BEFORE THE WHANGAREI DISTRICT COUNCIL AND NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER	of the Resource Management Act 1991
AND	
IN THE MATTER	of a resource consent application by Northport Limited under section 88 of the Resource Management 1991 for a port expansion project at Marsden Point
APPLICATION NO.	APP.040976.01.01 LU 2200107

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GREGORY JOHN BLOMFIELD

(NORTHPORT – CONSULTATION, DESIGN AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT)

25 August 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and experience

1. My name is Greg Blomfield. I hold a Bachelor of Surveying from the University of Otago and have experience acting as a Land Surveyor in Northland, Auckland and the UK.

2. I am the Terminal Facilities Manager at Northport Limited ("Northport"). I have been in my present role since 2008. My role includes the management of the mobile and fixed infrastructure at the Northport facility. This role includes the management of the port's consenting requirements.

3. Through my role working for Northport, I have also become qualified as a Senior Regional Responder for marine pollution response (MNZ).

4. I am very familiar with the Northport site, with my connection starting as a student during the initial construction of the port. That role included my engagement as an Engineering Surveyor and spanned three summer breaks while studying to become a Land Surveyor. This gave me early exposure to the original construction of the port, including the construction of the wharf and the reclamation.

5. Part of my role during the construction phase was to review the conditions of consent for construction activities, review the monitoring data and to tabulate and present this data with respect to the condition thresholds to the project management team. This gave me an early understanding of the consent conditions associated with the first phase of the port's growth, as well as the efforts that the project team went to during construction to remain compliant. It also provided me with a good understanding of the practicalities of undertaking a large scale construction project, in the marine environment, and the need for consent conditions to have a degree of practicality about them in order for them to be efficient and effective.

6. I have also travelled throughout New Zealand, visiting other ports and engaging with port staff in a similar capacity to my own. I have also visited international ports, including a recent trip to Port Botany in Sydney, to gain a better understanding of container terminals. I also have a connection to the Whangarei Harbour and the surrounding area, having grown up in Whangarei with long standing family ties to the area.

7. I have read the application material; submissions; the Section 42A Report; and the pre-circulated evidence.

Involvement with the Project

8. I have been involved with Northport's Vision for Growth Project (the "Project") since its inception in 2010. More recently, I have been appointed to a project management capacity.

9. My involvement in the Project has included the following key areas:

   (a) Engagement with stakeholders around the design specifications, including seeking expert advice as required;

   (b) Management of the communication strategy, including the Vision for Growth website;

   (c) Engagement and management of experts;

   (d) Representation of Northport throughout the community consultation and engagement process.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

10. In my evidence, I:

   (a) outline the consultation undertaken in relation to the Project;

   (b) summarise Northport's operations in the context of the Project, including its previous dredging and reclamation experience, record of environmental compliance, and the operational constraints it faces;

   (c) discuss the design considerations for the Project, including a summary of the consideration of alternatives;

   (d) briefly explain the methodology, programme and procurement process for construction of the Project;

   (e) address relevant issues raised in the s42A report and submissions; and

   (f) comment on the draft conditions proposed by Northport.

CONSULTATION

Northport's commitment to effective and meaningful consultation

11. In line with its approach to consultation and community engagement generally, Northport has invested significant time, resources and effort into consultation on the Project.

12. Northport's Chairman, Mr Jagger, and Northport's CEO, Mr Moore, both outline in their evidence Northport's commitment to environmental management and to the local community. As part of Northport's commitment to being a good neighbour, Northport considers that meaningful consultation comprises more than simply providing information. It involves genuine dialogue and real consideration of how to approach matters raised. Feedback/input received during consultation has assisted greatly in understanding others' views, and potential areas of concern. This enabled Northport to prepare an informed and comprehensive resource consent.

13. A conscious decision was made and has been communicated to the community and the port's stakeholders, that the port is a part of this community and that we want the resource consenting process to be an open and transparent one. This included Northport's election to follow a traditional council-based hearing process that would be publicly notified.

General approach to consultation

14. The overarching purposes of consultation have been to understand who is likely to be affected by the Project and to ensure they are made aware of and understand the Project and have been afforded an opportunity to be involved; and to carefully consider and where appropriate, respond to feedback received. Northport's view is that the outcome of the resource consent process needs to be one where the port can continue to operate as part of the community, and as a responsible business. Public involvement in the Project's development is a fundamental part of achieving that, and the Project has developed iteratively in response to public feedback.

15. The general approach to public consultation has been to actively engage with parties in a manner that is genuine, transparent, and open; and to allow sufficient time for all parties to consider substantive issues and respond. To achieve this, throughout the various stages of the Project, Northport has utilised a range of methods to engage with different parties - this has included a dedicated website, in

person meetings, phone calls and emails, attending public events, as well as holding several community information sessions.

