

Response ID ANON-URZ4-5FYM-P

Submitted to Fast-track approval applications
Submitted on 2024-05-02 10:31:25

Submitter details

Is this application for section 2a or 2b?

2A

1 Submitter name

Individual or organisation name:
Port of Tauranga Limited

2 Contact person

Contact person name:
Dan Kneebone

3 What is your job title

Job title:
General Manager Property & Infrastructure

4 What is your contact email address?

Email:
§ 9(2)(a)

5 What is your phone number?

Phone number:
§ 9(2)(a)

6 What is your postal address?

Postal address:

Private Bag 12504
Tauranga Mail Centre
Tauranga 3143
New Zealand

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 coastal marine area within the Tauranga Harbour at Sulphur Point and Mount Maunganui.

File upload:
Stella Passage Plan.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:

The common marine and coastal area is not owned by the Crown or any other person, in accordance with section 11 of the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011.

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:

POTL holds a Coastal Occupation Permit (040128) for occupation of the coastal marine area in the Tauranga Harbour adjacent to the Port of Tauranga commercial activities in Tauranga.

Section 2: Project details

What is the project name?

Please write your answer here:
Stella Passage Development

What is the project summary?

Please write your answer here:

A 385m wharf extension and a 1.8 ha reclamation at Sulphur Point, southern wharf extensions to the Mount Maunganui wharves of 315m and a 1.55ha reclamation, Mooring and Breasting Dolphins North and South of the Tanker Berth, minor structures and 0.18ha reclamation associated with Butters Landings, and an associated extension to the dredged shipping channel as per the attached plan.

What are the project details?

Please write your answer here:

The Port of Tauranga has been operating as a 'modern port' since 1953 and is New Zealand's largest port. The Stella Passage project proposes development which will enable the Port of Tauranga to accommodate growth in cargo and vessel sizes while also catering for projected export and import volume in the future. The project's purpose is to maximise the efficient use of the existing infrastructure and footprint of Port of Tauranga, New Zealand's busiest port, handling 42% of all of New Zealand's containers and 50% of New Zealand's exports by value and is an essential part of the Bay of Plenty's and New Zealand's economies.

The project comprises the following development for which resource consent is sought, to be undertaken in stages detailed further below:

- a. 385m extension to the Sulphur Point wharf;
- b. 1.8 ha reclamation at Sulphur Point;
- c. 315m extension to the Mount Maunganui wharf;
- d. 1.59ha reclamation at the Mount Maunganui wharf;
- e. Mooring and Breasting Dolphins North and South of the Tanker Berth;
- f. Minor structures and 0.18ha reclamation associated with Butters Landing; and
- g. Extension of the shipping channel to 10.55ha and the associated dredging of approximately 1,500,000m³ of material, of which 5.9ha and 800,000m³ is already consented (consent number 62920).

It is POTL's view that it is better for all parties, due to the financial and resourcing involved, to go through the consenting process once rather than continue to go through the process many times for each stage of development that is planned. Certainty of the ability to deliver its expected growth also enables POTL to plan and invest in the land-side infrastructure that will be required. As such POTL applies for the project to be listed in stages (Stage One and Stage Two) in the Fast-track Approvals Bill.

POTL also seeks authorisation under section 53 of the Wildlife Act 1953 to catch alive little blue penguins in order to remove them from the Mount

Maunganui rock wall which will be dismantled as part of the project, and relocate the penguins to the area which POTL has designated for penguin habitat, which will have purpose built penguin nesting boxes. POTL's Blue Penguin and Avian Management Plan includes measures that mean that physical removal of blue penguins is unlikely to be required, but POTL is applying for this permission so that it has been obtained in the unlikely event that relocation of any penguins is required.

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

Please write your answer here:

The Stella Passage project will be separated into two defined stages, based on the urgent need for Stage One of the project to be built and in operation as soon as possible:

Stella Passage Stage One

- 285m extension to the Sulphur Point Wharf
- 0.88 ha of reclamation at Sulphur Point
- Dredging on the western side of Stella Passage within the existing footprint of Coastal Permit 62920 to 16 meters depth

Stella Passage Stage Two

- 315m extension to the Mount Maunganui wharves
- 1.59ha reclamation at the Mount Maunganui wharf
- Mooring and Breasting Dolphins North and South of the Tanker Berth
- Minor structures at Butters Landing and associated 0.18ha reclamation (all at Mount Maunganui)
- Further 100 m of the Sulphur Point wharf extension (385m total including Stage One)
- 0.93 ha of reclamation at Sulphur Point (1.81 ha total including Stage One)
- Dredging on the western side of Stella Passage alongside Sulphur Point extension.

