
MINUTE 14 OF THE EXPERT PANEL
Hearings - updated timeframes and conditions

Southern Link Inland Port FTAA-2604-1207
16 September 2026

[1] The Panel conducted hearings with expert witnesses on Transport and Noise issues on 14 September 2026 and Freshwater issues on 15 September 2026. The Panel will issue a separate Minute on matters arising from the hearings along with a link to the transcript when it is available.

[2] At the conclusion of the Freshwater Hearing Ms Scott, counsel for the applicant, asked the Panel to consider extending the timeline for the filing of a consolidated set of resource consent conditions (the conditions) and the Conditions Hearing by a few days. We had directed that an updated set of conditions be filed by 5pm on 18 September 2026, with the Conditions Hearing to take place on 22 September 2026.¹

[3] The Panel agrees that given the progress made to resolving a number of issues that it would be appropriate to extend the timeframes to allow for further updates to conditions following the hearings in order to facilitate a more focused hearing (if it is still required).

[4] The Panel requests that the applicant respond to the issue that we raised with Ms Scott during the Transportation Hearing regarding a possible condition (or other methods) to provide surety of the benefits of the road to rail modal shift, including the timing of the construction of the rail siding as part of the Conditions

¹ [Notice of Hearing link](#)

Hearing. If the applicant does not consider that a condition or other method is available to the Panel under the FTAA, the applicant can provide further legal submissions as part of a right of reply to the Transportation Hearing. Directions regarding the right of reply are set out below.

Amendments to the timetable for the Conditions Hearing

[5] The applicant is to file an updated set of resource consent conditions, incorporating all matters agreed as between the applicant and commenting parties **by 5pm on Monday 21 September 2026.**

[6] If the commenting parties that have been engaged in discussions with the applicant have not yet reached agreement on a resource consent condition affecting their interests, and are proposing alternative condition(s) or wording, then they are directed to provide the alternative condition(s) or wording to the EPA at the same time as the applicant's updated set (**by 5pm on Monday 21 September 2026**).

[7] For the avoidance of doubt the expectation is that commenting parties continue to engage with the applicant on conditions to contribute constructively to the updated set, and if no agreement is reached then an alternative must be provided as directed above.

[8] If, having considered the updated set of conditions and any alternative wording, the Panel considers that a hearing is still required on conditions the hearing will now take place **on Thursday 24 September 2026, at 2pm online.** Invited participants are to advise the EPA of their attendance and names of representatives and planners attending by 5pm Monday 21 September 2026. A link will then be sent to respondents.

Format of the Conditions Hearing

[9] The Hearing will be conducted as a 'workshop' to assist the Panel to

understand the conditions and/or consider improvements to drafting to assist with our decision making under s81 of the Act. The Panel has not made a decision on the merits of the application at this stage.

[10] We do not require evidence from technical experts or lay witnesses on the effects of the proposal. It is not an adversarial hearing.

The invited participants are as follows:

- a) Applicant representative and planning expert.
- b) DCC representative and planning expert.
- c) ORC representative and planning expert.
- d) Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou representatives.
- e) Fish and Game Otago representatives.
- f) NZTA representative and planning expert.
- g) Mr and Mrs Inch representative.
- h) Mr and Mrs Stewart and White Robe Lodge representatives.

Directions regarding applicant's reply

[11] The applicant may file a written reply in relation to the Transportation, Noise and Freshwater Hearings **by 5pm on Friday 25 September 2026.**

[12] In the event that there are any matters arising from the Conditions Hearing that require a response from the applicant, we will discuss this at the end of the Conditions Hearing.



Cindy Robinson

Expert Panel Chair