whether proportionate, enforceable conditions could credibly address any remaining effects having regard to FTAA ss 82–84.

### **Statutory context**

[12] Key provisions for informing the conferencing include:

- FTAA ss 4, 7, 82–85; Schedule 5; Schedule 10.
- EEZ Act ss 10–11 (purpose and international obligations) and ss 59–61 (relevant considerations, existing interests, information adequacy and uncertainty).
- Treaty settlement and MACA instruments, where relevant.

[13] Where the EEZ Act applies, experts should address the EEZ matters first; the Panel will then apply the FTAA Schedule 10 weighting and ss 7, 82–85.

### **Lodgement**

[14] Each final JWS must be lodged immediately after the conference concludes. Any additional information identified during conferencing must be appended on lodgement or filed later to the EPA on a date agreed with the facilitator.

[15] Enquiries may be directed to the Application Lead Keely Paler at [info@fasttrack.govt.nz](mailto:info@fasttrack.govt.nz).



**Hon. Kit Toogood KC**  
**Taranaki VTM Expert Panel Chair**

## Appendix A — Economics Request for Information

Please provide a response to each of the questions below. In providing your response, please identify if (and where) you have already directly addressed any issue.

### **RFI for Trans-Tasman Resources (TTR)**

#### **A. Set-up Stage/CAPEX**

1. Page xv of the TTR Application states that the Project will deliver “much needed infrastructure investment in Taranaki and Whanganui”. Please provide more detail on the infrastructure that you are investing in and why it is needed.
2. The TTR Application has a sub-heading “Port of Taranaki and Whanganui Port Upgrades”. Please clarify the nature of these upgrades, and who is paying for them.
3. The TTR Application makes one reference to a pilot plant (assumed to be a vanadium recovery pilot plant). It references this in expenditure that has already occurred to date. The NZIER report lists the pilot plant as a component of the \$55m of capital expenditure. Please confirm that the \$55m does not include any sunk costs, or if it does, please provide an amended total with sunk costs excluded.
4. While operational expenditure is expressed as an annual average, it is not clear what period the capex expenditure (\$55m) is spent over. Please provide a breakdown of capex by year and provide GDP and employment impacts attributable to that capex as an annual average for that period.
5. Please clarify what the \$10.86m of central government expenditure is during the capex (set-up) phase.
6. Please explain how income tax credits (20% of the cost of new assets) associated with \$1bn of capital investment, depreciation of those assets and offsetting of historical and on-going exploration and development costs may affect stated corporate tax projections.

#### **B. TTR Direct Employment**

7. The application documents include several different figures for direct employment by TTR if the project goes ahead. Please confirm if the figures in the NZIER report are the figures that should be relied on?
8. The Application suggests that direct employees will be required for the majority of the requested 35-year consent term. Given that majority of the direct

employment is crew of the IMV and FSO, will that component of employment be closely tied to the extraction period?

9. Please provide a breakdown of direct TTR employment by category (e.g. HQ, IMV/FSO crew, Admin support, training and logistics facility, bunkering etc.) and year (i.e. years 1-35) so that the Panel can understand how employment changes over the term of the consents.
10. There are some discrepancies between reports describing where TTR staff are expected to come from/live. Please provide your best estimate of how many staff will reside in South Taranaki/Whanganui Districts (local), New Plymouth/Stratford Districts (Rest of Region), and Rest of New Zealand. This should take into account staff that may move to these locations for the duration of their employment but should also recognize the duration of the shifts for offshore boat crew and the effect this may have on where staff may be prepared to travel from. If appropriate (given uncertainty), provide some different scenarios of employment by location.
11. The Social Impact Report uses some very old data (e.g. 2006 census). The employment descriptions in that report do not match information now contained in the TTR application. For example, the Social Impact report expects FIFO/DIDO staff, including from Wellington.
  - a. What weight should the Panel give to the Social Impact Report, particularly in relation to employment assessment?
  - b. Are there any specific sections of that report that the Panel should give more or less weight to?
  - c. Why has the source of 'specialist labour' changed between when the Social Impact Report was prepared and the current applications (i.e. to become focused within or near the region). If the project has not materially changed and the locations of relevant experienced labour in New Zealand have not changed, how is TTR now able to obtain sufficient specialist labour from within or near the region?
12. Is the proposed training facility in Hawera a permanent facility, or is it short-term, aimed at assisting with the initial recruitment drive?
13. Please provide some comment on how feasible it will be to secure and/or train sufficient specialist crew for the IMV/FSO in the time frame needed? What is the contingency if recruitment of an indicative 173 crew is taking longer?
14. Under qualified economic benefits, the Application states that the Project has the potential to "offset the lower than average household incomes currently experienced in the local and wider areas" (page 128). How does this statement

