MINUTE 5 OF THE PANEL CONVENER

Advising of the Expert Panel Appointments and Decision Timeframe

[FTAA-2607-1264]

19 October 2026

[1] Simplicity Living Ltd seeks approvals for the staged subdivision and development of land to provide approximately 1,100 residential units.[1] These units would be accommodated in 40 apartment buildings, of which 33 would be three storeys and the remaining seven between five and eight storeys.

[2] A conference was held on Thursday 15 October 2026. I am grateful for the detailed memoranda filed in advance of the conference. A list of persons who attended the conference is attached to this minute (Schedule 1).

Engagement

[3] The District Council supports the development. The development could make an important contribution to the supply of rental accommodation in Queenstown. Urban intensification is enabled by the District Plan.

[4] The applicant advised that, following the Minister's referral decision, the District Council had declined its requests to engage. The District Council disputes this. I do not need to resolve these differing accounts for the purposes of this

[1] In addition, the approvals sought would enable the development of two car parking buildings, four resident community buildings and a communal space, parks and reserves, a commercial / retail lot for a local shopping centre.

minute. Respectful, constructive engagement between the applicant and the District Council will assist in clarifying their respective positions and identifying matters that can be agreed.

Queenstown Lakes District Council

Principal issues in contention

[5] The site is located in a special purpose zone that was introduced into the District Plan through the Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile Plan Variation. The Variation was determined in 2024 under the Streamlined Planning Process directed by the Minister for the Environment.

[6] The District Council affirms its commitment to the special purpose zone but seeks to understand the impact on Ladies Mile and Queenstown of the applicant's proposed departures from zone standards. The standards include those applying to the staging of development which is:

(a) to occur after the completion of transport infrastructure works shown on the Structure Plan[2];
(b) to integrate with transport infrastructure;[3] and
(c) to be in accordance with the Structure Plan.[4]

These matters are addressed in the application and will be for the panel to assess. However, the District Council maintains that an Integrated Transport Assessment should include an assessment of wider transport network impacts and performance in relation to additional demand on State Highway 6, in particular the Frankton Road/State Highway 6 intersection.[5] The District Council intends to ask the panel that the applicant update the assessment attached to the application.

---

[2] Application, Appendix Z, Land Use QLPDP Rule 15.4.18
[3] Application, Appendix Z, Land Use QLPDP Rule 49.5.39
[4] Application, Appendix Z, Land Use QLPDP Rule 49.5.21
[5] QLDC letter to EPA dated 17 August 2026.

Simplicity Living Ltd is not the only developer on Ladies Mile. The District Council has appointed an infrastructure negotiator to secure developer agreements with Simplicity Living Ltd and other property owners. The applicant anticipates entering into a developer agreement by the end of the year. However, in the absence of an agreement, the panel may need to determine the scope, staging and timing of three waters services.[6]

Other issues

The District Council's key issues identified to date are summarised below. Appendix A to its memorandum is attached to this minute.[7] The key issues are:

(d) ensuring that the development delivers a well-functioning urban environment (including good urban design outcomes) that provides public connections with other development on Ladies Mile, Shotover Country and Lake Hayes Estate;

(e) that any areas of misalignment with the Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile Structure Plan (found in the PDP) and the Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile Zone are appropriately addressed or managed, including to ensure a well-functioning publicly accessible and connected urban environment;

(f) ensuring appropriate location / amount / type of open space given the breaches of height standards resulting in increased density;

(g) ensuring appropriate and timely delivery of necessary transport works/upgrades, and that the collector road running along the northern side of the Ladies Mile Plan change area is of appropriate size and accommodates the appropriate vehicle, cycling and walking facilities to support high density development; and

(h) ensuring the provision of 3 waters infrastructure to Council requirements (noting that while discussions are in progress no agreement has yet been reached or Developer Agreement signed).

---

[6] QLDC memorandum dated 9 October 2026 at Appendix A.

[7] QLDC advises its assessment of the application is not complete and further issues may arise.

Department of Conservation

[7] If the applicant provides the results of its lizard survey and a lizard management plan by 5 November 2026, the Department will be able to file a complete report in accordance with s 51(4).