POTL proposes that construction associated with Stage One will start as soon as practical following the granting of consent. It is expected that it will take 24 months to construct Stage One, with dredging occurring simultaneously to the build and taking approximately six months.

Whilst some minor projects within Stage Two would likely occur concurrently with Stage One, the main 315m Mount Manganui wharves extension would be staged to manage resourcing demands on the Port and our contractors, as such it is not practical to carry out all parts of the project at once. While the Stage Two works are crucial to POTL's development plans, it is likely they would follow the immediate requirements of Stage One as noted above. Some further staging would be required for operational reasons so as to ensure that large swathes of wharf and Port operational area are not out of action at the same time.

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

Please write your answer here:

Resource Management Act 1991.
Wildlife Act 1953.

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

Please write your answer here:

Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

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

Please write your answer here:

POTL made an application for referral under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 in November 2020, which was declined in March 2021.

A resource consent application was made to the Bay of Penty Regional Council (BOPRC) on 28 May 2021, shortly followed by a direct referral application to have the application heard by the Environment Court. The Environment Court hearing was held in February and March 2023 (it was initially to be held in July 2022, but was delayed) and the Court released its interim decision on 13 December 2023. The Environment Court provisionally granted resource consent for Stage One, subject to additional matters being addressed to the satisfaction of the Court. A decision on Stage Two was reserved pending the provision of further information, with the Court indicating that Stage Two should be heard in approximately 2026. POTL is currently working through the additional matters which the Court has required it to address, and no consent has been issued to POTL yet.

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

No

Please explain your answer here:

N/A

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

Please write your answer here:

The staging of the project is set out above.

A detailed design of Stage One has been completed and is currently being updated to incorporate the revised National Seismic Hazard Model (NSHM 2022). POTL has already engaged a contractor for development of Stage One and provision for the required funding for this stage is in place. Works on Stage One would commence as soon as consent is obtained. Dredging on the western side of Stella Passage that is associated with Stage One is expected to take six months and the wharf construction approximately 24 months, meaning from the grant of consent roughly two years will be required to complete Stage One of the Project.

In relation to Stage Two, there is an immediate requirement for a new bunker barge berth. The barge is of shallow draught and the new berth is proposed at Butters Landing without the requirement for any dredging to take place. This work will take less than twelve months to design and construct.

The extension of the Mount wharves and associated reclamation will take six months to design and eighteen to twenty four months to construct. It is anticipated that this part of the development will be carried out following completion of the Sulphur Point extension and bunker barge berth. Noting there are additional enabling works associated before construction can start associated with the relocation and safe guarding of Blue Penguins, however this work can be carried out in advance while the other projects are underway.

The proposed Mooring and Breasting Dolphins on either side of the Tanker Berth are relatively straight forward structures, and design and construction would be completed within twelve to eighteen months. This will occur after Stage One, the bunker barge works and mount wharf extension is completed.

Following on from the construction of the Sulphur Point Stage One extension, the bunker barge works, Mount Maunganui wharf extensions and Tanker Berth mooring and breasting dolphins, attention will return to Sulphur Point. Given the timeframes set out above and the historic container growth through Sulphur Point, it is estimated that the further Sulphur Point wharf extension will begin design, followed by construction, in eight to ten years' time.

Section 3: Consultation

Who are the persons affected by the project?

Please write your answer here:

- Bay of Plenty Regional Council
- Tauranga City Council
- Ngāti Te Rangi
- Ngāti Ranginui
- Ngāti Pūkenga
- Waitaha
- Tauranga Moana Iwi Customary Fisheries Trust
- Ngāti Ranginui Fisheries Trust
- Ngā Hapu o Ngā Moutere Trust (collective of Matakana Island hapū)
- Ngāi Tukairangi
- Ngāti Kuku
- Ngāti He
- Ngāti Kaahu a Tamapahore
- Ngāti Kahu
- Ngāti Tapu
- Ngāi Tamarawaho
- Whareroa Marae
- Tauranga Harbour Master
- Tauranga Bridge Marina Limited

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:

POTL, through its involvement with the Ngā Mātarae Charitable Trust, has been outlining its development plans for the Port of Tauranga to iwi and hapū since 2016. An invitation was sent to iwi, hapū and their representatives in early 2019 to inform them of the specific developments associated with the Stella Passage project, and to invite some high level, early feedback on areas of potential concern. All parties expressed interest in the Stella Passage project.

