

Response ID ANON-URZ4-5FKD-Y

Submitted to Fast-track approval applications  
Submitted on 2024-05-03 16:14:26

Submitter details

Is this application for section 2a or 2b?

2A

1 Submitter name

Individual or organisation name:  
KiwiRail Holdings Limited

2 Contact person

Contact person name:  
Marija Batistich

3 What is your job title

Job title:  
Senior Legal Counsel

4 What is your contact email address?

Email:  
s 9(2)(a)

5 What is your phone number?

Phone number:  
s 9(2)(a)

6 What is your postal address?

Postal address:  
  
Private Bag 92138, Victoria Street West, Auckland 1142

7 Is your address for service different from your postal address?

No

Organisation:

Contact person:

Phone number:

Email address:

Job title:

Please enter your service address:

Section 1: Project location

Site address or location

Add the address or describe the location:

The Marsden Point Rail Link (MPRL) re-establishes a rail connected port in Northland via a new 19km track linking Northport at Marsden Point to the North Auckland Line (NAL) at Oakleigh, within the designation granted in 2012. The rail designation runs from the estuary at Oakleigh via Mata Hill, along the Ruakaka river, through the Takahiwai Hills and on to Marsden Point.

Refer Figure 1: Northland Rail Upgrade Programme  
Refer Figure 2: Marsden Point Rail Link Alignment

Refer Figure 3: Oakleigh to Marsden Point

File upload:

Oakleigh to Marsden Supporting Figures (1).pdf was uploaded

Upload file here:

No file uploaded

Do you have a current copy of the relevant Record(s) of Title?

No

upload file:

No file uploaded

Who are the registered legal land owner(s)?

Please write your answer here:

KiwiRail/NZRC has acquired 80% of the required privately owned land and is currently in negotiations with the remaining landowners to acquire the remaining land under the Public Works Act 1981. Some of the land has been acquired in full, resulting in the record of title transferring to NZRC/KiwiRail, but the majority are partial land purchases held under agreement subject to final survey and legalisation of the land (a compensation certificate is registered against the owners' Record of Title recording the transfer until legalisation actions have been completed).

The remaining privately owned land is held in records of title.

Detail the nature of the applicant's legal interest (if any) in the land on which the project will occur

Please write your answer here:

KiwiRail holds a Designation under Section 176 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) for the construction, operation and maintenance of the MPRL in the Whangārei District Plan (WDP). This designation has a 20-year lapse period (expiring in 2032).

Recent Value Engineering, Geotechnical Investigations and Detailed Design have identified several areas where land is required outside the current designation to affect a better engineering and/or environmental design. As mentioned above, 80% of the required private land has been purchased with KiwiRail in negotiations with the remaining landowners in accordance with the Public Works Act 1981. KiwiRail is negotiating with landowners and acquiring additional land areas needed outside the current designation. We expect to purchase all the additional land areas to assist with extending the current designation.

## Section 2: Project details

What is the project name?

Please write your answer here:

Marsden Point Rail Link

What is the project summary?

Please write your answer here:

The Marsden Point Rail Link (MPRL) is proposed to re-establish a rail connected port in Northland via a new 19km track linking Northport at Marsden Point to the NAL at Oakleigh, within the designation granted in 2012. The previous (rail enabled) Northland port at Whangarei was moved to Marsden in 2007, but the rail connection was not built as part of that project and consequently rail freight volumes significantly declined.

What are the project details?

Please write your answer here:

As noted above the project is the construction of the Marsden Point Rail Link (MPRL) connection between the NAL and Northport, once funded.

Once constructed, the MPRL will re-establish a rail connected port in Northland via a new 19km track linking Northport at Marsden Point to the NAL at Oakleigh, within the designation granted in 2012. The rail designation runs from the estuary at Oakleigh via Mata Hill, along the Ruakaka River, through the Takahiwai Hills and on to Marsden Point.

The wider context of the North Auckland Line (NAL)

The NAL runs from Westfield Junction in Auckland, through Newmarket Junction and continues to the West via Swanson (end of electrified network) and then north as far as Otiria, the most northern point of the New Zealand rail network to the west of Kawakawa. The electrified network extends only as far as Swanson and is therefore the end of the line for Auckland Transport's electric multiple unit (EMU) trains, but not so for KiwiRail freight.

