

Before the Expert Panel

Under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTAA**)

And

In the matter of an application for approvals by Taharoa Ironsands Limited to continue existing mineral sand extraction, including land preparation works, constructing a water supply reservoir, extracting ironsand material, processing extracted material, and transporting raw and processed material on 911 hectares at Taharoa Road, Taharoa, approximately 8 kilometres south of Kawhia and 45 kilometres northwest of Te Kūiti (**Central and Southern Block Mining Project**)

Memorandum of counsel on behalf of Taharoa Ironsands Limited
to the Expert Panel

Dated 22 May 2026

MinterEllisonRuddWatts.

PO Box 105 249 Auckland City 1143

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Solicitor acting: Tom Atkins [REDACTED]

Partner responsible: Stephanie de Groot [REDACTED]

MAY IT PLEASE THE PANEL

1. As you know, we act for Taharoa Ironsands Limited (**TIL**) in respect of the Central and Southern Block Mining Project at the Taharoa Ironsands Mine (**Application**).
2. Comments on the Application under section 53 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTAA**) were due at 11:59 pm on Wednesday 20 May 2026. TIL received notification from the Environmental Protection Authority of the comments filed on the Application at 12:00 pm on Thursday 21 May 2026.
3. TIL respectfully requests that the Panel exercise its discretion to suspend the processing of the Application in accordance with section 64 of the FTAA for a period of 17 working days.
4. TIL seeks that the suspension take effect from Wednesday 27 May 2026, with processing resuming on Monday 22 June 2026 (with TIL's response due by the end of that day).
5. The purpose of this request is because TIL requires more time than the statutory five working day period to prepare a robust and complete response to comments – and in a way that will best aid the Panel with its consideration of the application. In particular, more time is required because:
 - (a) some of the comments are lengthy and span across multiple topics / disciplines requiring a broad response;
 - (b) TIL is preparing a master table collating all comments by topic and preparing a response to each topic – this will include expert assessments where appropriate, TIL will also prepare technical assessments. This approach is time consuming but is valuable – it is intended to ensure that TIL produces a robust and complete response to comments and assists the Panel with its review of the comments and responses;
 - (c) as noted, some of TIL's experts will need to prepare further assessments on various technical matters which will take longer than the standard five-working-day period to complete – one of TIL's experts has indicated that it will take them the full time period sought to complete their assessment;

- (d) during the standard five-working-day period some of TIL's core consenting team members and technical experts have unavoidable commitments, including:
 - (i) TIL's legal advisers, and its principal planner, Mr Grant Eccles, who is involved in a week-long mediation set down by the Environment Court in relation to the Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan appeals;
 - (ii) TIL has scheduled a meeting with WRC to discuss conditions of consent; and
 - (iii) some periods of leave / absence.
- 6. TIL has no objection to the Panel and its advisers, or the EPA, continuing work on the Application during the suspension period.
- 7. However, TIL requests that the Panel do not issue any RFIs during that period. TIL considers that this would complicate the comment / response process, and some of TIL's responses to comments may address some proposed RFIs.
- 8. In respect of procedural steps, TIL requests that the Panel defer the following events to a period equivalent to the suspension sought, after processing of the Application resumes:
 - (a) The proposed hui facilitated by Mr Julian Williams (originally proposed to be held in the first week of June – Tuesday 2 June to Friday 5 June 2026);¹
 - (b) The Panel Facilitated Conference (originally proposed to be held on Wednesday 17 and Thursday 18 June);² and
 - (c) Any expert conferencing.
- 9. If the Panel grants the suspension sought by TIL, the following timeframes will apply:

¹ Minute 7 of the Expert Panel dated 6 May 2026 at paragraph [3].

² Minute 8 of the Expert Panel dated 7 May 2026 at paragraph [4].

- (i) TIL's response to invited comments would be due on Monday 22 June 2026; and
- (ii) the Panel's decision on the Application would be due on Friday 11 September 2026.

DATED this 22nd day of May 2026



Stephanie de Groot / Tom Atkins
Counsel for Taharoa Ironsands Limited