reconcile with the level of TTR staff anticipated at the local and regional level (relative to total employment), and the roles of those staff? Is the shift in household incomes at the local and regional level attributable the Project likely to be a negligible, minor, or a significant shift in your view?

#### C. Operational Stage/OPEX

15. It appears that the total cost of intermediate fuel oil is run through the IO model. Please explain why the wholesale margin only has not been used in the model. If this was in error, please provide updated results (undiscounted and discounted, including as amended by any other changes arising from this RFI).
16. Please confirm what opex in Table 7 relates to wages and salaries paid by TTR to its employees and what component supports goods/services purchased from independent businesses. Please set out in a table (expanding on Table 7).
17. If wages and salaries have been run through the model as if they were expenditure on businesses in each sector, please comment on whether this inflates economic impacts of that wage and salary expenditure by capturing all business costs (intermediate inputs etc.) of those sectors.
18. Please confirm if the direct employment results in the IO model outputs include TTR's employment in each locality, or is additional.
19. Please confirm if the modelling assumes that indirect and induced impacts arising from the direct expenditure occur in the same locality as the direct spending, or is the model multi-regional and accounts for expenditure that occurs throughout New Zealand (e.g., households spend locally, regionally and in the rest of New Zealand, including when travelling domestically and businesses purchase insurance or electricity from business that are not based in the region etc.).
20. Sensitivity testing of export revenue and royalty payments: NZIER shows only one variable changed at a time. Please calculate a worst and best case scenario for revenue, royalty and corporate tax contributions when the variables are applied in combination. Include any commentary for those scenarios that you think is relevant.
21. NZIER provides contextual analysis of the scale of TTR's modelled annual export value relative to other commodity exports. Please explain how increasing New Zealand's exports contributes to economic wellbeing (i.e. Is a benefit) over and above benefits derived from GDP and employment impacts already modelled?
22. Mr Thompson (Siecap) states in response to Ms Cooper that concerns around the cost and feasibility of vanadium and titanium processing is irrelevant as the processing and recovery costs for vanadium and titanium are "entirely out of

scope”. While we understand that any downstream processing will not be in New Zealand or form part of the consent applications in New Zealand, please provide additional explanation on how the revenue from (and royalties for) vanadium is assured from year 1 of extraction onwards (as assumed by NZIER).

23. Please provide further explanation as to why the potential revenue from TiO<sub>2</sub> is not included in the export revenue, royalty and tax calculations. If it was included, how would this change the economic contributions from corporate tax and royalties under NZIER’s modelling assumptions?
24. Can NZIER please address the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment’s comment that only direct GDP and employment impacts should be used at the national level?
25. Please quantify the net increase in labour productivity at a regional and national level from the Project, guided by the approach set out by the Parliamentary Commission for the Environment’s comment. Specifically, please consider if the mining sector employment is limited to those on the two vessels (170 FTES as used by the commentor) or includes all direct employees of TTR (or some figure in between). Please set out any limitations, assumptions and implications for those calculations.
26. Please quantify the one-off release of carbon from the mining operations using the approach recommended by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment in their comment. This should be on an annual basis taking into account the seabed area mined per annum. Please show results as an annual average, and cumulatively without and with the appropriate environmental discounting. *We note that the relevance of this matter is being considered in the legal hearing. This request is made in the event that it is determined to be relevant.*
27. What storage capacity is there between the IMV and FSO to account for export shipping delays (which are becoming increasingly problematic for export logistics in New Zealand)? Would shipping delays close to the time that the FSO is full require a halt in extraction? Have shipping delays been factored into the 71% active mining assumptions each year?

