
MINUTE OF THE PANEL CONVENER

Post-conference decisions

FTAA-2508-1096

Waitākere District Court – New Courthouse Project
(13 November 2025)

[1] The purpose of this Minute is to confirm the the Waitākere District Court – New Courthouse Project Expert Panel (**Expert Panel**) appointments, including the timing of those appointments, and the decision timeframe.

[2] A conference was held on 7 November 2025 for the purpose of informing my decisions on:

- (a) the appointment of panel members;
- (b) the timing of the panel decision.

[3] A list of persons attending at the conference is attached and labelled “Schedule 1”.

Appointment of panel members

[4] As discussed at the conference, three experts will be appointed to the Expert Panel. I engage the following members:

- (a) Heather Ash – Chair (law);
- (b) Lisa Mein (planning);
- (c) Bronwyn Rhynd (engineering).

[5] As specifically noted at the conference, no participant considered that a panel member needed to have specific cultural knowledge or expertise. I am satisfied

that, collectively, the Expert Panel will hold appropriate expertise and experience in relation to the matters set out in Schedule 3 clause 7. I noted that if the panel determines that it needs additional specialist or technical advice they have the power to commission this.

The timing of the Expert Panel decision

[6] The time to release a decision –

- (a) is set by the panel convener.
- (b) if no time frame is set, then the decision must be released within 30 working days after the date that comments are received.

[7] Under s 79 (2)(b) A time frame set by the panel convener **must**—...

be a time frame that the panel convener considers is **appropriate**, having regard to the **scale, nature, and complexity** of the approvals sought in, and **any other matters raised by**, the substantive application;

[8] During the conference I was advised by the participants that there has been ongoing engagement which will continue to occur. I was also advised that there are further information matters for the Applicant to address and was informed that this would be attended to in the timeframes that were discussed and are recorded here.

[9] The date that the Expert Panel will commence is the week starting 17 November 2025, noting that for the purpose of the section 53 the commencement date is **20 November 2025**. This means that the Expert Panel must invite comments on the application by **4 December 2025**.

[10] With regards to timing of the Expert Panel's decision I note that:

- (a) Councils and the Applicant have fully engaged and that further

collaborative discussions are proposed.

- (b) Although the application contains significant experts reports and evidence it is not considered to be legally, evidentially or factually complex.
- (c) The Expert Panel has the power to request further information and reports under section 67 of the Act and the power to appoint a special and/or technical advisor under clause 10 of Schedule 3 of the Act.
- (d) Once the time for the decision is set under section 79 of the Act, I am not able to extend that time.
- (e) The Applicant generally finds the statutory timeframes to be appropriate in the context of this Application. Auckland Council also considered that the timeframe was appropriate.
- (f) From 20 December to 10 January there are no working days so the timeframes must accommodate this.

[11] I propose to extend the timeframe for the Expert Panel to issue the decision documents under section 79 to **50 working days**. This means the decision documents will be due on **07 April 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 receiving comments under section 53 of the Act being **22 January 2026**.

[12] In terms of next steps, the participants will be contacted by the Expert Panel after their appointment date.

[13] I thank the participants for their engagement and assistance at the Conference, it is greatly appreciated.



Helen Atkins

Panel convener for the purpose of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Schedule 1

Organisation Name	Participant Name
Panel Convener	Helen Atkins
Ministry for the Environment	Lillian Parker
Auckland Council	Joe Wilson
Applicant Ministry of Justice	Alisa Neal Barker & Assoc. Hannah Pettengell Barker & Assoc. Tess Browne The Building Intelligence Group Tom McClean The Building Intelligence Group Chris Baldwin Ministry of Justice