

## Expert panel reappointed to consider fast-track application for Stella Passage development

Port of Tauranga (NZX:POT) today advised that the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has appointed an expert panel to consider its new application under the Fast-track Approvals Amendment Act 2025 for the Stella Passage development.

The panel, which will commence work on 16 March 2026, comprises Bronwyn Carruthers KC, Hugh Leersnyder and James Whetu. The panellists are the same as appointed for the Port's original fast-track application, which had to be withdrawn following an error in the fast-track legislation.

Comments on the application will be invited from tangata whenua parties on 30 March, and the panel decision will be due on 7 September 2026.

The Stella Passage development involves extending the Sulphur Point container berth by 385 metres (in two stages) and the Mount Maunganui wharves by 315 metres, by converting existing cargo storage land within the port's current footprint. It also involves associated reclamation of the land behind the new wharves and dredging.

The Environment Court has already established that the environmental impact from the Stella Passage development will, from a Western science perspective, be minor in the short-term and negligible in the long-term. However, Port of Tauranga has been unable to reach agreement with opposing iwi and hapū parties on the appropriate level of mitigation for the cultural impacts of the development.

Further details regarding the application can be found on the EPA's fast-track website: <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/stella-passage-development>.

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