The NAL upgrade programme is being funded by a Crown investment via the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF), which is enabling the following staged improvements to rail in Northland. Some parts are already consented or underway. The remaining step is the construction of the MPRL connection

between the NAL and Northport.

Completed, or underway

- o From January 2021, the NAL between Whangārei and Auckland has been able to take conventional 9'6" shipping containers.
- o From early 2022, the NAL between Whangārei and Auckland has been able to take an 18-tonne axle load meaning KiwiRail's standard North Island locomotive and wagon fleet can operate (prior to this only light axle locomotives can be used).
- o KiwiRail was funded by the PGF to purchase the land necessary for the MPRL connection to Northport, and at the time of writing this has been largely completed.

To do

The remaining step is the construction of the MPRL connection between the NAL and Northport, once funded.

The NAL upgrade programme will bring the NAL up to a 'modern freight standard' so that it is consistent with the rest of the KiwiRail network with these characteristics:

- o 18 tonne axle loadings;
- o high-cube container access;
- o modern locomotives and rolling stock that are inter-operable from across the rail network;
- o high service reliability, frequency, and available capacity;
- o limited speed restrictions; and
- o interconnected rail served seaports including Marsden Point, Ports of Auckland Limited (POAL) and Tauranga/Mt Maunganui.

The Marsden Point Rail Link (MPRL)

Northport is one of only two ports in New Zealand that is not connected to the rail network. Linking Northport to rail provides much needed optionality for shipping lines and cargo owners.

Prior to Whangārei's port moving out to Marsden Point one million tonnes of freight moved by rail to/from and within Northland; after the port moved this dropped to 100,000 tonnes.

Following the 2021 Baseline exercise, the Joint Ministers chose a preferred Whangārei to Port Marsden (W2PM) project option comprising:

- o construction of the new MPRL to Northport from the NAL;
- o further upgrade of the existing NAL from Whangārei to Otiria to 18 tonne axle-load, providing increased opportunity for freight transfer to rail from road; and
- o safety improvements along the existing state highway.

These interventions replace the previous option of upgrading the existing state highway and will support the development of a rail enabled export port at Marsden Point, expanding the overall supply chain system and making Northport a more viable alternative to the POAL for some freight traffic.

The MPRL was initially investigated as part of the KiwiRail Northern Rail Upgrade Programme (NRUP). It now forms a component of the rescope W2PM project within the NZUP programme of works.

Collectively, the Northland Rail Upgrade and MPRL seek to:

- o re-establish a rail-connected port in Northland;
- o strengthen integrated transport networks and support economic growth for the region;
- o improve road safety and decrease carbon emissions (by reducing road freight); and
- o add much-needed resilience to the wider North Island supply chain by creating more transport options.

Describe the staging of the project, including the nature and timing of the staging

Please write your answer here:

Subject to funding:

- completion of detailed design is scheduled for completion in mid-2025,
- procurement will commence mid 2025, with completion late 2025,
- construction will commence late 2025 (requiring four earthworks seasons.)

What are the details of the regime under which approval is being sought?

Please write your answer here:

KiwiRail holds nearly all the RMA approvals needed to build within the Designated alignment (including land in the Coastal Marine Area (CMA)). The existing approvals were granted in 2012. The following approvals are sought in this application:

- Construction consents; i.e. consents for discharges to air during construction, water takes for seawater or freshwater, and spoil/disposal sites (the need for these depends on construction methodology);
- Resource consents arising from any changes to Whangārei District Council (WDC) and Northland Regional Council (NRC) Plan rules since 2012;
- Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (applying regional rules), Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011 in limited circumstances only;
- Outline Plan of Works approvals from WDC;
- Any changes to the alignment, or detailed design changes not in 'general accordance with the approved plans' and/or agreed by NRC/WDC Manager;

- Archaeological Authority under Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 to modify or destroy archaeological site(s);
- wildlife permits under the Wildlife Act 1953 to undertake works in the habitats of threatened native species; and
- Any alterations to the designated alignment to achieve better alignment with other projects and/or environmental improvements.

If you seeking approval under the Resource Management Act, who are the relevant local authorities?