[8] Subject to the survey confirming the presence of expected lizard species on the site, the Department advises that both the wildlife and concessions approvals are straightforward and involve a low level of complexity.

Otago Regional Council

[9] The Regional Council and the applicant are likely to agree on the proposed conditions of consent. Following the conference, the Regional Council intends to provide the applicant a copy of its expert's audit. There is sufficient time before the Regional Council files its comments under s 53 to resolve outstanding information gaps and seek agreement on the wording of conditions.

Kā Rūnaka

[10] Representatives of the iwi authorities, Treaty settlement entities and other Māori groups were invited to the conference but did not attend.

Christmas and summer holidays

[11] No constraints on the availability of staff, counsel or consultants over the Christmas and summer holiday period were identified, other than those advised by Otago Regional Council. Given the Regional Council's position on the regional consent applications, those constraints do not warrant additional time in the decision timeframe.

Timeframe for a decision

[12] The applicant and District Council proposed a timeframe of 50 working days and 65 working days (respectively) for issuing a decision. I consider these timeframes insufficient for the following reasons:

(a) the panel will need to assess each stage of the development and the development as a whole;
(b) although the underlying zoning enables urban intensification, the status of the application is non-complying overall;
(c) the District Council anticipates that expert conferencing will be required in relation to urban design and road network design. Expert conferencing on three waters infrastructure will be required unless those matters are resolved earlier through a developer agreement. A workshop on conditions is also anticipated;
(d) the District Council may ask the panel to request an updated Integrated Transport Assessment;
(e) the effect on the transport network is a principal issue in contention. As advised by the applicant, NZTA has not yet expressed a view on the application;
(f) the panel will need to consider the reports expected from internal and external experts, together with participants' comments[8];
(g) amendments to the project's design and conditions may be required to address the issues raised by the District Council; and
(h) the panel will need to consider the interface between this project and the development proposed by the Clark Group.

Section 79(2)

[13] Comparisons with the timeframes for other fast-track projects are of

[8] I understand 72 adjacent owners and occupiers are listed in the application who must be invited to comment.

limited assistance in determining an appropriate timeframe for this application under s 79(2). The timeframe must reflect the scale, nature and complexity of this application. I am not aware of any other fast-track application to build 40 apartment buildings on 10 hectares of land. Context is everything: this fast-track application is to develop land located on Ladies Mile, Queenstown which is experiencing pressure on its transport network.

[14] Having considered the matters in s 79(2), including the issues raised at this conference, I set a timeframe of 80 working days for the panel's decision. If Simplicity Living Ltd and the District Council enter into a developer agreement, that may reduce the range or complexity of the issues to be decided by the panel. If it has not already started, engagement on matters beyond three-water infrastructure is strongly encouraged, as it will facilitate efficient processing of the application. It goes without saying that a panel can issue its decision early if it completes its determination before the release date for the decision.

[15] The panel will be appointed on 12 November 2026. For the purposes of s 53 of the Act, the panel will commence its consideration of the application on 19 November 2026. The panel will invite comments from participants by 3 December 2026; comments will be due by 21 January 2027. The applicant's response will be due 28 January 2027. The decision on the application will be due on 19 May 2027, subject to any suspension of processing under s 60 of the Act.

The panel

[16] The following persons will be appointed to the panel:

(a) Dr Clair Kirman (Chair);
(b) Dr Lee Beattie; and
(c) Andrew Murray.

[17] All panel members have the knowledge, skills, and expertise relevant to the approvals sought in the substantive application. I am satisfied that, collectively, the Expert Panel will hold appropriate understanding and experience in relation to te ao Māori and Māori development. I have also satisfied myself as to their availability and capacity, and that no conflicts of interest are disclosed.



Jane Borthwick

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

Schedule 1: List of attendees at the Panel Convener Conference on 15 October 2026

Applicant	**Lydia McLeay**
	Mitchell Holyoake
	Daniel Minhinnick
Otago Regional Council (ORC)	**Dwayne Daly**
Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC)	**Kierra Parker**
	Fiona Blight
	Marcus Langman
	Onur Oktem
Department of Conservation (DOC)	**Jen Vella**
	Emily Bayliss