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**MINUTE 3 OF THE EXPERT PANEL**  
**Invitations to comment**

**Oparure Quarry South-Western Pit [FTAA-2606-1251]**

**12 October 2026**

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- [1] This minute addresses invitations to comment on the application under section 53 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).
- [2] In accordance with section 53(2) of the Act, the Expert Panel must invite comments from persons listed in sections 53(2) (a) to (n) of the Act. Sections 53(2)(d) to (g) and section 53(2)(k) to (l) do not apply to this application. The Panel considers the persons identified in Appendix 1 must be invited for comment.
- [3] Section 53(2)(h) and (i) state that the owners and occupiers of the land adjacent to the land the application relates to must be invited to comment.
- [4] After considering the information from the Applicant and the advice from the EPA, and having now reviewed the application material, the Panel has determined that the owners and occupiers of land shaded orange and purple on the Maps in Appendix 2 and listed in Appendix 3 should be invited to comment.
- [5] Turning to section 53(3) of the FTAA, this confers on the Expert Panel the discretion to invite additional parties to comment. That discretion has to be exercised on a principled basis in light of the purpose of the FTAA.
- [6] The Expert Panel has identified the following additional parties whom it considers appropriate to invite comment from:

- (a) Oparure Marae; as mana whenua for the project area
- (b) Raukawa Settlement Trust; and
- (c) Pakeho A18 Trust; as iwi organisations identified in its report prepared by Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport under Section 18 of the FTAA as potentially having relevant interests by reason of its area of interest being near the project site.
- (d) New Zealand Transport Agency; as being responsible for State Highway 3, which is a strategic transport route for the proposed activity
- (e) NZSS Cave Conservation and Access Trust; and
- (f) North King Country Development Trust; and
- (g) Down to Earth Waitomo; and
- (h) Waitomo Experience; and
- (i) Spellbound Glowworm and Cave Tour; and
- (j) Ruakuri Cave Tours; as businesses and business organisations within the general vicinity and who may have relevant interests in the proposed activity.

[7] Section 54(1) of the Act requires that the Panel must specify in the invitation a date for when comments must be received by the EPA on behalf of the Panel (which must be 20 working days after the date on which the invitation is given under section 53).

[8] The invitation to comment is dated 12 October 2026, and the date for comments is 20 working days from this date. The date that invited comments on the application must be received is therefore **10 November 2026**.

[9] Comments may be filed with the EPA:

- (a) by email to [substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz](mailto:substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz);
- (b) by post to Private Bag 63002, Wellington 6140, New Zealand; or

(c) in person to Stewart Dawson's Corner, 366 Lambton Quay,  
Wellington 6011

- [10] The application may be accessed on the Fast-track website here:  
<https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/oparure-quarry-south-western-pit/substantive-application>
- [11] On 8 October 2026 the panel received advice from Waikato Regional Council and Waitomo District Council addressing the councils' technical experts that will provide comment in their s53 response. This advice can be viewed on the Fast-track website here:  
<https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/oparure-quarry-south-western-pit/reports-and-advice>
- [12] The panel noted that a terrestrial ecologist expert was not included in the advice and sought clarification. The Councils have confirmed that Gerry Kessels of Bluewattle Ecology has provided technical advice for terrestrial ecology as part of the RMA process and his advice will form part of the s53 response.
- [13] The Fast-track website will be updated as information is made available to the Panel



