
MINUTE 3 OF THE PANEL CONVENER
Appointment and timing of panel

State Highway 1 Wellington Improvements [FTAA-2607-1272]

13 November 2026

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[1] On 12 November 2026 I held a convener conference in respect of this application. The conference was attended by the Applicant and its legal and planning team, and representatives from Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Wellington City Council, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, Te Rūnanaga o Toa Rangatira and Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust (collectively referred to as the **mana whenua partners**).

[2] The purpose of this minute is to:

(a) Summarise the views expressed by conference participants on the matters of panel composition and the timeframe required for the expert panel to deliver its decision; and
(b) Confirm my decisions on those two matters.

[3] In advance of the conference, I received written memoranda from the Applicant, Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Wellington City Council and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

[4] At the conference I indicated who the proposed Expert Panel members were and the participants noted this information. The conference largely focussed on two timing issues:

(a) the commencement date of the Expert Panel and the associated date for the invite for comments;

(b) the decision timing date.

[5] All the participants agreed that the commencement date for the Expert Panel and the associated date for the invite for comments should be 7 December 2026 and 11 January 2027 respectively. I indicated that I would discuss this with the Chair to make sure there are no issues. I can confirm that this has occurred and these dates are confirmed. As discussed at the conference the Expert Panel will be set up on 30 November with the section 53 commencement date being 7 December. DOC and HNZPT informed me that these dates are significantly better for them in terms of the timing of their section 51 reports.

[6] The participants did not agree with the decision date, with the applicant requesting 60 working days from the date that comments close, whereas other participants requested a longer period of at least 90 workings days. I noted that a longer period than 90 working days requires the applicant's agreement.

[7] We had a lengthy discussion which included such matters as: the nature and complexity of the project; the likely number of commenting persons; other similar NZTA projects that have been through the fast-track process; and issues related to the delivery of the project once approvals are granted (if in fact approvals are granted) versus issues that are for the Expert Panel to determine. In summary the views of the participants was:

(a) 60 working days – applicant;
(b) 120-130 working days – Wellington City Council;
(c) 90 working days – Greater Wellington Regional Council;
(d) The mana whenua partners, DOC and NZHPT did not express an actual working day period but they all generally agreed with the Councils' position.

[8] After careful consideration I consider that a 90-working day period is appropriate to ensure that the participants, the commenting persons, and the Expert Panel have sufficient time to undertake all the processing tasks that lie

ahead.

[9] I record my thanks to all conference participants for their attendance and thoughtful participation.

[10] I am appointing the following persons to the Expert Panel to determine the substantive application lodged for the State Highway 1 Wellington Improvements project:

(a) Lachlan Muldowney (chair)
(b) Amanda de Jong
(c) Juliane Chetham
(d) Todd Langwell.

[11] I am satisfied that, collectively, the Expert Panel will hold appropriate expertise and experience in relation to: environmental and resource management law and planning practice; transportation; ecology; te ao Māori; and Māori development.

[12] I consider that the circumstances set out in clause 3(7)(c) and (e) of Schedule 3 apply, warranting the appointment of more than three persons.

[13] The date on which the Expert Panel will commence work is 7 December 2026 which means the invite for comment is due in the new year. As mentioned above this was discussed at length and the participants considered this was a better timeframe than one that had the invite for comment going out prior to the end of year break.

[14] I consider that a timeframe of 90 working days following the receipt of invited comments is appropriate. This means the decision documents will be due on **21 June 2027** subject to processing of the application being suspended for any of the reasons outlined in section 60 of the Act, and to the date specified for inviting comments under section 53 of the Act being 11 January 2027.

[15] In terms of next steps, the participants will be contacted by the Expert Panel after their appointment date.



Helen Atkins

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