

# Official Information Act Request

## Requester's details

**Date:** 30 May 2025

**Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Reference number:** ENQ-49407-K8Y0W9

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

I refer to your request received on 26 May 2025:

- The timeline of the Taranaki VTM Project's expert panel being appointed
- Whether the Taranaki VTM expert panel has been appointed
- Who on the panel for Taranaki VTM has been appointed
- Please provide us the decision matrix as to how it was decided that these persons would be on the panel
- Please tell us how the decision matrix was able to ensure there was no bias within the panel, or risk of an appearance of bias
- Please tell us how the decision matrix ensured representation and diversity including with respect to tangata whenua representation
- Is the convener of the panel also the chair?
- Who is the chair of the Taranaki VTM expert panel
- Are there any restrictions on the form of our comments?
- If we, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust are named as a relevant Iwi authority
- Is there any other information within the EPA that you have not yet informed us of?
- What are the reasons the EPA did not proactively inform us of the information above?

We request to be proactively informed of any and all information related to this application moving forward, can you confirm as soon as possible that this indeed will be your practice - in addition at a minimum we expect the same information provided to the applicant regarding this process can you please send to us as soon as possible any information that the applicant has received that we have not received and can you confirm moving forward that we will receive the same information that the applicant receives.

The information you have requested follows.

The Fast-track process operates across two agencies: the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). Each agency is responsible for specific aspects of the process based on their respective roles. The MfE assesses referral applications and provides advice to the Minister for Infrastructure to inform his decisions on referral applications. The EPA's Fast-track team provides administrative support for the substantive application process, including

procedural advice and secretariat support to the panel convener and expert panels who make a decision on substantive applications. More information is here: [Process overview | Fast-track website](#).

The EPA's Fast-track team received a substantive application for the Taranaki VTM project on 23 April 2025 and deemed it to be complete on 15 May 2025.

On 29 May 2025 the EPA decided that the Taranaki VTM Project has no competing applications.

To date, the expert panel has not been set up for this project to assess the substantive application. Information requested in relation to the expert panel is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act (OIA) as the information does not exist.

If the expert panel invites Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust to comment there will be no restriction on the comments able to be provided. The EPA has not yet requested a section 18 report from the MfE which will outline who it determines to be the relevant iwi authorities. This report will be requested when the EPA provides the substantive application to the panel convener and will provide guidance and support to the panel convener and expert panel.

Regarding your request to be proactively informed of all information relating to this application, the EPA will notify relevant parties of decisions made in line with our legislative requirements and will publish all notices or documents required to be received or sent under the Fast-track Approvals Act on our website.

The Fast-track web page for this project, [Taranaki VTM | Fast-track website](#), will indicate when the expert panel is considering the application. All relevant information is uploaded to the Fast-track website as soon as practicable. We would encourage you to check for updates as the project progresses.

The initial listing application is on the MfE website and is publicly available here: [Taranaki VTM project | Ministry for the Environment](#).

I hope this information is helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision under section 28(3) of the OIA. You can contact the Ombudsman on 0800 802 602, or by email at [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz)

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via [oia@fasttrack.govt.nz](mailto:oia@fasttrack.govt.nz)

We may publish your request and our response on our website, [www.fasttrack.govt.nz](http://www.fasttrack.govt.nz) We make OIA responses available so others can read more about the work we do and the questions we are asked. Any information that might identify you will be removed to protect your privacy.

Nāku noa nā



Michelle Ward  
**General Manager, Climate, Land and Oceans**