Please write your answer here:

Northland Regional Council (NRC) and Whangarei District Council (WDC).

What applications have you already made for approvals on the same or a similar project?

Please write your answer here:

KiwiRail holds a Designation under Section 176 of the RMA for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Oakleigh to Marsden Point Rail Link (the Link) in the WDP. This designation lapses in 20 years (in 2032).

Resource consents granted by WDC and NRC provide for the construction of the route on land, in or over watercourses and in the CMA. They include approval, as a restricted coastal activity, signed by the (then) Minister of Conservation to use/reclaim areas of the upper Whangarei Harbour for the railway track.

All consents and the Designation were granted/confirmed on 12 April 2012 - the date on which Environment Court appeals were settled. The MPRL Designation is incorporated in the Operative WDP.

Is approval required for the project by someone other than the applicant?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Final funding for the project will be required from Ministers

If the approval(s) are granted, when do you anticipate construction activities will begin, and be completed?

Please write your answer here:

The project is investment ready.

It is funded for detailed design, which is in progress, but is not yet funded for construction.

An initial business case cost estimate of \$1.004bn is currently being refined with additional investigations and value engineering in progress as part of the detailed design phase.

Subject to funding:

- completion of detailed design is scheduled for completion in mid-2025,
- procurement will commence mid 2025, with completion late 2025,
- construction will commence late 2025 (requiring four earthworks seasons.)

### Section 3: Consultation

Who are the persons affected by the project?

Please write your answer here:

- Central Government;
- Ministry of Transport;
- Waka Kotahi (NZTA);
- Regulators;
- Worksafe;
- Te Puni Kokiri;
- Mana whenua (broadlist);
- Ngāti Whātua;
- Ngāti Wai;
- Ngāpuhi;
- Mana whenua (targeted groups);
- Patuharakeke;
- Te Parawhau;
- Kopuawaiwaha Land trust
- NRC

- WDC;
- Northport; and
- Landowners and/or leaseholders.

Detail all consultation undertaken with the persons referred to above. Include a statement explaining how engagement has informed the project.

Please write your answer here:

Consultation on the Notice of Requirement (NoR) with stakeholders and iwi was undertaken in 2008 onwards up to the confirmation of the NoR in 2012. While the project then went into hiatus, it was revived in 2017/18 and iwi engagement was undertaken in relation to planned geotechnical investigations, and with NZTA. There has been ongoing engagement since the designation of the route with landowners, and WDC and NRC on an as-required basis. The current funded design and value engineering phase included formalising iwi engagement, and this will continue as the Project goes forward. Landowner engagement continues and 80% of the route has now been purchased.

Iwi/hapū engagement was undertaken for the designation of the route between 2008-2012. Engagement with local iwi groups principally included:

- Patuharakeke;
- Te Parawhau; and
- Kopuawaiwahua.

Engagement was also undertaken in 2018 and is ongoing for current geotechnical works.

Notifications about the CMA Geotechnical works as requested by NRC to meet the requirements of the Marine and Coastal (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 were also taken at that time. Since then, geotechnical bores within the CMA have become a permitted activity.

As part of the current design project, KiwiRail recently re-started formal iwi /hapū engagement to assist it with future design and project works. Invitations were sent to a wide range of iwi/hapū groups in the area, with the specific hapū listed above seeking ongoing engagement. A well-attended hui was held at Takahiwai Marae on 14th December 2023 to discuss the terms of reference.

Upload file here:

No file uploaded

Describe any processes already undertaken under the Public Works Act 1981 in relation to the land or any part of the land on which the project will occur:

Please write your answer here:

KiwiRail/NZRC has already acquired 80% of the required privately owned land under the Public Works Act 1981 and is currently in negotiations with the remaining landowners to acquire the remaining land under the Public Works Act 1981. KiwiRail has been negotiating to acquire additional land areas outside the current designation identified following Value Engineering and Detailed Design. We expect to purchase all of the additional land areas to assist with extending the current designation.

#### Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

What treaty settlements apply to the geographical location of the project?

Please write your answer here:

None. Local iwi Te Parawhau, and Patuharakeke, are yet to reach a Treaty Settlement.

Are there any Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 principles or provisions that are relevant to the project?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Are there any identified parcels of Māori land within the project area, marae, and identified wāhi tapu?

