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**MINUTE 5 OF THE EXPERT PANEL**  
**Additional Material, Appointment of Advisors, Provisional Timetable**  
**Indications for Period to 31 May 2026**  
**Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project**  
**[FTAA-2507-1089]**  
**30 March 2026**

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[1] This Minute records the Panel's decisions and actions regarding additional applicant information, and the appointment of a decision writer and of conference facilitators. It also provides provisional indications of the Panel's proposed timetable for the period ending 31 May 2026.

**Additional Information Provided by Applicant**

[2] As mentioned in Minute 3 of the Panel (dated 11 March 2026), on 10 March the applicant provided additional information to the Panel, comprising 37 documents. In part, the additional material updates the application to reflect ongoing discussions with interested parties, with the applicant's stated intention being that those invited to comment under s 53 of the Act can do so with reference to the most up to date information. It also includes some technical information not previously provided. This additional application material is available on the Fast-track website here:

<https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/bendigoo-phir-gold-project/substantive-application>

[3] Under Schedule 3, clause 10 of the Act, the Panel may regulate its own procedure as it considers appropriate, without procedural formality, and in a

manner which best promotes the just and timely determination of the approvals sought in the application.

[4] The Panel considers that the additional information will assist in determination of the application and that it is appropriate to accept it. Its decision is informed by the fact that the material was received in advance of the request for comments under s53. The Panel notes that specific reference to the additional material was made in the request.

### **Appointment of Decision Writer**

[5] In accordance with its powers under schedule 3 Clause 10 of the Act, the Panel has determined that it would benefit from the support of a professional decision writer. Such support is considered necessary because of the complexity and volume of material associated with the application and is designed to ensure an appropriate framework for the decision, continuity of style and consistent presentation of technical information.

[6] The panel has appointed experienced decision writer Carolyn Wratt to provide decision-writing services. It notes that Ms Wratt has recent experience in respect of a similarly complex fast-track application. Her appointment is effective 26 March 2026.

[7] The Panel notes that the appointment of a decision writer does not in any way relieve it of its responsibilities as decision maker. The decision writer acts in a supporting, technical capacity only. All substantive decisions remain the sole responsibility of the Panel.

### **Appointment of ChanceryGreen as Conference Facilitators**

[8] The Panel anticipates that it will direct that multiple expert conferences be convened, with the usual objective of the production of joint witness statements identifying common ground where possible and, where not, narrowing and

identifying areas of difference, and reasons for those differences. the Panel will make final decisions in terms of number and timing after review of comments and responses received under s 53 and 55 of the Act. The Panel also signals that any directed conferences may be further followed by sequential “hot tub” style hearings where the Panel can explore areas of difference between experts and ask other questions of the experts involved, as relevant.

[9] The Panel consider that it would be assisted in this process by the appointment of specialist environment law and strategy lawyers ChanceryGreen who have extensive experience in facilitating and managing expert conferencing, in development of associated agendas and in recording outcomes. It shall appoint ChanceryGreen accordingly with an identified start date of 13 April 2026.

#### **First round Requests for Information (RFIs)**

[10] The Panel has previously foreshadowed an imminent first round of RFIs (Minute 4 of the Panel). One RFI was issued on 19 March 2026 relating to appendixes of the Mine Waste Report, the response can be viewed on the Fast-track website (linked below). Further RFI's will be issued to the applicant this week with the due date for responses coinciding with the applicant's response to s 53 comments received. The RFIs, and, in due course responses, will be publicly available on the Fast-track website here:

<https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/bendigoophir-gold-project/reports-and-advice>

#### **Provisional Timetable to 31/5/26.**

[11] In identifying the provisional timetable below the Panel emphasises that s 53 comments are not yet due and that, pending their receipt and any applicant response, it intends to retain maximum flexibility

- (a) to size its processes appropriately, having regard to the areas of dispute and
- (b) in respect of timing of any of the steps it provisionally contemplates.

[12] With that caveat however, the following steps and likely timeframes are identified:

Anticipated steps	Provisional timeframes
Receipt of s 51 reports	25 March 2026
First round RFIs to the applicant	1 April 2026
Receipt of s 53 comments	10 April 2026
Applicants' response to comments and RFI	17 April 2026
Development of conference agendas	20-24 April 2026
Proposed Hearing (Central Otago) oral submissions in support of comments/ response	28-30 April 2026
Proposed Expert conferencing	4-22 May 2026

Proposed "Hot tubbing" of experts	25-29 May 2026
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M.A. Muir". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Hon Matthew Muir KC

Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project Expert Panel Chair