

**Date:** Tuesday 23 April 2024  
**Time:** 1.00pm  
**Meeting Room:** Claris Conference Centre  
**Venue:** 19 Whangaparapara Road  
Claris  
Aotea / Great Barrier Island

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## **Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS**

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## Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board feedback on the Fast Track Approvals Bill

### Background

Aotea / Great Barrier Island lies 90km northeast of Auckland City and is sentinel at the entrance to the Hauraki Gulf and within the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea are mana whenua of Aotea, Hauturu (little Barrier Island), the Pokohinu Islands (Mokohinau Islands), and other outlying islands and rocky outcrops.

Aotea / Great Barrier Island is large in size being 28,500 hectares and encompasses 52 rocky outcrops including Rakitu (Arid) Island, a 253-hectare Scenic Reserve. Over 60 per cent of the island is Department of Conservation (DoC) estate; 43 per cent of which is the Aotea Conservation Park. Aotea is an International Dark Sky Sanctuary and has no streetlighting.

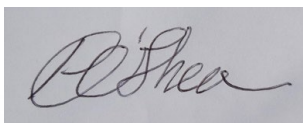
The island has a permanent population of 936 residents (2018 Census) and one of the lowest median household incomes across the Auckland region. Transport and freight to and from the island is either by plane, a 35-minute flight one way, or by ferry a four-and-a-half-hour trip one way. There is no on-island public transport.

Aotea has no reticulated power, wastewater/septic, nor water. Households are off-the-grid powered by solar, wind and generators, and collect water by bore, stream-take or rainwater. Telecommunications can be a challenge on the island with many black spots.

### Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board feedback

- a) Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board does not support the Fast Track Approvals bill due to concerns that:
  - i. mining of conservation land will be identified on Aotea which was staunchly opposed in the past and as a result greater land protection measures were instigated. All mining consents must be publicly notified.
  - ii. local government will be shut out of the process. They will be bound to decisions and costs made by this process, such as, installing infrastructure and accessways on council land to enable any granted consents. Noting that the island has no local compliance monitoring or capability.
  - iii. this proposed bill appears to ignore the principals of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It also appears to ignore the Four Wellbeing's i.e.: social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of citizens and communities that is core to the Local Government Act.
  - iv. mana whenua and their waahi tapu have not been considered enough through this proposal. The cultural significance of our tangata whenua history is strongly interwoven with all aspects of our island's history and holds significant value to our community.

- v. this bill enables three MPs to both identify the projects and make exclusive decisions on those projects. This process leaves ministers open to considerable legal and political risk, including allegations of pre-determination, bias and even corruption.
  - vi. the process timeframes stated in this bill may not enable expert advice to consider all the necessary checks and balances required on projects of scale are in place. Fast-tracking will become a way to avoid that process rather than being a means to expediate the process.
  - vii. the scope is too wide and overrides Resource Management Act, Wildlife Act, Conservation Act, Reserves Act, Freshwater Fisheries Regulations, Fisheries Act, Crown Minerals Act, heritage legislation, and legislation for the exclusive economic zone which will enable consents on prohibited areas and conservation land.
  - viii. there is potential for major loss to environmental and marine protections. This poses a threat to the native flora and fauna and local economy. The island's main economy is from tourism. Visitors come to experience an off-grid, low light, uninterrupted, environmental, and cultural paradise. The island's employment and wellbeing rely on the protections to keep us an environmental haven.
  - ix. The appeals process is not robust enough.
- b) Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board does support the concept of fast-track consenting for public works projects such as wharves, airfields and roads but does not support the process for fast-track consenting as outlined in the Fast Track Approvals bill.

<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Izzy Fordham Chair, Aotea/ Great Barrier Local Board Date: 16 April 2024</p>	<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Patrick O'Shea Deputy Chair, Aotea/ Great Barrier Local Board Date: 16 April 2024</p>
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