MINUTE 3 OF THE PANEL CONVENER

Convener's Conference

FTAA-2608-1288

27 October 2026

[1] Oceana Gold (New Zealand) Limited seeks authorisation for the staged expansion of the existing open pit and underground gold mining operations in the East Otago area, to enable production of approximately 130,000 ounces of gold per annum.

[2] A conference will be held on **Monday 9 November 2026 at 10 am**. An invitation to join the conference via Microsoft Teams will be sent shortly.

[3] The purpose of this conference is to gather participant views on matters arising in relation to the application filed under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. Your views will inform two decisions that I must make as panel convener regarding:

(a) the appointment of panel members;[1]

(b) the timing of the panel decision.[2]

Timeframe for a decision

[4] The Panel Convener decides the appropriate timeframe for release of the decision on the application. The Convener does so having had regard to the scale,

[1] FTAA, schedule 3
[2] FTAA, section 79

nature, and complexity of the approvals sought (among other matters).[3] Complexity is in part a function of the issues that arise on this application.

[5] If the timeframe for a decision is not appropriate, this risks -

(a) insufficient time being allowed, impacting the quality of the decision-making;
(b) not adequately engaging with the wider requirements of public law leaving the decision susceptible to appeal or review; or
(c) an overallocation of time which would not satisfy the procedural principles in section 10 of the Act.

Is a timeframe greater than 90 working days appropriate?

[6] My preliminary view is that the panel will require more than 90 working days to issue its decision. I seek participants' views on the appropriate timeframe and the reasons supporting it.

[7] The timeframe must be determined under section 79 of the Act. In this case, the complexity of the decision-making process will be particularly relevant. The applicant may not agree to a timeframe exceeding 90 working days. If agreement is not reached, prospective panel members will need to consider whether they can undertake the required work within 90 working days before accepting appointment.

[8] I ask each participant to consider the process that the panel might follow to arrive at its final decision. Although the panel will determine its own procedure, an assessment of the likely decision-making process is necessary to inform the timeframe decision. Participants are therefore asked to identify those steps and estimate the time each may require.

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[3] FTAA, s 79.

Scale, nature and complexity of approvals sought

[9] Three matters arise:

(a) the potential steps in the panel's decision-making process;
(b) the existing and proposed consent framework for the Macraes Operation; and
(c) the certification of 11 management plans.

[10] I ask participants to comment on the process the panel might follow when deciding this application, having regard to the following matters:

(a) the application seeks to extend four existing open pit mines and one underground mine;
(b) the mines are in three geographically separate areas: Central Mining Area, Coronation Mining Area and Golden Bar Mining Area; and
(c) other active, closing or closed pits at the Macraes Operation may affect, or be affected by, the activities for which approval is sought.

Potential steps in the panel's decision-making process

[11] Participants are asked to address the following questions:

(a) does the project comprise essentially three separate projects brought together in a single application?
(b) is there a logical sequence to deciding for assessing and deciding the mine extensions? For example, should the panel first consider the approvals sought for the Central Mining Area (Innes Mine and the underground mine), then followed by those for the Coronation Mining Area and Golden Bar Mining Area?
(c) should the environmental effects of each individual mine or each

Mining Area be assessed separately, before assessing the cumulative effects of the combined activities for which approvals are sought?

(d) what alternative approaches to assessing the environmental effects would assist the panel, and what implications would those approaches have for the timeframe?

Existing and proposed consent framework

[12] The complexity of the existing and proposed consents framework is relevant to the timeframe decision. Many existing consents will coexist with the new 'MP4' land use consent, and some will overlap with it. The partial or full surrender of other consents is contemplated, as are future variations to existing consents where required to align them with the MP4 land use consent.

[13] Participants are asked to identify the steps the panel may need to take to assess the relationship between the existing and proposed consents, including any proposed surrender, variation or mechanism for resolving inconsistent conditions, and the implications for the decision timeframe.

Management plans

[14] The applicant proposes that 11 of the 28 draft management plans be certified by the panel. To inform the decision timeframe and identify any need for special advisers, the local authorities and administering agencies are to outline their usual processes for certifying management plans. Assume that I am not familiar with your processes. With reference to the 11 management plans in question, please address:

(a) the usual certification process, including any direct engagement with the applicant and coordination between local authorities or administering agencies;

(b) the subject-matter expertise required to review the plans;

(c) whether, and if so why, the proposed consent conditions need to be

finalised before the management plans are reviewed;

(d) the time required to complete the process; and

(e) any other matter relevant to the certification process.

Production of documents

[15] By the time the panel is appointed, the applicant is to provide the following documents or identify where they can be found in the application:

(a) an indicative work programme for the proposed mining activities; and

(b) the full set of conditions for each resource consent proposed to be changed, together with any documentation that may bear on the interpretation of those conditions.

[16] The applicant should also be prepared to provide, if directed by the panel, the conditions of other existing consents that are not proposed to be changed by the application.

