
MINUTE 2 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Comments and reports received, appointment of technical advisors, request for further information, proposed expert witness conferencing
Takitimu North Link – Stage 2
[FTAA-2507-1085]

15 December 2025

[1] This minute records that the Panel has received comments on the application from invited parties, the appointment of four technical advisors, issued a section 67 request for further information from the applicant, and outlined the proposed approach to expert witness conferencing.

Comments received under section 53

[2] The Panel has received a total of 22 comments from invited parties by the deadline of 9 December 2025. These comments are available on the Fast-track website: <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/takitimu-north-link-stage-2/comments-from-invited-parties>

[3] The applicant has been invited to provide its response to those comments by **16 December 2025**.

[4] Ngā Pōtiki ā Tamapahore Trust (PSGE) was inadvertently omitted from the initial invitation list due to an oversight in the section 18 report. The Panel has since extended an invitation to the Trust to provide comments on the application.

The Trust has been given 20 working days to respond (until 30 December 2025)¹. The applicant will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to respond to any comments received from the Trust before expert conferencing scheduled for mid-January.

Reports received under section 51

[5] The Panel has received reports under section 51 from:

- The Director-General of Conservation regarding both the wildlife approval and the complex freshwater fisheries activity approval, as specified in clauses 3 and 4 of Schedules 7 and 9 respectively; and
- Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and the Māori Heritage Council concerning the archaeological authority, as specified in clause 3 of Schedule 8.

[6] Those reports are available on the Fast-track website here:

<https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/takitimu-north-link-stage-2/reports-and-advice>

Request for further information under section 67

[7] The Panel has requested additional information from the applicant under section 67 regarding road safety implications at the northern termination of the Takitimu North Link – Stage 2 project.

¹ The RMA definition of “working day”, which excludes the “Christmas shutdown” period commencing on 20 December and ending with 10 January, has not been applied in this case. Rather, a period of 20 working days which does not exclude the Christmas shutdown period has been applied, to strike a balance being ensuring procedural fairness and achieving the procedural principle in the FTAA to use timely and efficient processes.

[8] The information is requested to be provided by 16 January 2026.

[9] The request and response when submitted will be available on the Fast-track website here: <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/takitimu-north-link-stage-2/reports-and-advice>

Appointment of Technical Advisors

[10] To assist with the assessment of technical matters, the Panel has resolved to appoint the following technical advisors:

- Graham Ussher (RMA Ecology)
- Phil Harrison (Flow – Transport)
- Mark Pennington (Tonkin & Taylor – Stormwater and Flooding).

[11] The technical advisors will attend a site visit scheduled for Monday 15 December.

[12] The advisors will provide independent advice to the Panel on matters within their areas of expertise.

Proposed Expert Witness Conferencing

[13] At this stage, based on the comments received, the Panel proposes that expert witness conferencing be undertaken for the following topics:

- Ecology;
- Planner conditions workshop.

[14] The Panel signals the potential for additional conferencing (either informal or

facilitated) to be directed following receipt of and dependent on the Applicant's comments due on 16 December. Areas which may benefit from further discussions or conferencing of experts or relevant parties include landscape, noise and cultural / tikanga matters.

[15] The Panel has appointed Marlene Oliver as an independent facilitator of the expert conferencing. The Panel will not itself attend. At this stage the Panel anticipates that facilitation of the ecologists' conference would be useful, and potentially the condition workshop.

[16] The conferencing will be scheduled during the weeks of 12 and 19 January, prior to a draft decision and conditions being released for comment, to clarify areas of agreement and disagreement among experts. The Panel's preference is for in person conferencing in Tauranga. The Panel anticipates that the experts engaged by the applicant, local authorities, and the Panel's own technical advisers would participate in conferencing. However, any expert engaged by a party who has provided comments on the application would also be invited to participate.

Next Steps

[17] The Panel will issue directions regarding the timing and process for expert conferencing together with draft agendas for the relevant parties' comments following receipt of the applicant's response to comments due on 16 December.



Mary Hill
Takitimu North Link – Stage 2 Expert Panel Chair