A number of meetings were then held with iwi associations, with various hapū groups and the Whareroa Residents identifying potential cultural effects of the proposed works. Through consultation, concerns have been raised that the growth of the Port of Tauranga may have detrimental effects on the mauri of the Tauranga moana, reduce the connection with taiao and further compromise the ability for exercising kaitiakitanga.

Prior to lodging its application for resource consent, a copy of the application and POTL's Assessment of Environmental Effects was provided to iwi and hapū in March 2020. POTL lodged a resource consent application with BOPRC on 28 May 2021 for the Stella Passage project, and made an application for direct referral to the Environment Court shortly thereafter. Notification occurred to a number of iwi groups, and 10 groups representing tangata whenua interests joined the proceedings and presented evidence.

Since the hearing and following the interim decision of the Court, further consultation has been undertaken with tangata whenua in response to the Court's directions which require matters to be addressed in consultation with tangata whenua and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

Through the consultation undertaken as part of this process, and the evidence provided during the Environment Court hearing, POTL have identified the following topics of concern to iwi and hapū:

- Effects on the mauri of the harbour. The degradation of mauri is closely linked to the discharge of contaminants, port activities, coastal development and dredging.
- Effects on kaimoana (in particular pipi at Te Paritaha and Tuangi off Whareroa). Te Paritaha is the largest pipi bed within Te Awanui and is renowned for its plentiful supply. The pipi bed has been a customary harvesting ground for many generations.
- Effects on sea grass. The sea grass provide a nursery for juvenile fish and are a barometer to the health of the harbour, in particular the amount of turbidity and sediment that may be smothering the seabed.
- Effects on current flows. Changes to the harbour current flows can have negative impacts on those carrying out traditional cultural interests.
- Effects on air quality. Given the proximity of Whareroa Marae to the Port of Tauranga there is concern that extending the Port will have cumulative effects on the air quality in the area.
- Potential for new structures to be hosts for invasive species. The protection of native species is important to local iwi in sustaining a healthy ecosystem

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:

N/A

Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

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

Please write your answer here:

Attached in this section is the report prepared by the Ministry of the Environment and the Office of Māori Crown Relations under Section 17 of the Covid-19 (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 in the course of the referral application process for the Stella Passage development under that legislation, which sets out the relevant iwi and iwi authorities, and treaty settlements in the area of the Port of Tauranga.

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?

No

If yes, what are they?:

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?

Yes

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?

No

If yes, what are they?:

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:

Section 17 Report.pdf was uploaded

Section 5: Adverse effects

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

Please describe:

POTL has obtained full expert assessments relating to the Stella Passage project with the full list of those assessments as follows:

- Statutory Planning Assessment by Beca;
- Impacts on sediment transport of proposed expansion of the Port of Tauranga shipping channels and wharves by Julia C Mullarney and Dr Willem P. de Lange;
- Hydrodynamic modelling of proposed expansion of the Port of Tauranga shipping channels and wharves by Julia C Mullarney and Dr Willem P. de Lange;
- Characteristics of sub-surface sediments in southern Stella Passage, Tauranga Harbour by Vicki Moon and Dr Willem P de Lange;
- Port of Tauranga Expansion Project, Landscape Assessment by Stephen Brown;
- Assessment of environmental effects of proposed expansion of the Port of Tauranga shipping channels and wharves on Coastal Ecology by Kaeden Leonard, David Culliford, Alice Morrison, Matthew Bennion and Professor Chris Battershill;
- Assessment of Effects on Birds of Proposed Port of Tauranga Wharf Developments by Rachel McClellan and Carolina Stavert (Wildlands); and
- Assessment of Effects on Marine Mammals by Helen McConnell.