16. Consultation has been undertaken both before and after the lodgement of the resource consent applications for the Project, and has proceeded through to, and will continue during, the hearing of those applications.[1]

Public and stakeholder consultation

Consultation with the public generally[2]

17. Public consultation began in 2017 with the launch of the Project and our website through an 'advertorial' in the local newspaper, the Northland Advocate. We also undertook a public letter drop to local residents, which included an information brochure (refer to **Annexure A**). Northport's CEO sent an email to a list of Northport key stakeholders. A sign was also placed on the public viewing platform on the eastern boundary of the port, encouraging the community to visit the website. Initial engagement with Patuharakeke was also undertaken.

18. The letter drop provided Northport the opportunity to get out in the local community, to deliver the letter to locals living in the area, but to also engage with residents when delivering the letters. I personally delivered to all of the addresses on the south side of the harbour, with Mr Moore delivering to the Northern side residents. My experience with delivering the letters direct was very positive, with residents very keen to engage with me, to understand more about the proposal, as well as confirming interest in wanting to visit the website to review more of the documentation being made available.

19. The areas where the letter drop was delivered to were selected based on local proximity to the port. Deliveries were also made to other local residents we considered may have an interest in the future of the region, its growth, and the benefits and effects that this growth may bring. A map of the streets visited and delivered to is included in **Annexure A**.[3]

20. The letter drop and website were designed to enable residents and stakeholders to be informed and to provide feedback. The feedback has been a very important

[1] Section 8 of the AEE sets out those groups that were identified for targeted consultation.
[2] Details of the public consultation undertaken by Northport are set out in Section 8 of AEE.
[3] See Figures 10 & 11.

aspect of the consultation process, as it has helped the Project team adapt the proposal elements, and confirm that we are “on the right track” with others.

21. Other public consultation is summarised below:

(a) *Northland Field Days (1 - 3/3/2018).* Northport took the opportunity to attend the Northland Field Days in Dargaville in 2018. The field days provided a platform to actively engage with thousands of people attending the site over three days. Northport used a side opening shipping container to enable the engagement, which was filled with posters, and a large screen TV showing the Vision for Growth Video. A range of Northport staff attended the event.

(b) *A & P Show, Barge Park (5/12/2020 & 3/12/2022).* Northport attended the 2020 and 2022 A & P Shows at Barge Park. In both instances, Northport had a site central in the main area, with good foot traffic. Attending the site provided the public with an opportunity to see the Northport video and look over the presentation material, as well as speak with senior staff working on the Project, including Northport’s lead planner, Mr Hood.[4] Organisers of the 2022 event confirmed that over 10,000 people had attended the event.

Figure 1 - A & P Show, Barge Park 2020

[4] Mr Hood only attended the 2022 event.

Figure 2 - A & P Show, Barge Park 2022

22. Through the numerous initiatives, from attending local public events, to taking our van on the road, to hiring meeting halls, the feedback was generally ‘we support it' and ‘why hasn’t it started already’.

Website – Vision for Growth (www.visionforgrowth.co.nz)

23. In 2017 Northport launched a dedicated Project website. This website includes a range of information, including summaries of technical reports and a video. The website has been progressively updated as the Project has evolved. Technical reports were added to the website for public viewing as they become available, including the final application documents (the AEE and attached reports).

24. The website provided a platform for Northport to engage with the community. Key features of the website include:

    (a) a comments section which provided people with the opportunity to make comments, suggestions, or to ask questions;

    (b) an invitation was extended to persons and groups to tour the port;

    (c) a submissions section detailed the process for filing a submission on the resource consent application; and

    (d) a sign up section for those seeking to receive updates on the Project as it evolves.

25. Examples of direct feedback through the website includes:

(a) *"I think this is a great idea and process, and I fully support the vision. Wish you all the best in building a port for the future, and look forward to be involved and contributing wherever I can."*

(b) *"A very exciting piece and I truly believe that Northland and neighbouring regions with benefit greatly by this."*

(c) *"It seems to me that Northport is ideally suited to expansion in conjunction with a rail link and coastal shipping."*

26. Some of the key indices from the analytics from the website since December 2020 are as follows:

(a) 8,900 users engaged with the website, 8,700 of them new users, with an average engagement time of 1min 19seconds.

(b) 13,000 home page views, 32,000 total page views

(c) New Zealand had the highest user rate (5,500), followed by USA and Australia, both approx. 1000 users.

(d) Files downloaded was recorded as 2,700.

27. This data confirms that the website was used on a regular basis, with good engagement with the information and documents based on the website. It also confirms that there was regular engagement with the website as well as a very wide range of interaction, both nationally and internationally. It also shows that a high number of users also downloaded files, including expert studies that were undertaken during the consultation process.

Port tours

28. Since 2018, well over 800 people have taken up the opportunity to experience a port tour as part of consultation on the Project.

29. Port tours have been advertised and undertaken throughout the public engagement process. The tour is conducted either via a 10-seater Transit Van owned by Northport, or via a coach or bus hired for the occasion when numbers required it,

such as when the local retirement village indicated it was interested in knowing more about the port.

Figure 3 - Local Retirement Village taking part in a Port Tour

30. Tours were generally conducted by myself or the Port CEO, Mr Moore. Those attending the tours varied widely, from local residents to interest groups, clubs and businesses. The tour was run free of charge for interested parties, with the focus on giving the community access to see the port and better understand the Project, while providing a senior staff member to show and explain the port's operations, as well as answer their questions during the tour.

31. The tour would typically start with viewing the latest of the port's consenting videos. Following that, a brochure was provided to the participants showing the port layout as well as the proposed expansion.

Figure 4 - Group watching animation video of the port prior to Port Tour

32. The port operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Therefore, the tour itself is undertaken in a way that provides safe access through the port to view the operations and describe the future expansion, but also flexible to ensure that the

participants get to see an operational port, with description of where and how future expansion is proposed to take place. The focus of each tour was also dependant on the interests of the group on the tour, providing more time in areas of high interest.

33. The tours were undertaken over a large period of time, during all seasons and environmental conditions. This therefore gave the community a very real understanding of how the port operates, including how it manages its environmental responsibilities on a daily basis, including dust management, stormwater management, lighting and noise as examples.

34. Feedback from the tours has been very positive, with a relatively high number of participants reengaging with the port to arrange further tours for their friends and family, business associates, and in some cases for themselves.

Targeted consultation with the Marsden Bay and Whangarei Heads communities

35. The Marsden Bay and Whangarei Heads communities were identified for targeted consultation regarding the Project due to their proximity to Northport and feedback we had received through the website and general engagement.

36. Northport engaged in written correspondence with members of the Marsden Bay community. This included emails, several mailouts and letter drops to update the community as to progress with the Project. Additionally, two meetings were held at Albany Road, attended by myself and Northport's noise expert, Mr Fitzgerald. These meeting were primarily focused on the residents' primary concern of noise, but also involved discussion on all aspects of the Project, including the design and layout of the proposed facility.

37. Feedback received from the Marsden Bay community influenced the development of the Project, including the location of the tug facility. The general consensus when talking to the residents was that they understood that the port needed to grow, however, if possible, the location of a tug facility on the western side of the port would mean that noise from the tugs during the night would be a new effect that they would not like to have. Northport therefore undertook to position the tug facility on the eastern edge of the port, away from these residents.

38. Another example of influence from the community has been the high mast light towers. The towers are 35m high and are painted bright white. Generally, the port is low lying, so the view from Marsden Bay towards Mt Manaia is interrupted by these

vertical columns. Residents raised this observation, asking if there is anything we can do to limit the light towers. While there is not much Northport can do to limit the number of towers, as these play a critical health and safety, as well as security, role for the port, we did establish that there is no requirement from any regulator to have the towers painted bright white. Northport engaged its landscape expert to undertake a colour palette review for the towers with the relative background in mind. A colour was then selected, with towers being progressively repainted to assist in making them more recessive within the background environment.

39. A comparison between the old white tower vs the new recessive-coloured towers can be seen in the below figure. Northport intends to continue to use recessive colours for the light towers associated with the Project and has proposed a consent condition requiring this.

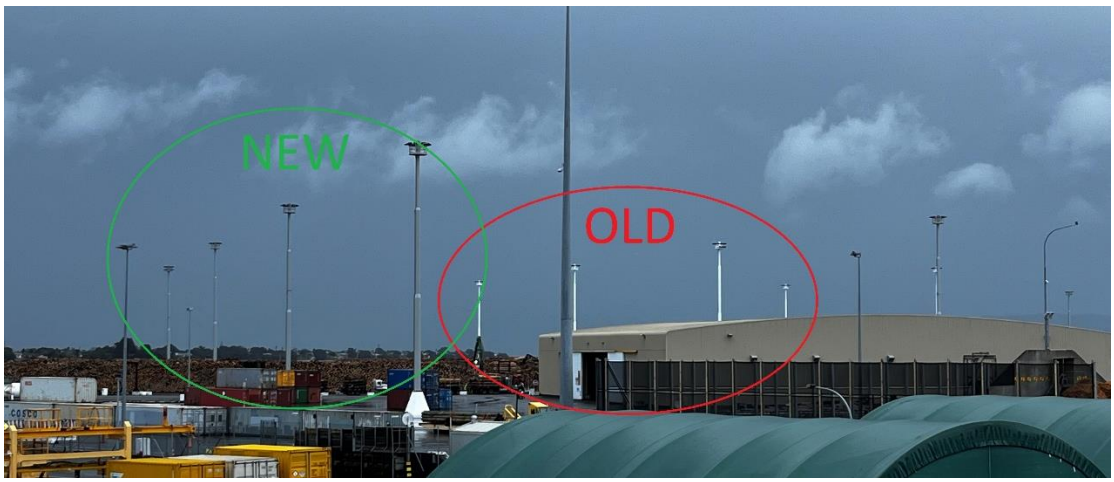


Figure 5 - Port lighting tower colour comparison: old white towers vs new neutral tone towers

40. Northport held two community drop-in information days at the Parua Bay Community Centre and McLeod Bay Hall. I attended both of these information days, together with the Port CEO, Board chairman, and a planning consultant.

41. 30 people were recorded as attending the McLeods Bay Hall event, with 17 attending the Parua Bay Community Centre. A feedback form was also provided as part of the engagement. Most attendees were interested to know more about the Project before making up their mind about the merits of it. In person feedback was very positive and appreciative of the commitment Northport was making to keep the community informed.

Stakeholder consultation

42. Throughout the consultation process, Northport has endeavoured to identify and engage with key stakeholders. As part of this, through the website people could register to be included in being updated about key milestones of the Project (as outlined above).

43. Primary objectives of stakeholder engagement have been to facilitate informed responses to the Project; to receive input from stakeholders regarding potential effects relevant to them, and the types of expert investigations needed; and, in some cases, to receive feedback on draft technical reports circulated to key stakeholders.

44. Engagement has taken many forms over a significant timeframe, including formal meetings, emails, telephone calls, personal communications and Northport attending the meetings of several local groups. I have been personally involved in the majority of this consultation, as have a number of other key Project personnel. Northport has also made its independent expert team available for discussions.

45. Below I summarise stakeholder engagement:

    (a) Northland Regional Council (NRC) – Engagement with NRC has included meetings with senior staff within NRC, as well as with Councillors. This engagement has been a combination of meetings at NRC offices, as well as site tours and presentation as the Project has developed. Northport was also an active participant through the recent Regional Plan Review process, which included informing the planning staff of the future plans of Northport to assist with the wider understanding of the port's growth strategy.

    (b) Whangarei District Council (WDC) – Engagement with WDC has included meetings with senior staff within WDC, as well as Councillors. Staff have been engaged with over the course of the Project to help inform details within the proposal. Engagement has included site visits with staff. Northport has also been an active participant with recent Plan Changes[5] lead by the WDC.

    (c) Ruakaka Economic Development Group (REDG) – A group presentation to REDG was given by Northport CEO Mr Moore in October 2020. Mr Moore has provided regular updates to REDG with respect to the progress of the Project.

[5] Including Whangarei District Council Plan Change 88.

(d) Engagement with a number of government agencies has also been an important part of the consultation process. Agencies such as NZ Defence, MBIE, MOT, DOC and Waka Kotahi have all been a part of the engagement process since 2017 as the Project has evolved and developed.

(e) Channel Infrastructure (CHI) – Northport has engaged with CHI (previously Refining NZ) Chairperson, CEO and staff since the launch of the Project. CHI have assisted in multiple aspects, including providing advice on expert consultants, which has helped the development of the Project through to where it is today. Engagement has been a two-way street in some cases, with both parties seeking assistance from the other with future development plans.

(f) Marsden Cove Fishing Club members – The local fishing club has been informed of the Project and, importantly, has provided information to its members on behalf of Northport about the Project. A large number of the members undertook port tours set up for the fishing club.

(g) Bream Bay Coastal Care (BBCC) – In December 2021 Northport met with members from BBCC. The meeting was beneficial in helping both parties understand that we have a common interest with regard to environmental management.

(h) Bream Head Conservation Trust (BHCT) – BHCT has been engaged with over the course of the Project through Northport's CEO, Mr Moore's, involvement with the Trust Board as a trustee. While Mr Moore has resigned from his position from the Trust Board, Northport's values still align with that of BHCT.

Figure 6 - Northport representative Ben Sweeny at opening of BHCT new facilities (from BHCT website)

(i) Te Araroa Trail – Senior staff with Te Araroa Trust have been contacted with respect to the Project. At this point in time the engagement has not needed to progress until construction type works that may affect the connection at Marsden Point begin.

(j) Orca Research Trust (ORT) – Northport has been engaging with Ingrid Visser and her team since 2019. Engagement around the Project has been a part of the relationship that has formed between the parties, as well as a working relationship whereby Northport has been able to assist ORT with sighting information and validation of mammals in the harbour, as well as assisting with staff and vessels in a real event to manage whales off the coast to prevent a stranding.

(k) Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve Committee (WHMRC) – Engagement with WHMRC has typically been through verbal and written discussions. Northport has listened to some of the concerns raised and has fed that back through to the expert team undertaking assessments. Additional modelling has also been undertaken to assist with providing assurances around these concerns. A presentation to the Committee members has also been undertaken to provide information, as well as give a chance to further engage.

(l) Ruakaka Resident and Ratepayers Association Inc (RRRA) – Northport has attended one of the RRRA meetings held in Ruakaka and presented to the

group the port expansion Project. There was a mix of responses to the presentation, with the general feedback being very positive and pleased that Northport had taken the opportunity to involve the community. The letter received from the Secretary following the meeting is at **Annexure A**.

Feedback from public and stakeholder consultation

46. In my view, the public and stakeholder consultation undertaken has been invaluable for Northport to understand the key issues associated with the Project from the perspectives of the public and key stakeholders. Northport has listened to the views expressed, and has responded to those, including where appropriate, amending, redesigning, or tailoring the Project. Northport has also ensured that its independent expert team has remained briefed on progress with, and responses from public/stakeholder engagement, and the experts have taken account of and responded (as appropriate) to views expressed during consultation.

47. As can be demonstrated through the level of submissions received through the public notification of this application, there has been strong interest in it. The high number of positive submissions highlights that, to a large extent, that interest is positive. Many of the submissions highlight that Northport have demonstrated a high level of commitment to engage with the public on this application. The positive submissions also highlight that there is a level of understanding that Northland needs the port to be able to expand if it is to be able to meet the demands of the freight tasks of the future and for the region to be able to prosper.

48. A range of potential issues were canvassed during consultation. I summarise below several common themes that emerged during public and stakeholder engagement and how they were addressed.

(a) *Northport needs a rail connection in order handle the capacity demonstrated in this application.* While Northport would welcome a rail connection to the port, Northport is not the party who would build the Marsden Point Rail Spur. Northport has though, and continues to, engage with KiwiRail and government Ministers and representatives, highlighting the benefits of a rail connection to Marsden Point. In July 2023, Kiwirail announced[6] *"We had submitted a business case to build the* [Marsden Point] *spur line to the Government and have been given the go ahead to progress the project to its next stage –*

[6] Northland Rail Programme Newsletter, July 2023.

Detailed Design." Northport continues to address this concern raised by the community with the appropriate parties and is supportive of this announcement.

(b) *Environmental effects on the Harbour* – Northport engaged a team of experts to assist with the study of effects and to then assist with mitigation where appropriate, if the effects cannot be avoided. Through review of the current facility, and our operations and design options, the team has been able to come up with a proposal that meets the design objectives, while also appropriately managing (in Northport's view) effects on the harbour and its users.

(c) *Noise in the residential receiving environment* – Noise for local residents has been a theme and a concern for some time. With expert assistance from Marshall Day Acoustics, in depth monitoring has taken place, modelling of scenarios has been conducted, and a review of operations and procedures has evolved, in consultation with the local residents. While most local residents acknowledge that they live in an environment that includes a working port, most do not want to see the noise from the port increase. Northport recognises this, and through discussion with its expert advisors, has proposed, through the Project, moving to the use of the 'Port Noise Standard'. The proposed approach will require the port to be active in its noise management and will include community engagement as part of the ongoing requirement. It also provides for mitigation of noise for dwellings that see noise reaching a certain threshold. Mr Fitzgerald outlines the relevant terrestrial noise issues in his evidence.

Engagement with iwi/hapū

49. Mr Isaacs addresses cultural issues and Northport's engagement with iwi/hapū in his evidence. I also provide a summary on consultation with iwi/hapū below.

50. Northport has put considerable focus into consultation with iwi/hapū in recognition of their relationship with, and the special status they hold as kaitiaki of, Whangarei Harbour.

51. In his evidence, Mr Moore details Northport's existing relationship with local iwi and hapū, including the special relationship between Northport and Patuharakeke which is recognised by a Te Whakahononga, or Relationship Agreement.[7]

52. Northport is also engaging with Te Parawhau hapū representatives to develop a Relationship Agreement between Northport and Te Parawhau.[8] Both parties share similar aspirations for the people of Northland. These aspirations are intended to be at the foundation of the relationship between Northport and Te Parawhau.

53. Northport also has a relationship with Ngātiwai, as outlined in Mr Isaacs' evidence.

54. Northport greatly values these relationships and has approached the Project with the clear intention to involve iwi/hapū from the outset. This has included liaising with Northland Regional Council to ensure that all relevant iwi and hapū groups were consulted in relation to the Project.

55. Key purposes of Northport's ongoing engagement with iwi/hapū have included to:

    (a) enable iwi/hapū to be informed of, and stay updated as to progress with the Project throughout its development;

    (b) provide iwi/hapū an opportunity to identify and explain the cultural values of Whangarei Harbour and the effects of the Project with respect to those cultural values – and allowing Northport to consider and appropriately recognise and respond to those values/effects; and

    (c) identify opportunities for iwi/hapū to be practically involved in the scoping, design, and effects management (including Northport's proposed "cultural mitigation proposal") of the Project and to facilitate such involvement.

56. Consultation with iwi/hapū commenced at the outset of the Project, with Patuharakeke being engaged with during the October 2017 launch of the Project that was incorporated into the celebration of Northport's 15th anniversary.

57. Consultation of the Project was then assisted by a cultural facilitator engaged by Northport, Jason Cooper. Mr Cooper started with the Project in August 2020. His role was to assist Northport with engagement with local iwi and hapū. His role

[7] Details of the Te Whakahononga / Relationship Agreement between Northport and Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board are confidential between the parties.
[8] Details of the Relationship Agreement between Northport and Te Parawhau are confidential between the parties.

included calling meetings, facilitating meetings, and providing meeting notes. Mr Cooper held this role until May 2022.

58. Northport then engaged a cultural engagement specialist, Dee Isaacs, to assist with and facilitate engagement with iwi/hapū. A key part of Mr Isaacs' role was to help Northport understand the cultural effects raised in the Cultural Effects Assessment prepared by Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board. This involved Mr Isaacs engaging with and getting to know local iwi and hapū on a personal level, to understand the concerns being raised through the reports and during hui, and assisting Northport with its understanding of the concerns. Mr Isaacs goes into this in more detail in his evidence.

59. Throughout the Project development, the majority of the engagement with iwi and hapū was small, focused hui, with a group formed to review technical reports as they were prepared in draft by Northport. The group had representatives from Patuharakeke, Te Parawhau, and Ngātiwai. There was, however, also a number of larger hui.

60. There was also hui called for wider discussion with iwi and hapū, including a large one held in Ruakaka, as well as one held at Barge Park in Maunu. Both of these hui were attended by Northport technical experts, with presentations made in their specialist fields. Questions by the attendees were then taken by the experts and answered where possible.

Feedback from iwi/hapū

Feedback from iwi/hapū through the engagement process is outlined in detail in Mr Isaacs' evidence.

Post-notification consultation

61. Northport elected to follow a standard resource consent process over potential fast-track or direct referral processes as it committed to meaningfully engage with and provide the public and stakeholders with a better opportunity to get involved and be heard. For the same reason, Northport requested that the resource consent application be publicly notified.

62. Northport continued to consult with iwi/hapū following lodgement of its application for resource consents, including Patuharakeke, Te Parawhau and Ngātiwai, as outlined in Mr Isaacs' evidence.

63. It also hosted a number of consultation events throughout Whangarei, including taking the Northport van to public locations. Community locations and events included: Taurikura, McLeod Bay, Whangarei Town Basin, Waipu Markets, Whangarei Growers' Market and Marsden Cove. The van was used as a travelling billboard. It was set up with a TV that can play the VFG videos and provided a backdrop to engage the public with brochures and handouts. During the notification period, we were able to provide people with an understanding of the submission process, including the importance of being involved in the process. Using the van to get out to these community-facing locations, we were able to engage with well over 200 people who wanted to know more about the Project.

64. Northport also invited residents from the Marsden Bay area and Reotahi area to community-based meetings regarding Northport's lodgement of its application, with a focus on noise. Mr Fitzgerald attended both meetings, along with myself, where Mr Fitzgerld presented the details of the application with regard to noise. The residents were able to freely engage on the topic, as well as others. I found this to be a very constructive set of meetings.

65. One of the A & P shows covered elsewhere in my evidence coincided with this post lodgement engagement. This was therefore an opportunity to let the community know that Northport had been engaging with them since 2017 and now had lodged an application. We reminded them that this is a public process, that we want the public to provide feedback to us, as well as the council, on all points of the application. Information was provided at the show as to how to access this application information, as well as submission forms. With organisers recording attendance at over 10,000 people, this was a useful event to present the Project to a good cross section of the community, as well as to encourage them to become involved.

66. I return to discuss relevant issues raised in submissions on Northport's resource consent application later in my evidence.

NORTHPORT OPERATIONS

67. Northport's role has expanded and diversified significantly since Northport began operating 2002 and it is cognisant of future opportunities - and requirements - to further expand, adapt and diversify.

Previous dredging and reclamation experience

68. A detailed history of the construction of the Northport facility is set out in the Issues and Options Report.[9] This demonstrates Northport's previous experience with dredging and reclamation.

69. Mr Moore has provided in his evidence a summary history of Northport. Relevantly, in 1999, following the grant of resource consent, dredging, reclamation, and construction were undertaken to create the Northport facility. Construction proceeded in an iterative, staged manner. Stage 1 included the construction of Berths 1 and 2 which was completed in 2002. Berths 1 and 2 together represent a 390 m linear berth, dredging to enable a depth 13.0 m below chart datum, and a 30.7 ha reclamation to provide an operational port area.

70. In 2004, construction of Stage 2 commenced. This involved dredging, reclamation, and construction of an additional berth. Berth 3 was completed in 2007. This saw the construction of an additional 180 m linear berth extension, dredging to enable a depth 14.5 m below chart datum at Berth 3, and a 2.9 ha reclamation.

71. This resulted in Northport's current total berth length of 570 m and total site area of 49.1 ha – 33.6 ha of which is reclaimed.

72. The design and construction ideology also focused on minimising the environmental impact through the reuse of dredge spoil to construct the reclamation of the port. This is a key feature of the current application as well, where Northport is not seeking to dispose of dredge spoil to an offshore seabed location. Instead it can reuse that material in the reclamation to construct that area of hardstand required to handle the growth of the container trade.

73. In practice, dredge spoil was removed from the seabed by the dredge to provide a consistent seabed surface and turning basin for shipping. The material was pumped ashore, with the dredge connected via a pipeline to a discharge point within the reclamation. The sediment was hydraulically placed by the dredge within the reclamation, which provides for a high degree of compaction when the spoil is typically sand material. As the sand continued to be pumped in, it eventually formed land. This was then further compacted using mechanical equipment, with a pavement formed on top to form the port's finished surface.

[9] Appendix 2 to the AEE.

Operational environmental management: noise and transport

74. Mr Moore and Mr Jagger address Northport's commitment to environmental management in their evidence. Below I address certain operational matters.

75. Northport holds a suite of consents, primarily from two previous stages of consenting. Consent conditions within those consents range from construction-based conditions through to operational. The operational conditions provide for the day to day running of the port.

76. Noise from the site is a high priority for Northport. The port has a port service centre (PSC) that is manned 24 hours a day and can be contacted at any time by phone. It is through the PSC that any concerns or complaints can be raised. From time to time, operations at the site are such that residents raise concerns; this is usually at night.

77. Through historical engagement with the local residents, we have established a system of 'notification' vs 'complaint'. The notification process was developed to assist the port with the management of noise. This is where a resident may feel that the noise from the port is rising, or at a level where it may cause issues later in the night if it remains at that level. The PSC can take that notice and warn operations on the site that conditions, if they remain the same, are likely to cause issues for local residents unless something is changed.

78. Northport has also developed a number of management tools to assist with the minimisation of noise. These include looking at the type of operations as well as the environmental conditions, to then issue a noise advisory to the site operations.

79. A recently implemented tool is the 'Noise Risk Wind Rose'. This tool looks at the areas in the community that are down-wind of the port and provides those areas with a risk profile based on wind velocity. When the wind strength and direction falls within these risk profiles during night time operations, the activities onsite are provided with additional notice that there is a need to take particular care due to the environmental conditions.

80. Noise complaints are also received and officially recorded through the PSC. Records of these are supplied to WDC on request and include details of the complainant, the date and time of the complaint, the likely cause of the complaint and what the issue is, as well as the action taken with regards to that complaint.

81. A summary of the number of complaints received on an annual basis is as per the below table.

Years	Total
2015	16
2016	21
2017	19
2018	46
2019	21
2020	8
2021	14
2022	9
2023 (YTD)	9
Grand Total	165

82. Northport continue to review the level of complaints, engage with local residents on the matter, and implement measures to effectively manage the effects of noise. As part of the management of noise, Northport has recently invested in modern container handling equipment. The cranes have a feature that reduces impact noise when lowering the load to the ground, by using a 'soft landing' mode. The selection of container handling equipment that uses 'load sensing hydraulics' means the engine only provides the power required to lift the load, reducing the engine emissions and noise. Both are examples of how modern machinery design is improving, including reduction in noise emissions.

83. At the end of 2018, Northport developed a new role within the business – Business and Environmental Sustainability officer. That role has helped Northport monitor the operational effects that the site has, as well as offer guidance around environmental issues.

84. The impact of Northport on the highway is another area that we are working on through engagement with Waka Kotahi. Northport and Waka Kotahi have established a working group that meets on a monthly basis. The main focus is to understand the forecast operations that either party is likely to undertake, and what impact that may have on the other party. In some cases, that may result in alternative planning being undertaken to minimise disruption to the state highway network. For instance, a large container ship calling at the port may result in an increased volume of trucking in the days following that shipment, therefore closing of a lane on that route for maintenance by Waka Kotahi may be best rescheduled until that volume is reduced, overall minimising the impact on road users on the state highways.

Operational constraints

Berth Capacity

85. As outlined in the AEE and summarised in the evidence of Mr Moore, Northport's current facilities are under pressure and nearing their functional capacity. Ongoing national supply-chain pressures, long-lead times in the development of port infrastructure, and growing demand from shipping companies mean that it is necessary for Northport to expand its facilities.

86. Northport is not developed to its full potential, or in a way that can effectively accommodate other freight streams, for example, containers, cars, and cruise vessels. Availability of berth space and appropriate handling infrastructure to efficiently load and unload container freight will become limiting factors at Northport, constraining its ability to handle increased cargo volumes and more diverse cargo types.

87. To accommodate the changes in freight tasks and to realise the benefits of the opportunities for the regional economy, Northport needs to expand into a facility capable of efficiently handling additional freight streams.

Terminal capacity

88. Northport currently has some capacity to handle containers but is constrained by berth length and storage capacity.

89. The main constraint for the terminal today is the existing cargo demand. As detailed further below, the berth occupancy is currently much higher than industry indices for a facility of this size. Storage onsite is also constrained when multiple demands coincide, in some cases forcing the port to put financial disincentives in place for cargo owners in order to manage volumes.

90. The port has continued to develop the terminal as demand has increased. The facility is now at a tipping point for the construction of an extension to the current facility, however this will only service the short term growth.

91. Substantial investment is required to efficiently handle the anticipated increase in general and high-value container freight that is forecast for the future of Northland and the Upper North Island in a resilient and sustainable way. This has been

highlighted in numerous government reports, including the recently released Freight and Supply Chain Strategy.[10]

Berth occupancy/length

92. Increasing Northport's total berth length and storage areas, and upgrading its handling equipment, will improve the efficiency of the port and enable it to support increased freight volumes.

93. As covered in more detail in the Issues and Options Report[11], the berth is 570m long. This is a continuous length that can cater for a range of vessel sizes. In practice, most vessels calling at Northport are between 170m and 210m, however as larger container vessels call at the facility, we are needing to handle vessels as large as the Tianjin Bridge (294.1m Loa), which as seen in the figure below, restricts the facility down to two vessels.

Figure 7 - Vessel Tianjin Bridge (294.1m) being berthed alongside Berths 2 & 3 at Northport with 180m log ship on Berth 1

94. While the berth length of 570 has no length capacity issues with these vessels, it does restrict other vessels calling at the same time. This impacts the ability to load and discharge other cargo during that period, and ultimately can lead to berth congestion, requiring vessels to have to wait at anchor before getting a berth.