Yes

If yes, what are they?:

One Māori Freehold property is impacted by the existing designation. KiwiRail/NZRC is acquiring additional (non Māori) land outside the designation which will remove the requirement to purchase part of the Māori Freehold land, as a result part of the designation boundary will need to be shifted.

Is the project proposed on any land returned under a Treaty settlement or any identified Māori land described in the ineligibility criteria?

No

Has the applicant has secured the relevant landowners' consent?

No

Is the project proposed in any customary marine title area, protected customary rights area, or aquaculture settlement area declared under s 12 of the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 or identified within an individual iwi settlement?

Yes

If yes, what are they?:

Resource consents granted by the WDC and NRC in 2012 provide for the construction of the route on land, in or over watercourses and in the CMA. These resource consents have long (35 year) expiry dates. They include approval, as a restricted coastal activity, signed by the (then) Minister of Conservation, Kate Wilkinson, to use/reclaim up to 22 hectares of the upper Whangarei Harbour.

Has there been an assessment of any effects of the activity on the exercise of a protected customary right?

No

If yes, please explain:

Upload your assessment if necessary:

No file uploaded

## Section 5: Adverse effects

What are the anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment?

Please describe:

While a more detailed effects assessment would be provided with any additional NoRs and resource consent application(s) a summary of canvassed effects is provided below.

Key consents have been obtained including coastal reclamation and regional consents for route construction and operation. All major construction projects have effects, and these were assessed in detail through the NoR and consented process pre-2012. At that time these were identified as:

- construction effects (including earthworks, stormwater runoff, erosion and sediment control, traffic and nuisance, effects of noise and vibration;
- operational noise;
- hydrological effects (including effects on coastal and stream processes);
- effects on public access, and access to private land and the roading network;
- environmental effects (including noise, vibration, ecological, landscape/visual and natural character);
- cultural and historic/heritage effects (including modifying and removing archaeological sites);
- effects on values of importance to Māori;
- amenity effects (including visual and noise impacts on amenity);
- social effects (including potential impacts on day to day running of landowners' farms);
- economic effects (including disruption to local farms and businesses); and
- recreational and navigational effects.

The effects from any additional consent requirements will be assessed, both in terms of today's district and regional rules and regulations applying to each change or amendment. A description of the anticipated and known adverse effects on the natural environment will be provided. This must include any impact on the matters of national importance described in Section 6 of the RMA, and an outline of how those effects will be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Conditions attached to consents and the Designation must be discharged before construction starts. Management Plans for 11 specialist areas are required to address construction activities, environmental performance and mitigation and communication. Most Management Plans are required to be certified by an Independent Review Panel of technical experts, approved by NRC. Requirements for pre-construction surveys and noise mitigation packages also apply. An assessment of the project in relation to National Policy Statements, National Environmental Standards, and relevant Regional Policy Statements, Regional and District Plans will be undertaken for any future changes.

Upload file:

No file uploaded

## Section 6: National policy statements and national environmental standards

What is the general assessment of the project in relation to any relevant national policy statement (including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement) and national environmental standard?

Please write your answer here:

Resource consents granted by the Whangarei District Council (WDC) and Northland Regional Council (NRC) provide for the construction of the route on land, in or over watercourses and in the coastal marine area (CMA). They include approval, as a restricted coastal activity, signed by the (then) Minister of Conservation, Kate Wilkinson, to use/reclaim land in the upper Whangarei Harbour. Any alterations to the design to extend works beyond the approved scope in the CMA will require a full assessment under the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and other relevant standards and plans.