In addition to these reports, evidence was produced in response to evidence from other parties and questions from the Court in relation to:

- Air quality by Jenny Simpson (Tonkin & Taylor);
- Public Health by Dr Lynette Dennison (Tonkin & Taylor);
- Construction and operational noise by Nevil Hegley.

The following descriptions are high level summaries of the effects assessed:

Hydrodynamic and Geomorphic –The proposed construction of wharves, associated reclamations and dredging to form the wharf batter slope and shipping channel will modify the existing bathymetry and reduce flow speeds, but these effects are highly localised being in the immediate vicinity (<40m) of the proposed dredging site. Predicted changes in sediment transport caused by the proposed dredging and structures are minimal and highly localised. Negligible impact on the tidal elevation and timing are expected.

Water Quality –The effects of dredging on water quality are considered to be minor, with effects of the project considered to be negligible in the long term. Consent conditions will adequately manage any water quality issues that arise during the dredging.

Ecology – Management techniques used to control the dredging can be used to ensure the level of turbidity is maintained to avoid adverse effects on seagrass beds. There will be a loss of any pipi that are within the area to be dredged and within the footprint of the proposed wharf and reclamation and the tuangi and pipi found in the adjacent areas will be subject to increased turbidity during dredging operations. The turbidity effect on water quality and species is considered to be transient. The recovery of the dredged sea floor is expected to replicate the rest of the dredged harbour channel. As per previous dredging campaigns, dredging will be undertaken using methodologies which limit the plumes of fine sediment that travel beyond the dredged areas, which will minimise the effects on ecology.

Landscape and Visual – A landscape assessment was prepared by Brown NZ Limited (2019). The Stella Passage project is located in an already highly modified environment that is already defined from the rest of Te Awanui. It is considered that the developments proposed by the project are continuations of the existing landscape and overall the effects are not expected to alter the identity of the area. Effects on Whareroa Marae are considered to be low.

Avifauna – There are no adverse effects expected on birds associated with the Sulphur Point development, given the sand pile will remain unchanged. The reclamation and expansion at Mount Maunganui will remove a rock wall which is the habitat of red-billed gulls and little blue penguins. POTL proposes to mitigate the effects on red-billed gulls by attempting to relocate them to the northern end of Sulphur Point and if relocation is not successful prior to construction starting leaving the equivalent area of the existing rock wall habitat in place. For the little blue penguins, a nesting box colony is proposed to be established. Effects are assessed as being able to be avoided with these mitigations in place.

Marine Mammals – three marine mammal species enter the harbour on an occasional basis, being bottlenose dolphins, killer whales and New Zealand fur seals. There is the potential for there to be adverse effects on these species during the pile driving associated with construction of the wharves,

however this will be managed by the use of marine mammal observers, cameras, shutdown zones for when marine mammals are spotted and a bubble curtain to reduce the impact of underwater noise associated with pile driving, which will ensure adverse effects are avoided.

Navigation, Recreation and Public Safety – The Stella Passage project does not introduce a new hazard as recreational users that transit through Stella Passage must co-exist with existing port operations. During the dredging activities there is a potential navigational risk to recreational users, although this activity is not uncommon in the Tauranga Port Zone due to the maintenance dredging that is required, and POTL will address the risk through conditions. The proposed wharf structures and associated reclamations are in line with the existing developments and do not create any further restriction to those wanting to navigate the channel. The ship to shore cranes that will sit on the proposed Sulphur Point extensions are not an issue up to 286m south of the existing wharf and beyond that articulated booms to meet a 78m height restriction will be required (due to the proximity of Tauranga Airport).

Construction Noise – Noise associated with the construction of the project including pile driving meets the requirements of the District Plan and relevant Noise Standard. In relation to Whareroa Marae in particular, noise levels will be at or below the existing noise environment. Mitigation has been offered to manage noise effects, including the limiting of the operational hours of piling.

Air Quality – The effects of the proposal on air quality are so small that they are unlikely to be discernable in air quality measurements. Even on a very conservative screening assessment of PM2.5, cumulative effects once the project is operational would remain well below the relevant air quality guidelines and standards.

Public Health – An assessment of public health has been undertaken which has determined that the incremental risks from the increase in the number and size of ships using the expanded wharfs at Sulphur Point and the Mt Maunganui are within acceptable risk levels established by national and international regulatory agencies and in many cases below negligible risk criteria.