Other matters

[17] In deciding the timeframe for a decision, I will be assisted most by genuine engagement with the matters in issue rather than general or formulaic responses.

[18] At the conference participants are invited to:

(a) identify any information gaps in the application and whether these should be resolved prior to setting up the panel;

(b) comment on the extent of engagement by the applicant both before and following lodgement of the application;

(c) the applicant aside, identify in-house experts and external consultants engaged on this project;

(d) where there is a difference of opinion between the applicant and any other participant, identify:

(i) the principal issues in contention; and

(ii) those issues capable of resolution through conditions of approval.

(e) record processes agreed with the applicant to narrow or reduce any issues relevant to the application and the decision that the panel is required to make;

(f) identify any changes made, or currently underway, to the application since lodgement, whether as a result of engagement with participants or other work undertaken by the applicant, including any new or supplementary reports and draft conditions;

(g) describe the complexity of this application;

(h) state whether the drafting of proposed consent conditions (including any draft management plan filed) is accepted; and

(i) propose efficient processes to enable the panel to understand, resolve or narrow the scope of any likely issues and indicate how these processes may be accounted for under the decision timeframe.

[19] It is anticipated that the local authorities will obtain input from planning and technical advisors to identify the likely issues. However, an assessment of merits is not required at this stage. For information about cost recovery, please refer to the EPA's cost-recovery policy (details below).

Participants at the panel convener's conference

[20] Schedule 1 includes a list of persons[4] invited to attend the conference.

[21] Schedule 2 is a draft timetable which participants are invited to complete having regard to the matters noted in this Minute.

Accessibility and recording of the panel convener's conference

[4] These people are referred to as 'statutory participants' in the Guidance Note.

[22] The conference will be held remotely, with access provided to participants. The conference will be recorded, and a copy of the recording will be made available on the fast-track website.

[23] The application documents can be viewed on the fast-track website here - https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/macraes-phase-four-mp4

Cost recovery

[24] Cost recovery for participation in fast-track processes is determined by the FTAA and the Fast-track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025.

[25] Costs for preparing and attending this conference are described in the policy. For information on costs recovery, the link to the policy is found here.

Directions

[26] I direct:

(a) The participants are to file a written response to the matters set out in this Minute, including Schedules 1 and 2 (attached).

(b) Written responses and confirmation of attendance are to be filed by **Wednesday 4 November 2026**.



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

Schedule 1: Persons invited to attend the conference

The following relevant iwi authorities and relevant Treaty settlement entities[5] invited to attend the conference:

- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- Te Rūnanga o Moeraki
- Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki
- Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou
- Te Rūnanga o Waihao

Copy to: Other Māori groups with relevant interests[6]

- Aukaha

The following persons are invited to attend the conference:

- The authorised person or applicant – Oceana Gold (New Zealand) Limited
- Relevant administering agency – Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga
- Relevant local authorities – Dunedin City Council, Waitaki District Council and Otago Regional Council

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[5] FTAA, ss 18(2)(a). Section 7 states, relevantly, all persons performing and exercising functions, powers, and duties under this Act must act in a manner that is consistent with—
the obligations arising under existing Treaty settlements. The panel must invite iwi authorities and the Treaty settlement entities and adjacent landowners and occupiers to comment on the application. The panel may also invite other Māori groups with a relevant interest to comment.

[6] FTAA, s 18(2)(k)

Schedule 2: Participants' estimated timeframe[7, 8]

Task	Working days	Date
Panel commencement	N/A	2 December 2026 (nominal)
Invite comment from relevant parties	10 W/D later	16 December 2026
Comments close (ss 53 & 54)	20 W/D later	3 February 2027
Comments close for applicants (s 55)	5 W/D later	11 February 2027
Any other procedural steps, evaluation and decision writing	XXX W/D (say)	
Draft decision is to approve		
Draft decision and conditions to Ministers (s 72)	XXX W/D (say)	

[7] Note 1: a draft decision to decline is not included in this timeframe. If the statutory timeframe it is insufficient for applicant to respond, the applicant will need to apply to suspend the application under s 64 FTAA. Consideration should also be given to the timing of ss 70 and 72 steps.

[8] Note 2: the order of ss 69, 70 and 72 steps may differ case-by-case. On a decision to approve, sequencing s 72 before s 70 is simplest, albeit requiring more time than running ss 72 and 70 steps in parallel.

Response from Ministers. (s 72)	10 W/D later	
Applicant response to Ministers comments (if any)	XXX W/D later	
Draft conditions and decision to participants (s 70(1))	XXX W/D (say)	
Participant comments on draft conditions (s70(2))	XXX W/D later	
Applicant response to participants on conditions (s 70(4))	5 W/D later	
If not agreed, procedural step in relation to draft conditions.	XXX W/D (say)	
Evaluate and finalise decision	W/D later (say)	
Decision release	W/D later (say)	