Stephen Daysh

**Oparure Quarry South-Western Pit Expert Panel Chair**

## Appendix 1

### Parties invited to Comment under section 53(2) of the Act

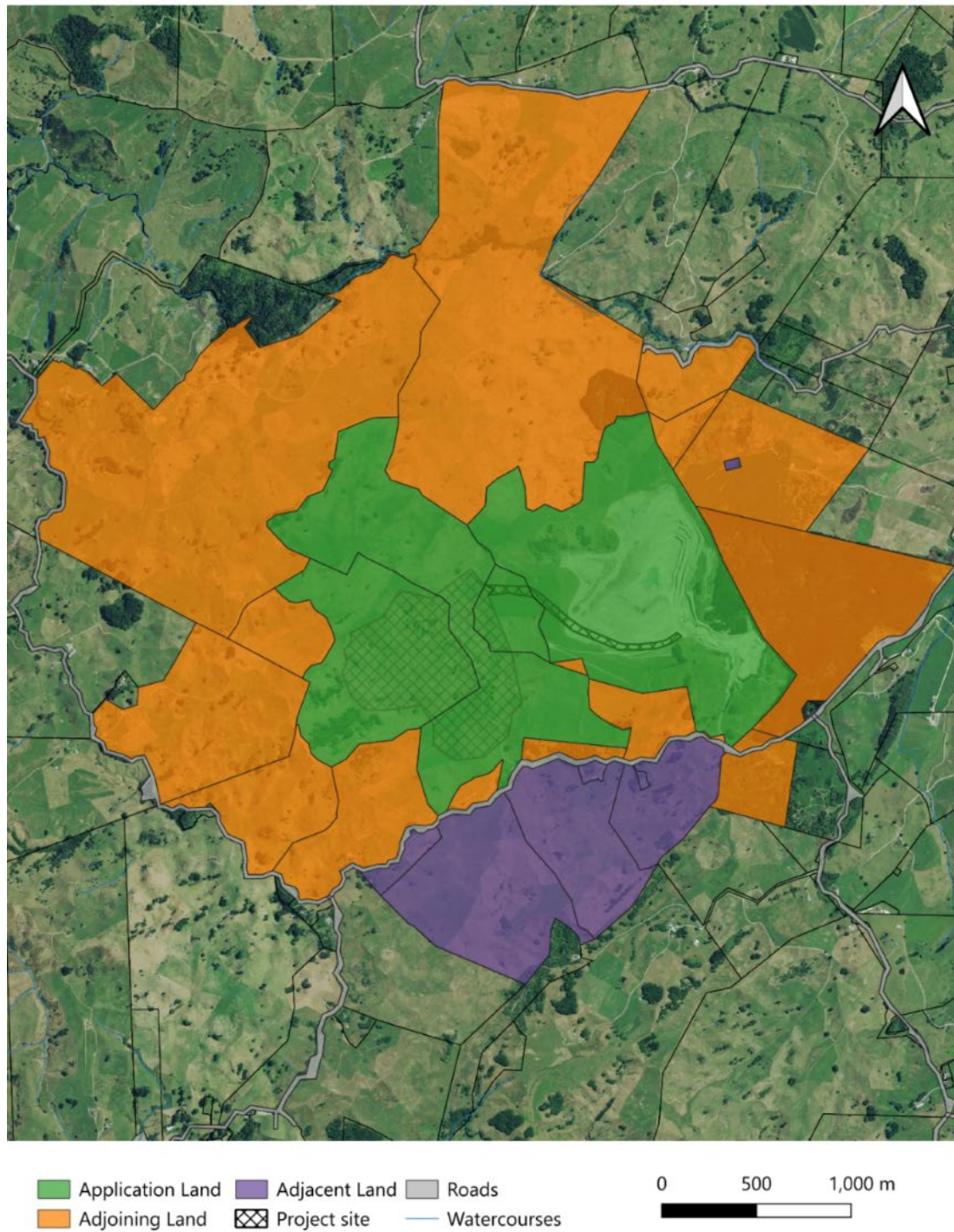
|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |
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| 53(2)(a) | the relevant local authorities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waitomo District Council</li> <li>• Waikato Regional Council</li> </ul> |
| 53(2)(b) | the relevant iwi authorities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Te Nehenehenui Trust</li> </ul>                                         |
| 53(2)(c) | any relevant Treaty settlement entities, including, to avoid doubt,—<br>(i) an entity that has an interest under a Treaty settlement within the area to which the substantive application relates; and<br>(ii) an entity operating in a collective arrangement, provided for under a Treaty settlement, that relates to that area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Te Nehenehenui Trust</li> <li>• Waikato River Authority</li> </ul>      |
| 53(2)(d) | any protected customary rights groups and customary marine title groups whose protected customary rights area or customary marine title is within the area to which the substantive application relates                                                                                                                           | N/A                                                                                                              |
| 53(2)(e) | any applicant group under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 that is identified in the report prepared under section 18 or 49 and seeks recognition of customary marine title or protected customary rights within the area to which the substantive application relates                                        | N/A                                                                                                              |
| 53(2)(f) | ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou if the area to which the substantive application relates is within or adjacent to, or the activities to which it relates would directly affect, ngā rohe moana o ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou                                                                                                                    | N/A                                                                                                              |
| 53(2)(g) | the tangata whenua of any area within the area to which the substantive application relates that is a taiāpure-local fishery, a mātaītai reserve, or an area that is subject to bylaws or regulations made under Part 9 of                                                                                                        | N/A                                                                                                              |