Cultural Effects - Iwi and hapū have raised the following concerns relating to POTL's proposed development due to the possible affects on culturally significant sites and other key cultural values:

- Te Paritaha - Adverse effects resulting from the dredging on this important pipi bed;
- Whareroa Marae – The presence of industry (including the Port) in close proximity to the marae and the potential effects on traditional kaimoana gathering sites and the seagrass beds out from Whareroa Marae;
- Te Awanui – Potential tidal changes up harbour and the erosion or accretion this may cause. POTL's modelling does not suggest that this will occur. Equally, the change in channel depths will not alter the sediment sources entering the harbour that cause the accretion up harbour. The further development in the harbour contributes to the feeling of tangata whenua of a loss of connection and access to the harbour;
- Air Quality – Air quality in the Mount Maunganui Industrial catchment;
- Taiao - Further development within the harbour will cause further reduction and connection with taiao and compromise the ability for the exercising of kaitiakitanga; and
- Mauri - The proposed development will result in further degradation of the mauri of Tauranga moana.

POTL has proposed a comprehensive mitigation package focused on mitigating the specific effects raised by tangata whenua prior to and during the Environment Court hearing. Over the term of the consent, the cost of the mitigation is expected to be approximately s 9(2)(b)(iii). This includes contributions to Tauranga Moana Iwi to continue their Cultural Effects Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (CEMMP) for Te Awanui Tauranga Harbour. It also includes contributions to an Iwi controlled Trust and a Marae Infrastructure Fund. POTL intends to offer the proposed mitigation package regardless of whether the resource consent application is considered via the existing route or the fast-track process.

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:

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) is of relevance to the Stella Passage project. The NZCPS seeks to achieve the purpose of the RMA in respect of the coastal environment of New Zealand. The Stella Passage project is consistent with the objectives and policies of the NZCPS, with the following noted in particular:

- A sustainable national transport system requires an efficient national network of safe ports, servicing national and international shipping;
- The infrastructure as proposed will enable people and communities to provide for their economic, social and cultural well-being of the community;
- Ports depend on and have a functional need to be located within the coastal environment;
- The reclamations required as part of this project will provide significant regional or national benefit;
- Providing for further Port development adjacent to and within the existing Port operational area ensures integrated management of resources in the coastal environment;
- Consultation and engagement has been undertaken with iwi who have an interest over the

harbour, as well as hapū for port land, to recognise their kaitiakitanga.

- Adverse effects on indigenous taxa that are listed as threatened or at risk are able to be avoided.

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 allows for time savings of up to three years and millions of further dollars in consenting costs. POTL's experience is that the normal RMA processes for consenting is lengthy and difficult. To date the Stella Passage project has cost in excess of **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)** and it has been three years since the consent application was lodged with BOPRC, as set out in more detail below. That is for a project with a restricted discretionary activity status that has been signalled in the Regional Coastal Environment Plan for many years.

Conditions agreed on are increasingly complex and onerous, which has a cost in terms of process and compliance costs. Additionally, decisions often seek to create a compromise whereby restrictions and limitations are imposed through conditions that have the potential to result in a loss of productivity of the Port.

With respect to timeframes, POTL's experience includes the following examples:

- Mount Maunganui Wharves and Stormwater Consent – consultation began in 2012 and the final cultural impact assessment was received in 2017. The application was lodged on 21 December 2017 and the consent was subsequently granted on 7 June 2019.
- Channel Deepening and Widening Consent – the application was lodged on 23 July 2009 and the consent granted in March 2013 after two Environment Court hearings and an appeal to the High Court.
- Stella Passage Development – Consultation began in 2018 and an application to have the project fast tracked was made in November 2020 under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Approvals) Act 2020. This application was declined and a resource consent application for the project was lodged with BOPRC on 28 May 2021. The Environment Court hearing was held in February 2023 (after being delayed from July 2022) and an interim decision was released on 13 December 2023.

With respect to the costs of the process, POTL's experience is that the process for reconsenting its dredging and stormwater consents were **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)** and **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)** respectively. This does not include costs in regard to consent conditions and mitigation packages.

Given the cost and delays POTL has faced to date, the fast-track process offers much more certainty that the Stella Passage project will be consented in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

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 is ready to be fast-tracked as the necessary expert assessments and an Assessment of Environmental Effects have been prepared. If the project is listed, an application could be lodged with the EPA within one month of the Act becoming law. Therefore, referring this project will demonstrate the efficient operation of the fast-track process.

