
MINUTE 3 OF THE PANEL CONVENER
Appointment and timing of panel
[North West Rapid Transit] [FTAA-2511-1146]
1 April 2026

[1] On 31 March 2026 I held a convener conference in respect of this application. The conference was attended by the Applicant and its legal and planning team, Auckland Council representatives, and a representative from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

[2] The purpose of this minute is to:

- (a) Summarise the views expressed by conference participants on the matters of panel composition and the timeframe required for the expert panel to deliver its decision; and
- (b) Confirm my decisions on those two matters.

[3] In advance of the conference, I received written memoranda from the Applicant, the Council and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

[4] In relation to expert and panel composition and expertise, the participants' views can be summarised as follows:

- (a) The Applicant considered that the appointment of three Panel members is appropriate for the Application and does not consider there are any factors that warrant the appointment of additional members. In respect of Panel composition, the Applicant considers that legal, urban planning and urban design/landscape architecture

would assist.

- (b) The only comment made by Auckland Council on Panel composition is that Auckland Council agrees with the Applicant.
- (c) Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga did not raise any issues with the panel composition as discussed.

[5] I discussed my proposed Panel members during the conference and all the participants agreed that they had the requisite skills and experience for this Application.

[6] In relation to the decision timeframe:

- (a) Auckland Council considered that 60 working days (ie doubling the 30 working day default) would be more appropriate based on the nature of the application.
- (b) The Applicant considered that around 40 working days (ie 10 more working days than the 30 working day default) would be appropriate based on the nature of the application.
- (c) I determined that between 40-60 working days therefore would be considered appropriate based on the feedback received from the participants at the conference. As can be seen below I have determined that 50 working days from the date that comments are received to be the appropriate decision making time frame.

[7] I record my thanks to all conference participants for their attendance and thoughtful participation.

[8] I am appointing the following persons to the Expert Panel to determine the substantive application lodged for the North West Rapid Transit project:

- (a) Lachlan Muldowney (Chair)
- (b) Todd Langwell
- (c) Richard Blakey (Council nominee).

[9] I am satisfied that, collectively, the Expert Panel will hold appropriate expertise and experience in relation to law, planning & policy, transport and traffic engineering, and as required by the Act, te ao Māori and Māori development.

[10] The Expert Panel may wish to engage other specialist technical disciplines to assist them in their task once they have considered the application in detail.

[11] The date on which the Expert Panel will commence work is **13 April 2026**.

[12] I recommend that the Applicant continue its constructive engagement with Auckland Council to identify or narrow issues in contention and confer on conditions, and to make arrangements for an Expert Panel briefing session and a site visit, ideally both to be undertaken prior to the invitation to comment being issued (which will be no later than **28 April 2026**).

[13] I consider that a timeframe of 50 working days following the receipt of invited comments is appropriate. This means the decision documents will be due on **6 August 2026** subject to processing of the application being suspended for any of the reasons outlined in section 60 of the Act, and to the date specified for inviting comments under section 53 of the Act being 28 April 2026.

[14] In setting this timeframe I have had regard to the following relevant matters:

- (a) The nature of the application and the range of activities for which approval is sought;
- (b) The participants' views on complexity and the likely issues requiring resolution; and
- (c) The possibility that some mechanism to resolve focused issues, or to workshop conditions, may need to be provided for by the Expert Panel.

[15] In terms of next steps, the participants will be contacted by the Expert

Panel for the North West Rapid Transit project after their appointment date.



Helen Atkins

Associate Panel Convener for the purpose of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024