File upload:  
No file uploaded

## Section 7: Eligibility

Will access to the fast-track process enable the project to be processed in a more timely and cost-efficient way than under normal processes?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The fast track process is considered to be more appropriate than the usual consenting process for the following reasons:

- As described above, the existing designation expires in 2032 and there are strong economic and surety reasons for giving effect to the designation prior to that date. A fast track consenting process will allow the designation to be given effect to in a more efficient way allowing the economic benefits of the MPRL to be realised more quickly.
- The suite of approvals able to be obtained under will provide for the consenting of the MPRL in a more timely and cost efficient way. If approvals were sought under the traditional consenting processes KiwiRail will be relying on multiple authorities issuing a suite of consents.
- Additional consents are required in addition to those already held to provide for construction, any changes to district and regional plan rules since the consents were granted, obtaining necessary consents under National Environmental Standards relating to freshwater management and contaminated soils. The fast-track process would provide for these to be obtained in a timely and efficient manner.
- A review of the alignment in view of current requirements for the corridor may result in amendments to the designation to better align with other projects in the region and/or environmental initiatives.
- Given the nature of the project there is likely to be extensive public interest in any consenting process, however, given the existing designation and that KiwiRail owns the relevant land it is important to ensure that any issues raised in relation to consenting are properly managed and limited to the nature of the consents sought. Given these issues, a fast-track process would more efficiently manage and assess the consents sought and the effects along the route in relation to all affected landowners and stakeholders.
- The potential issues in this area and varied nature of additional consents required will add complexity to environmental considerations that under traditional consenting processes may result in the approvals process becoming complex and drawn out.
- The long lead time for construction for the corridor, once fully consented, creates a risk that the infrastructure would not be able to be delivered as quickly as it is required and economic benefits of the projects not realised, and may constrain related decision-making (e.g. Ports, wider Auckland transport network) as drawn-out consenting processes will impede the ability of government to choose when to fund and construct. Approving the MPRL in a timely and efficient manner through the fast-track process will assist in addressing this.

What is the impact referring this project will have on the efficient operation of the fast-track process?

Please write your answer here:

This project that was originally supported by the Provincial Growth Fund, has initial consents, is of regional and national significance and is therefore meets the criteria for a project that is best suited for the fast-track process.

Referring the MPRL will ensure the efficient operation of the fast-track process as the requirements of the project and its potential adverse effects are known. The potential adverse effects of the MPRL can be appropriately addressed through conditions of consent.

KiwiRail is an established infrastructure provider with a high level of experience of obtaining consents and approvals for such projects.

As an initial suite of consents have already been granted for the MPRL if the remainder are approved through the fast-track process the once funding is secured for the project, MPRL can be delivered in a timely manner ensuring the project can be delivered without incurring the cost associated with further delays.

Has the project been identified as a priority project in a:

Local government plan or strategy

Please explain your answer here:

- Whangarei District Council adopted its Whangarei District Growth Strategy in September 2021. This identified Marsden Point area as a high growth area and an employment node. One of the strategic drivers identified is resilient infrastructure – ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with growth and development. Transport choice is another such driver, identifying the need to provide a choice of transport options to ensure people can move easily and safely around the district, and improving regional connections through rail and highway improvements. The Strategy also identifies that with freight numbers in Northland expected to increase rail will be a crucial part of developing an efficient, integrated road-rail transport system in the region, recognising the role of the route between Oakleigh and Northport/Marsden Point.
- In 2020, the Urban Development Act 2020 came into effect, coupled with the Urban Growth Agenda and the National Policy Statement on Urban

Development - Councils are required to develop a Future Development Strategy (FDS) which will inform its Long Term Plan (LTP) and collectively the Infrastructure Strategies across New Zealand.

- These 'development vehicles' set the scene for future-ready cities across the country and created a springboard for organisations to deliver integrated solutions.

- Whangarei FDS: Over the last 9 months, WDC and NRC have been developing urban growth scenarios to guide the development of WDC for the next 30 years. KiwiRail are currently part of the Central Government Technical Advisory Group and have actively contributed to the development of the FDS. Long list options have been narrowed down to a baseline scenario and the two growth scenarios are: Refer Figure 4: Baseline Scenario & Two Growth Scenario's

Scenario

1) All - Benefits, Alignment and Commentary:

- In its forward planning, Marsden Point is earmarked to be a secondary city centre, focussing investment and prioritisation to this area.
- All scenarios include the new rail line and the benefits and opportunity this hold for urban regeneration of the immediate and wider region is recognised in all forward planning documents of WDC and NRC.

2) Scenario 1 - Benefits, Alignment and Commentary:

- Urban densification and infrastructure investment along main transport routes, and less densification into greenfield land – compact city
- Reduced vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT), and higher active modes along the growth spine.
- Growth in business and employment, particularly in Marsden Point, and on the back of port activity and expansion.
- This scenario will be more resilient to natural hazards and impact on the natural environment, due to compactness.