#### D. Limitations of IO Modelling

28. While the limitations of IO modelling are well set out, and NZIER maintains that the model is fit for purpose, please address the potential implications of those limitations on the results of the modelling.

**RFI for Mr Banks (on behalf of The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society)**

**A. Examples of variable tax contributions**

1. You provide some examples on annual variation in taxes paid by existing mining operations (OceanaGold and from Papua New Guinea):
  - a. Please confirm if the mining in Papua New Guinea you refer to is land-based.
  - b. Can you provide more detail on whether capital expenditure in those same years (or another cause) influenced those tax payments – particularly when tax contributions were low?
  - c. If the variability in tax payments in question (b) above was strongly linked to capital investment in those years, please provide further explanation on whether you consider those examples are still relevant to the Panel's consideration of the robustness of TTR's projected tax contributions, given that TTR signal no material reliance on capital expenditure after the initial set up phase?



## Appendix B — Economics JWS Questions

For each question below, record in your Joint Witness Statement:

- **Matters agreed.**
- **Matters disagreed**, with concise reasons.
- **Unresolved matters or uncertainties.**

Experts may add or refine questions within their field, provided the intention of the question is maintained and duplication with the filed RFI record is avoided. If experts consider that a question has already been addressed under another question, this can be explained in lieu of repeating the information.

### A. Wider Economic Considerations

1. Does assessing the extent of a project's significant regional or national benefits require consideration of the duration of the benefits, e.g. whether the project has a positive legacy effect on the regional or national economy?
2. What, if any, are the legacy effects of the project?
3. The TTR Application states that the Project represents a transformative opportunity for the New Zealand economy and if approved, will be a catalyst for economic progress in New Zealand. Set out agreement or disagreement with these statements and provide reasons/examples.
4. If the Project presents risks or benefits to New Zealand's reputation, is this a relevant economic effect?
5. What weight should be given to GDP and employment contributions expressed in percentage terms versus absolute terms. How meaningful are those percentages to decision makers.

### B. Employment and GDP Impacts

6. [NZIER's](#) IO modelling estimates total direct, indirect and induced employment of 211 FTES associated with the set-up (capex) period and 1,123 per annum for the operational (extraction) period for the Region (Taranaki Region with Whanganui District), and 459 and 1,365 FTEs respectfully at the national level. This is stated by NZIER as being "new jobs".

- a. How much of the direct, indirect and induced employment at the regional and national levels is likely (in reality) to be new (net additional) jobs, versus sustained existing jobs? Please provide reasons.
  - b. Does transfer of workers from an existing job to a job for TTR mean that induced household expenditure would have occurred under the status quo?
  - c. Should induced GDP and employment impacts be included at the regional and/or national level? Why/why not?
  - d. The [Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment](#) has suggested that only direct GDP and employment should be counted at the national level? Do you agree with this, or not (and why)?
7. Are GDP impacts, employment impacts, corporate tax contributions and royalties mutually exclusive under NZIER's modelling approach? I.e., is there any double counting of these impacts?
  8. Sensitivity testing of export revenue and royalty payments: NZIER shows only one variable changed at a time. Under a worst-case scenario, is there logic in modelling the effect of combined variables? And if so, which of the variables should be combined?

### **C. Economic Impacts versus Benefits**

9. Are GDP impacts, employment impacts, corporate tax contributions and royalty contributions economic benefits? What components of these measures contribute to/enhance economic wellbeing? Please provide examples of how economic benefits differ from economic impacts in the context of the Project.
10. What weight should be given to the high share of the Project's export value transferred to foreign investors? Is this a relevant consideration in economic terms?
11. In assessing economic benefits, should the Panel factor in any foregone opportunity for different activities to establish at the site (e.g. wind energy generation), and if so, how does this affect the economic analysis?