[redacted]

Whare Kaupapa Atawhai | **Conservation House**

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12 August 2026

Ref: OIAD-9361

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (the Department), received on 29 June 2026, in which you stated and asked:

> *"We act for Trans-Tasman Resources Limited (**TTR**) and write to request, under section 12 of the Official Information Act 1982 (**Act**), the official information held by the Department of Conservation (**DOC**) concerning TTR's application for the Taranaki VTM Project lodged under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTAA**) on or about 15 April 2025 (**Application**).*
>
> *In this letter: the **Authority** means the Environmental Protection Authority, and the **Panel** and the **Convenors** mean the expert panel and the panel convenors appointed under the FTAA. If DOC considers that any information within the scope of this request is held by another agency or organisation, we ask that you transfer this request under section 14 of the Act rather than refuse it.*
>
> *The following official information is requested, whether of general application or specific to the Application and whether created before or after the Application was lodged:*
>
> *a) all submissions, technical input, or expert evidence provided by DOC to the Panel, the Convenors or the Authority in relation to the Application;*
>
> *b) all internal DOC policy positions, guidelines, or frameworks concerning:*
>
> *i. offshore seabed extraction or mining applications;*
> *ii. the marine-ecology impacts of minerals extraction;*
>
> *c) all communications between DOC and:*
>
> *i. the Authority;*
> *ii. the Convenors; and*
> *iii. any other government agency,*
>
> *concerning the Application;*
>
> *d) all communications between DOC and:*
>
> *i. environmental non-governmental organisations;*
> *ii. community groups; and*
> *iii. objectors to the Application,*
>
> *concerning the Application or offshore seabed minerals extraction or mining;*
>
> *e) all documents recording any internal assessment by DOC of the Application against the applicable statutory criteria;*
>
> *f) all documents recording any peer review of DOC's advice or evidence on the Application;*
>
> *g) all documents identifying areas of scientific uncertainty or disagreement concerning the Application;*
>
> *h) the instructions to, and engagement terms for, any external peer reviewer or expert engaged by DOC in relation to the Application; and*

i) *a description of the team and roles dealing with the Application, the approximate number of staff involved, and any index or schedule of the records held in relation to it (role titles and counts are sufficient; TTR does not require individuals' names where privacy is engaged)."*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

On 3 July 2026, we contacted you seeking clarification of your request. On 16 July 2026, you confirmed that you were seeking the same information requested in your original request of 29 June 2026 and confirmed that you would accept information between the date range of 15 April 2025 and 29 June 2026 (the date your request was made to the Department). Under section 15(1AA) of the OIA, where a refinement is sought within that period, the time between seeking the refinement and receiving your response is excluded from the statutory timeframe for response to your request. As such, the new date for responding to your request is 13 August 2026.

Regarding **parts A and B** of your request. I can confirm that the Department does not hold the information you have requested. As such, we are refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information you have requested does not exist.

For **part C** of your request, the Department only holds information comprising communications with other government agencies. This includes emails between the Department, the Environmental Protection Authority and the Ministry for the Environment, as well as documentation provided to the Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board. The board material consists of flowcharts of engagement by the Department with Treaty Partners under the Fast-track processes, touchpoints for Māori groups under Fast-track processes, and the respective roles of DOC and other conservation agencies under Fast-track processes. Please find this information **enclosed**.

For **part D** of your request, the Department holds information regarding those who object to the application. Please find this information **enclosed.** One document has been withheld in full under section 9(2)(ba(i) of the OIA, as this information was provided to the Department on a confidential basis, and may prejudice the ongoing supply of similar information.

In relation to **part E** of your request, the Department holds only one set of documents relevant to internal assessments: a memo dated 11 June 2025, together with its attachments, *Advice from 2016* and *Table comparing applications from 2025*.Copies of these documents are **enclosed**.

For **part F** of your request, I can confirm that the Department does not hold documents recording any peer review of DOC's advice or evidence on the Application. As such, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information you have requested does not exist.

Regarding **part G** of your request, I can confirm that the Department commissioned JASCO Applied Sciences Limited (JASCO) to conduct a scientific peer review in relation to underwater noise and marine mammals. A copy of this report is publicly available on the Department's website here: https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/oia/2025/september/ttr-fast-track-application-assessment-report.pdf.

As such, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information you have requested is publicly available. The Department holds no further information in scope of this part of your request.

For **part H** of your request, I can confirm that the Department holds the instructions and terms of engagement for the JASCO experts engaged by the Department to review TTRL's application. Copies of these documents are **enclosed**.

Regarding **part I** of your request, I can confirm that the Department did not establish a formal team to review TTRL's application. The Department identified external expertise was required in the early stages of receiving the application. JASCO was commissioned to review the application with a focus on the impacts on marine species. The following staff were involved:

- Deputy Director General Biodiversity, Heritage and Visitor
- Director, Marine and Freshwater – decision maker for decision to procure report from JASCO Applied Sciences.
- Manager – Marine Species Team – decision maker on involvement of team members in working on Fast Track applications, and the need for due diligence to be done by the team for applications that could impact on marine species.
- Senior Science Advisor x 2 – Marine Species Team – Identification of Fast Track projects that DOC should seek outsourcing for provision of advice (triage of list of Fast Track projects – that could have impacts on marine species). Provision of advice and liaising with JASCO to determine scope of work for contract.
- Legal Services Manager – provision of advice to DOC on legal fast-track procedural issues.
- Senior National RMA Advisor x 2 – provision of advice on previous applications and liaison with decision makers
- Fast Track team members.

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed in the Document schedule below, subject to information being withheld under the following sections of the OIA, as applicable:

- personal contact details of officials, under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people; and
- information provided in confidence, under section 9(2)(ba)(i) – to protect information where release would prejudice the ongoing supply of similar information.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Lynn Hansberry
Director, Regulatory Systems
Department of Conservation | *Te Papa Atawhai*

Document schedule

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1.	11 June 2025	Document: Approach to Trans-Tasman Resources Limited application for offshore iron-sand mining under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA)	Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a).
2	12 October 2016	Document: Marine Consent Application by Trans-Tasman Resources Limited	Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a).
3.	5 June 2025	Document: Baseline/TTRL Fast-track application 2025 – comparison of the conditions with earlier sets of consent conditions.	Released in full.
4	28 May 2026	Emails: DOC's neutral position on TTR	Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a).
5	February 2025	Email attachment: Fast Track Approval Process, Taranaki VTM Project, Submission Package, February 2025	Withheld in full under section 9(2)(ba)(i).
6	5 February 2025	Email attachment: Template Letter – re notification of VTM project	Released in full.
7	8 July 2025	Emails: Re: TTRL	Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a).
8	18 July 2025	Emails: Taranaki VTM Panel convenor conference	Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a).
9	Not dated	Document: Roles for conservation agencies when marine consents are processed under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024	Released in full.
10	Not dated	Document: Flowcharts of engagement by DOC with Treaty partners under Fast-track processes	Released in full.
11	Not dated	Document: Flowcharts of touchpoints for Māori groups under Fast-track processes	Released in full.
12	Not dated	Document: Flowcharts of roles for DOC and other conservation agencies under Fast-track processes	Released in full.
13	23 July 2025	Emails: Review of reports provided by TTRL for Taranaki VTM project under Fast Track	Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a).