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|          | the Fisheries Act 1996                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 53(2)(h) | owners of the land to which the substantive application relates                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | See Map 1 for land to which the substantive application relates.<br>List of all owners set out in Appendix 3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 53(2)(i) | occupiers of the land to which the substantive application relates unless, after reasonable inquiry, an occupier cannot be identified                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | See Map 1 for land to which the substantive application relates.<br>List of all occupiers set out in Appendix 3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 53(2)(j) | the Minister for the Environment and other relevant portfolio Ministers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister for the Environment</li> <li>• Minister for Economic Growth</li> <li>• Minister for Infrastructure</li> <li>• Minister of Conservation</li> <li>• Minister for Māori Development</li> <li>• Minister of Climate Change</li> <li>• Minister for Resources</li> <li>• Minister for Rural Communities</li> </ul> |
| 53(2)(k) | relevant administering agencies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 53(2)(l) | any requiring authority that has a designation on land to which the substantive application relates or on land adjacent to that land                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 53(2)(m) | <p>if the approvals sought in the substantive application include—</p> <p>(i) an approval described in section 42(4)(a) or (d) (resource consent or designation), the persons and groups listed in clause 13 of Schedule 5:</p> <p>(ii) an approval described in section 42(4)(e) (concession), the persons listed in clause 5 of Schedule 6:</p> <p>(iii) an approval described in section 42(4)(g) (conservation covenant), the persons listed in clause 44 of Schedule 6:</p> <p>(iv) an approval described in section 42(4)(h) (wildlife approval), the persons listed in clause 4 of Schedule 7:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director-General of Conservation</li> <li>• Te Nehenehenui Trust</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|          | <p>(v) an approval described in section 42(4)(k) (marine consent), the persons listed in clause 5 of Schedule 10:</p> <p>(vi) an approval described in section 42(4)(l) or (m) (access arrangement), the persons listed in clause 5 of Schedule 11</p> <p>(vii) an approval described in section 42(4)(n) (mining permit), the person listed in clause 18 of Schedule 11.</p> |     |
| 53(2)(n) | any persons or groups specified by the Minister under section 27(3)(b)(iii).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | N/A |

Appendix 2 – Map of land whose owners and occupiers are invited to comment under section 53(2)(h) and (i)

## Oparure Quarry South-Western Pit Map



**Appendix 3 – List of land parcels whose owners and occupiers are invited to comment under section 53(2)(h) and (i)**

| <b>Owners of the adjacent land (orange and purple)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <p>Land that has a common boundary with the land to which the substantive application relates and is considered adjacent (shown orange):</p> <p>482 Boddie Road<br/> Pakeho A 18 Block<br/> 188 Waipapa Road<br/> Pakeho A 19B Block<br/> 966 Oparure Road<br/> 973 Troopers Road<br/> 1026 Oparure Road<br/> Section 6 Block I Otanake SD<br/> Lot 1 DPS 26796</p> <p>Land that does not have a common boundary but is close enough to form part of the context of the application site and could be considered adjacent (shown purple):</p> <p>1027 Oparure Road<br/> 859 Oparure Road<br/> 873 Oparure Road</p> |
| <b>Occupiers of the adjacent land (orange and purple)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>966 Oparure Road<br/> 1026 Oparure Road</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |