

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF DEE ISAACS (CULTURAL)

Northport has committed to meaningful ongoing engagement with mana whenua. This has included engaging early with a view to understanding the potential cultural issues and to make a good faith attempt to address them.

Initial engagement with mana whenua on the Project was undertaken prior to lodgement of the resource consent applications and, importantly, remains ongoing. Northport has a pre-existing relationship with mana whenua, but engagement with mana whenua specifically in relation to the Project began over five years ago. To assist with engagement with mana whenua on this Project Northport engaged a facilitator, Mr Cooper, to identify and coordinate relevant groups, and to facilitate meetings / hui.

Three mana whenua groups were identified as being potentially affected by the Project, being Patuharakeke, Te Parawhau and Ngātiwai. Therefore, Northport's cultural engagement has focused on these iwi, hapū.

Northport acknowledges the important cultural, historical, and spiritual associations of iwi, hapū with Poupouwhenua/Whangārei Te Rerenga Parāoa. Northport also acknowledges that the Project will have a range of cultural effects for iwi, hapū.

Northport has formulated a comprehensive cultural mitigation proposal – an integral part of its wider effects management framework – that includes a range of initiatives aimed at addressing cultural effects. This includes:

- (a) A framework for the establishment and operation, including funding, of a Kaitiaki group with set functions and roles which are intended to be developed by the group.
- (b) Harbour restoration and enhancement.
- (c) Provision for mana whenua involvement in matters of project design and delivery.
- (d) A cultural monitoring framework.
- (e) Provision for initiatives to develop expertise and capacity building for mana whenua.

Northport's approach to addressing cultural matters seeks to integrate the concepts of mātauranga Māori (tikanga values) and mātauranga pākehā (western science and systems).

It is clear to me that Northport knows that cultural effects are only able to be properly assessed by mana whenua. It has not purported to undertake its own assessment of cultural effects, or to address them in isolation. Rather, it has, in my opinion, genuinely advanced an engagement process with iwi/hapū in order for it to gain an understanding of these matters so that it can meaningfully attempt to address concerns in an appropriate way.

The cultural effects have been clearly stated by mana whenua, including with regards to the interrelationship between those effects and other disciplines/matters (and vice versa). The (western science) evidence of Northport's experts informs appropriate means to avoid, remedy or mitigate effects associated with the Project, including by addressing cultural matters, insofar as that is practicable/appropriate.

In situations where there is conflict between value systems and the outcomes they support, western science value systems need to be balanced with mātauranga Māori/tikanga values to achieve the most appropriate resolution.

While I acknowledge that iwi, hapū have expressed a different view on the adequacy of the cultural mitigation proposal (in the context of the cultural values of the site; iwi, hapū assessments of the effect of the proposal; and the range of cultural issues raised), in my opinion the proposed cultural mitigation:

- (a) represents a genuine/good faith attempt by Northport to take on board its understandings from the engagement process and to offer a suite of initiatives to meaningfully address cultural effects; and
- (b) represents a culturally appropriate response to the issues raised.

In my view the engagement with – and input of – iwi, hapū has enabled Northport to prepare proposed conditions that effectively respond to cultural issues raised in relation to the Project. I consider that Northport's proposed cultural conditions – and the cultural mitigation proposal they entail – are appropriate to address the cultural effects and concerns that have been identified by iwi, hapū.

In my view, the engagement approach undertaken by Northport aligns with best practice. Northport has achieved proactive and meaningful engagement with iwi, hapū groups. Importantly, Northport is committed to continuing engagement with iwi, hapū and building/strengthening those relationships.

Dee Isaacs

9 October 2023