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

Local government plan or strategy

Please explain your answer here:

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Regional Coastal Environment Plan (Regional Coastal Environmental Plan) recognises that provision for the development of additional shipping capacity, including capital dredging in appropriate locations at the Port of Tauranga is important to the continued and efficient operation of the Port. The Sulphur Point and Mount Maunganui extensions are explicitly provided for in the Regional Coastal Environmental Plan, and are both restricted discretionary activities.

The Tauranga Moana Infrastructure Action Plan identifies the Project as a priority project, and includes it as the first item on a Ten Point Action Plan. It refers to the Port of Tauranga's capacity as an infrastructure constraint.

Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

National significant infrastructure

Please explain your answer here:

The Stella Passage development will deliver both nationally and regionally significant infrastructure.

The Port of Tauranga is pivotal to the regional economy of the Bay of Plenty, is a significant component of the national economy and its continued operation is of national importance. The Port of Tauranga currently handles:

- 24% of New Zealand imports and 38% of New Zealand exports by tonnes
- 21% of New Zealand imports and 50% of New Zealand exports by value
- 33% of New Zealand's total trade by tonnes
- 35% of New Zealand's total trade by value
- 42% of all containers in and out of the country.

As New Zealand continues to grow in population and relies on international trade for its largest industries, the volume of import and export cargo will continue to grow. Port of Tauranga is also currently the only New Zealand port able to accommodate the largest container vessels that visit here.

A Port Zone was established in the Regional Coastal Environment Plan to provide for the Port activities and to recognise that the Port of Tauranga cannot relocate from its current location and its continued operation and incremental growth is of national significance. The Regional Coastal Environment Plan also recognises that the port areas including the Tauranga Harbour and its channels necessary for the operation of the port which is pivotal to the regional economy and a significant component of the national economy and that its continued operation is of national significance.

Commercial port areas, including Tauranga Harbour, and the channels necessary for the operation of ports have been defined in the Bay of Plenty's Regional Policy Statement as regionally significant infrastructure. In the engagement draft of the Transitional National Planning Framework released in September 2023, nationally significant infrastructure was defined to include the port facilities of each port company referred to in Part A of Schedule 1 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, further demonstrating the role of the Port of Tauranga as nationally significant infrastructure.

Will the project:

increase the supply of housing

Please explain your answer here:

The Port of Tauranga is vital to the increase of housing supply as a gateway for building materials coming into the country. The extension of the Sulphur Point wharves in particular will increase the capacity for building materials to be imported, supporting the increase in supply of housing.

Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The Stella Passage project is one of national importance in New Zealand's efforts to create a resilient, carbon efficient and sustainable supply chain. The proposed development removes the constraint on the ability of the Port of Tauranga to meet growth in demand for shipping services to and from New Zealand. Other ports are unable to meet this need due to their own constraints on infrastructure capacity as well as environmental concerns.

To understand the project's impact, early in 2023 Port of Tauranga commissioned a report by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research on the opportunity cost of not proceeding with the Stella Passage project.

The report highlights the facts that:

- New Zealand will miss out on \$485 to \$749 million of annual GDP by 2032 without the extension of the container wharves as proposed by this application;
- The absence of the berth extension will cost New Zealand up to \$2.78 billion in annual export revenue once capacity at the Tauranga Container Terminal is reached;
- The absence of the berth extension will reduce annual imports by about \$2.52 billion nationwide.

POTL also obtained an Economic Impact Report from Warren Hughes in 2020. This economic impact report only looked at a 220m Sulphur Point southern wharf extension and the associated dredging. The revenue associated with a 220m wharf extension and associated dredging was estimated to be **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)**, it would create 368 jobs in total and result in **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)** value added or gross regional product. As the increased capacity of the container terminal is realised, the annual additional employment was expected to be 81 jobs and revenue of **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)**. The additional extensions and development proposed as part of this project will obviously have far greater economic impacts than what is reflected in Warren Hughes' report.

Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The Port of Tauranga is an important gateway for primary industries, in particular the kiwifruit and dairy industries. The expansion of the Port will ensure capacity is available for increases in the exports that these industries generate as they continue to grow.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The Port of Tauranga supports the development of natural resources by providing a gateway for exports of natural resource products.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The proposed development ensures that Port of Tauranga will be able to accommodate more than one large container ship at a time. Larger ships offer the most carbon efficient mode of transport. This is because the largest proportion of greenhouse gas emissions in New Zealand's container supply chain relates to the 'blue water' or ocean-going component of the cargo journey. Landside emissions from road or rail transport contribute only a small percentage of the total carbon emissions related to container imports and exports. Providing for bigger ships means less small vessel trips, which has the effect of lowering overall carbon emissions.

For example, Port of Tauranga regularly receives visits from vessels with capacity of around 9,500 TEUs. The carbon footprint for a 20 foot, 15 tonne dry container from Shanghai to Port of Tauranga on a ship of that size is smaller than the same box shipped from Shanghai to Auckland on a 4,500 TEU vessel, even when taking into account the transfer by rail between Tauranga and Auckland.

The wharf extensions and associated dredging is a building block in the POTL's overall emission reduction strategy. The extension will allow more cargo to enter the terminal. Additional cargo will be the catalyst for investment in electric stacking cranes to allow intensification of stored containers, reducing the number and travel distances of the straddles operating within the terminal. The installation of electric stacking cranes is dependent on the construction of the wharf extensions and associated additional capacity created.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

As a company operating the Port of Tauranga, POTL is recognised as a lifeline utility under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (Schedule 1, Part A). Lifeline utilities play a vital role in recovery from natural hazards, and have statutory duties such as the need to ensure the ability to function to the fullest possible extent, even though this may be at a reduced level, during and after an emergency. Expansion of the Port will ensure increased resilience of supply chains in the event of natural hazard emergency.

Any new wharf structures are designed to the latest seismic standards. The proposed wharves will be 2.6m above Mean High Water Spring sea level affording plenty of protection from sea level rise.

Will the project address significant environmental issues?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The Stella Passage Development contributes to decarbonisation, as it will allow the Port to accommodate larger, more carbon efficient vessels. In addition, additional cargo will be the catalyst for investment in the electrification of container handling, as outlined elsewhere in this application.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

A full planning assessment of the project against the relevant statutory planning documents has been undertaken. Its conclusion is that the project is consistent with those documents, which are the:

- Bay of Plenty's Regional Policy Statement; and
- Bay of Plenty's Regional Coastal Environment Plan.

Anything else?

Please write your answer here:

POTL would like to emphasise that to date it has costs in excess of \$9(2)(b) on obtaining resource consent for the Stella Passage project, being a process that it begun in 2018. The RMA process is extremely inefficient for critical infrastructure such as this Stella Passage project, and POTL seeks that the project be listed in the Fast-track Approvals Bill to make use of the fast-track process for this reason.

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?

No

If yes, please explain:

The Port's wharves currently have 2.6m of free board above Mean High Water Spring sea level. A report by NIWA, Tauranga Harbour Extreme Sea Level Analysis, March 2017, predicted a worst case scenario of 1.59m sea level rise by the year 2130. This scenario was based on a future of high emissions and the upper-end of the likely range. Even taking the worst case scenario, the Port would have 1m of free board remaining in 110 years' time.

Any new wharf will be designed to the latest international standards. These standards use displacement-based design methods to withstand the effects of earthquakes. The Port has site specific spectral hazard assessments performed to ensure the modelling of the interaction between the wharf and soil is done to best practice. The outcome is a wharf structure that, even after a 500 year earthquake event, will be repairable, with any damage to structural elements designed to occur in accessible locations. The proposed wharf extensions will provide modern infrastructure that benefits the region and national robustness to recover from natural disasters.

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:

The Port of Tauranga Limited places great importance on ensuring compliance with resource consents, District and Regional Plans and regulations. The Port's operation area is shared by many different parties, who all have a part to play when it comes to compliance with the numerous conditions across many consents that govern the Port's operations, monitoring and maintenance. POTL has a positive record of compliance with consent conditions, and compliance issues experienced in the past have typically related to minor incidents that have been quickly addressed. POTL has been issued with four abatement notices in its history, two of which were cancelled soon after issue. These low-level enforcement actions have always been promptly addressed to a high standard and no further action has been taken by the relevant local authority.

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:

Cory Lipinski

Important notes