

Memorandum to the Expert Panel

Hananui Aquaculture Project

On behalf of the Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body (RTIAB)

1. Introduction

The Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body (RTIAB) respectfully provides this memorandum to assist the Panel in its deliberations on the Hananui Aquaculture Project.

RTIAB acknowledges that formal submission periods have closed. This memorandum does not introduce new evidence. It is provided in response to matters arising from the applicant's response to comments dated 7 May 2026, and to clarify procedural and cultural matters already raised in RTIAB's submission dated 30 April 2026.

This memorandum does not raise new matters but seeks to clarify RTIAB's existing position in light of the applicant's response to comments dated 7 May 2026 and the Environmental Monitoring and Management Plan (EMMP) dated 22 May 2026.

RTIAB respectfully requests that the Panel exercise its discretion to consider this memorandum for that limited purpose.

RTIAB considers the matters outlined below to be directly relevant to the Panel's statutory obligations and to the robustness of the decision-making framework.

2. RTIAB statutory, Treaty and customary role

RTIAB is the entity responsible for the governance and stewardship of the Rakiura Tītī Islands. Those islands were vested in Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, on behalf of whānau with customary rights, as part of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement 1998.

RTIAB represents those whānau who hold and exercise customary rights to harvest tītī in accordance with tikanga. These responsibilities are place-based and intergenerational, and relate directly to the sustainability and ongoing practice of tītī harvesting.

The Rakiura Tītī Islands also have status as reserves under the Reserves Act 1977, and are subject to a specific statutory governance and management framework arising from the Ngāi Tahu settlement, within which RTIAB exercises its functions.

RTIAB's role is therefore distinct from broader mana whenua engagement, in that it relates specifically to the management of tītī and the Rakiura Tītī islands.

Under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024, decision-makers must act consistently with existing Treaty settlements and recognised customary rights

3. Adaptive management and absence of RTIAB role

The proposal relies heavily on adaptive management to address uncertainty in relation to environmental effects, including seabird interactions.

The Environmental Monitoring and Management Plan (EMMP), dated 22 May 2026, establishes a detailed adaptive management framework, including staged responses, monitoring triggers, and management actions such as fallowing, reduction of farming intensity, and relocation of farms.

However, RTIAB has no defined role in:

- seabird management planning
- monitoring design or interpretation
- adaptive management responses

More generally, the EMMP framework provides for decision-making by the consent holder, informed by monitoring results and advice from a suitably qualified and experienced person (SQEP), with certification and oversight by the consent authority.

While mana whenua engagement occurs in other parts of the consent framework, the adaptive management system itself is technical and operator-led, and does not include a role for RTIAB or for mana whenua in decision-making.

Adaptive management is the mechanism through which key decisions affecting tītī will be made over the life of the project. The exclusion of RTIAB from that mechanism is therefore a significant omission.

4. Use of prior (2023) submission under COVID fast-track process

RTIAB notes that the applicant's response to comments dated 7 May 2026 includes, as Attachment H, RTIAB's earlier comments (14 February 2023) and relies on them.

- Those comments were conditional, related to an earlier proposal, and under a different statutory regime
- In particular, support was provided subject to seabird management measures
- The proposal and its evidential context have since evolved

Reliance on the earlier comments without full context creates a real risk of mischaracterising RTIAB's position. In particular, the reliance in the 2023 submission on seabird management measures as a condition of support has not been reflected in the current adaptive management framework established in the EMMP dated 22 May 2026, in which RTIAB has no defined role.

5. Procedural and decision-making implications

RTIAB respectfully submits that the matters identified above are directly relevant to the Panel's consideration of whether the proposal provides an adequate framework to manage effects on a taonga species.

In particular:

- The EMMP dated 22 May 2026 confirms that adaptive management is the primary mechanism through which environmental effects are monitored and responded to over time
- RTIAB has recognised Treaty-based, statutory, and customary responsibilities in relation to tītī
- The current framework provides for mana whenua input on a consultative basis only, with no role in decision-making within the adaptive management system
- RTIAB is not provided for within that framework

In these circumstances, there is a real risk that RTIAB's distinct, place-based role is not fully understood or translated into the conditions that will govern how effects on tītī are managed over time.

RTIAB considers that this issue can be addressed through refinement of the conditions.

6. Suggested condition refinements

RTIAB respectfully requests that the Panel consider whether the following refinements could be made:

1. Inclusion of RTIAB in seabird management planning
2. Participation in monitoring design and implementation
3. Involvement in interpretation of monitoring results and adaptive management responses
4. Provision for ongoing hui, reporting, and engagement processes specific to RTIAB

These refinements would provide a practical mechanism to reflect RTIAB's responsibilities within the adaptive management framework established by the EMMP.

7. Closing

RTIAB thanks the Panel for its consideration of this memorandum.

Noho ora mai,

Dr Jane Kitson, PhD (Zoology) – co-Chair RTIAB

On behalf of the

Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body



Dated: 30 May 2026