3) Scenario 2 – Benefits, Alignment and Commentary:

- Some VKT reduction, and social and economic benefits for residents on the northern harbourside.
- Protection of productive soils from greenfield development in the north.

4) Next Steps & Status – Benefits, Alignment and Commentary:

- The FDS will inform the LTP and sector plans. Based on information available on the Council's website, formal consultation is expected to be undertaken in mid-2024

5) Key Takeout – Benefits, Alignment and Commentary:

- Rail, a rail spur and port operations in Marsden Point holds both social and economic benefits to the city and wider region.

Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

National significant infrastructure

Please explain your answer here:

The MPRL will deliver regionally and nationally significant infrastructure. The MPRL is expected to create a safer, more sustainable, and higher quality freight option providing the capacity needed to enable significant changes to the Upper North Island supply chain. In doing so, the MPRL will drive further economic growth within the Northland region and the Upper North Island, in support of the strategic priorities for land transport set out in the Government Policy Statement Land Transport 2021.

It is, therefore, expected to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- will deliver nationally or regionally significant infrastructure;
- will provide significant economic benefits and significantly contribute to the growth, diversity and resilience of regional economies;
- will reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- has been identified as a priority in a relevant plan, or would help progress priority objectives in a sector strategy; and
- would help deliver objectives or strategies in a relevant spatial strategy and be consistent with the approach agreed in a relevant spatial strategy.

Northport is one of only two ports in New Zealand that is not connected to the rail network. Linking Northport to rail provides much needed optionality for shipping lines and cargo owners.

Prior to Whangarei's port moving out to Marsden Point one million tonnes of freight moved by rail to/from and within Northland; after the port moved this dropped to 100,000 tonnes.

Supporting this, KiwiRail has commissioned a Computable General Equilibrium analysis of the economic and emissions impacts of rail infrastructure improvements that has focussed on assessing the national and regional impacts of potential rail investments primarily in Auckland, but also including the MPRL. In respect of the MPRL, findings from this work include:

- in a scenario that measures purely the impact of rail enabling Northport, the Northland regional impact is expected to be an economy some \$283mn larger in 2100 than it would otherwise have been.
- the collective rail investment (of which MPRL is a part) is estimated to deliver significant national and regional economic growth. Overall, a national economy that is between \$6.6bn - \$7.3bn per annum larger than it would otherwise have been by 2100.
- concurrently, the overall investment (of which MPRL is a part) is estimated to create between 22,800 – 23,700 additional FTE jobs.

This report clearly demonstrates the national and regional impacts that investment in the MPRL would make. It can be provided on request, or as part of a future Fast Track Consent application



Will the project:

Please explain your answer here:

No this is an industrial focused project.

Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project will provide significant economic benefits and significantly contribute to the growth, diversity and resilience of regional economies.

Enabling prosperity for the people of Northland – increasing connectivity and modal choice between road and rail - has the potential to provide material stimulus, in terms of economic output and employment, to the local Northland economy.

KiwiRail commissioned a Computable General Equilibrium analysis of the economic and emissions impacts of rail infrastructure improvements that has focussed on potential rail investments primarily in Auckland, but also including the MPRL. In respect of the MPRL, findings from this work include:

- In a scenario where the MPRL is built but future freight growth is assumed to be handled principally at Tauranga rather than Auckland or Northport (i.e. a scenario that reveals purely the impact of rail enabling Northport), the Northland regional impact is expected to be an economy some \$283million larger in 2100 than it would otherwise have been.
- considering the collective rail investment (i.e. Auckland as well as MPRL), the Northland region would expand the fastest, as it benefits from improved rail links and greater activity at Northport. It also benefits the most (proportionately) of all regions for much of the projection period.
- the collective rail investment (of which MPRL is a part) is estimated to deliver significant national and regional economic growth. Overall, a national economy that is between \$6.6billion- \$7.3billion per annum larger than it would otherwise have been by 2100.
- a scenario in which Northport is assumed to grow (at a rate similar to the MPRL Detailed Business Case) adds approximately \$650million per annum to the national economy by 2100.
- concurrently, the overall investment (of which MPRL is a part) is estimated to create between 22,800 – 23,700 additional FTE jobs.

Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project will provide increased freight capacity to assist primary industries, leading to a reduction in road congestions and reduced emissions profile.

Will the project support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

This project will enable natural resources to have a greater option to move natural resource freight by rail with improved efficiency and effectiveness, as well as leading to a reduction in road congestions and reduced emissions profile.

Will the project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project will reduce emissions - rail produces 70% fewer emissions than heavy road freight transport per tonne of freight carried.

Reducing the impact of transport – such greenhouse gas emissions, road crashes and traffic congestion are minimised by reducing the proportion of existing and future heavy trucks from Northland and Auckland roads.

We acknowledge that infrastructure construction and increased economic growth each tend to contribute to higher emissions . KiwiRail commissioned a Computable General Equilibrium analysis of the economic and emissions impacts of rail infrastructure improvements that has focussed on potential rail investments primarily in Auckland, but also including the MPRL. Findings from this 2024 work include:

- In terms of emissions reductions, after accounting for construction and increased travel (due to increased economic growth) the collective rail investment (including MPRL) is estimated to deliver total transport emissions reductions 0.32% lower than baseline by 2100. This equates to a transport emission(s) 'saving' of 32.3Kt CO2-e by 2100.

• The composition of emissions across the economy would change as a result of the rail investment programme. The primary sector and manufacturing sector, both of which are heavy users of rail freight, would see their emissions fall below baseline over time, despite their output growing faster. Primary and manufacturing sectors would thus become more emissions-efficient due to the rail investment programme (inclusive of MPRL).

Will the project support adaptation, resilience, and recovery from natural hazards?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Future option value, including port access and resilience – connecting Northport to the national rail network would provide additional capacity to handle the expected growth in export and import volumes from the Upper North Island. It would also increase network resilience in the event of a natural disaster or break in the supply chain.

Will the project address significant environmental issues?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Issues created by the movement of heavy freight vehicles are well known in the North. The absence of a rail enabled Port limits mode choice and limits freight traffic to ship or road modes. Post construction the project will enable more a more sustainable transport mode for freight and contribute to reducing road wear and tear. Transporting freight by rail is a more fuel efficient and environmentally sustainable alternative to transportation by road and will help to reduce the impact of private vehicles on the community.

Is the project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The MPRL has been included in the Whangarei District Plan maps since 2012 and has guided area planning since.

Anything else?

Please write your answer here:

Benefits expected:

- o increase the proportion of Northland freight moved by rail and reduce truck movements on constrained parts of the State Highway system;
- o reduce emissions - rail produces 70% fewer emissions than heavy road freight transport per tonne of freight carried;
- o provision of more resilient transport networks and optionality for Northland producers;
- o Improved opportunities for economic prosperity and growth for the Northland region by providing better access to employment and jobs through business growth; and
- o reduce the cost and impact of transport for Northland-based businesses and New Zealand more generally and to encourage better use of existing infrastructure.

In addition to the direct benefits of constructing the MPRL, there are opportunities for a joint causeway to accommodate NZTA's State Highway 1 Roads of National Significance (RONS) programme which identifies a four-lane highway which does not currently have a designation, or land acquired.

Does the project includes an activity which would make it ineligible?

No

If yes, please explain:

## Section 8: Climate change and natural hazards

Will the project be affected by climate change and natural hazards?

Yes

If yes, please explain:

While all projects have the potential to be affected in some way by climate change and natural hazards the overall impact of this project is to improve the resilience of the rail network, which will assist with planning for and mitigating the impact of such events.

## Section 9: Track record

Please add a summary of all compliance and/or enforcement actions taken against the applicant by any entity with enforcement powers under the Acts referred to in the Bill, and the outcome of those actions.

Please write your answer here:

No outstanding compliance or enforcement actions (if any) taken against the KiwiRail by a local authority or the Environmental Protection Authority under the RMA.

Load your file here:

No file uploaded

## Declaration

Do you acknowledge your submission will be published on environment.govt.nz if required

Yes

By typing your name in the field below you are electronically signing this application form and certifying the information given in this application is true and correct.

Please write your name here:

Joshua Leckie

Important notes