95. There is a measure for berth utilisation or 'berth occupancy' relative to the number of berths, that helps ports and port designers plan for future expansion. In Northport's case, as a three-berth facility, the maximum berth occupancy for all three berths should not exceed 55%.[12] Exceeding this will result in queuing and congestion. Over the past four years, Northport has had an average of 66%. Northport is therefore seeking consents for the Project to provide additional berth capacity.

[10] See https://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/freight-and-logistics/new-zealand-freight-and-supply-chain-strategy/
[11] See Appendix 2 of the AEE, Sec 7.
[12] See Table from UNCTAD Guidelines, reproduced in Issues and Options Report, Appendix 2 of AEE, Sec 7.2.

96. Northport engaged a port design expert from TBA, Mahim Khanna, to provide expert analysis. I understand Mr Khanna is able to use simulation software to study the berth capacity, with inputs including available berth space, vessel configuration, arrival and departure patterns and restrictions, container crane capacity and productivity.

97. The berth capacity study found that a berth of 700m is required, which will provide for two large container vessels. This would provide for two concurrent vessels, one vessel being serviced by gantry cranes, with the second being serviced by mobile harbour cranes.[13]

Freight storage

98. Current storage on-port is at a premium at Northport and must be carefully managed to ensure maximum productivity and timely departure of container vessels. Storage areas distant from the wharf significantly reduce a terminal's efficiency and longer-term viability.

99. As Northport's container freight volumes grow, the efficient handling of container freight will be contingent on having storage and handling areas immediately adjacent to the berths, along with sufficient space for truck movements and associated container handling equipment storage and maintenance. A uniform and well organised yard layout will also be critical.

100. As discussed in the evidence of Mr Moore, Northport is located adjacent to a heavy industrial hub at Marsden Point. This land, while not owned by Northport, has the potential to support port-related growth by accommodating facilities such as bulk storage, empty container storage and maintenance, import vehicle storage, distribution hubs, warehousing, log-receival and scaling, and other port-related activities. However, this land is unsuitable for full container storage (export/import) due to its distance from the wharf.

[13] Refer to the statement of evidence of Mahim Khanna. For completeness, the total proposed facility would have a berth length of 1090m. With the TBA study confirming that a modern and efficient terminal needs 700m, this leaves a residual of 390m to service the balance of the ships calling at the facility. The 390m residual is in fact the length of berth currently referred to as Berth 1 and 2, and is what was built under the first stage of the construction in 2002, and what is typically used to handle the majority of the forestry cargo through the port. Therefore, with the first 390m of berth catering for two vessels, the balance of 700m also at times catering for two large container vessels, the total facility may only have four vessels alongside and be full. However, in normal operating configurations, the facility will be catering for five vessels which will provide for optimum efficiency for all cargo types.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDING ALTERNATIVES

101. The following core operational requirements were developed and have informed the consideration of alternatives:

(a) Berth must be long enough to provide for the size and number of container vessels, and volume of freight anticipated.

(b) The wharf must have structural capacity for ship to shore (STS) container cranes.

(c) The berth needs to be deep enough to allow container vessels to approach and remain alongside the wharf while loading/discharging through full tidal cycles.

(d) Sufficient land is needed behind the wharf to store, move and load/unload containers, accommodate future rail links, provide truck queuing and container exchange facilities and associated ancillary services.

(e) The container terminal design needs to allow for existing freight to remain viable, including berth and storage requirements within the current port facility to be accounted for.

(f) To create a modern efficient terminal with sufficient area to be able to initially handle 250,000 TEU per annum, with up to c.500,000 TEU per annum in the longer term.[14]

102. As part of the design development, Northport considered various options and alternatives to achieve the overall objective of expanding the container port. These are detailed in the Issues and Options Report which is attached as Appendix 2 to the AEE, and which I briefly summarise below.

103. Northport staff have many years of experience in working cargo ships and planning berth availability, including for container ships. This experience, along with review of port sector design manuals and engagement with New Zealand and International ports has helped inform Northport's overall operational layout of the terminal.

104. For a container terminal to function effectively and efficiently, the facility needs to have the ability to handle two container vessels concurrently. There are a wide

[14] Subject to considerable investment in specialised handling equipment, such as STS cranes, automated trucks, and RTG container handlers.

range of reasons why a port needs to have more than one berth designed for container handling, including shipping schedule conflicts, weather delays, berth maintenance and liner services conflicting with non-liner service calls.

105. To quantify this further, Northport engaged international port design experts TBA. TBA used a number of methods, including simulation, (as detailed in their report)[15] to model and confirm a functioning layout for a terminal. The TBA report concluded that Northport requires a two-berth terminal, requiring 700m of berth length, in order for it to meet the project scope of up to c. 500,000TEU per annum.

106. Northport's existing cargo also needs to be maintained, with current berth occupancy rates exceeding 65% for Berths 1 & 2. This means that these two Berths are critical to the handling of cargo other than containers if they are to be able to maintain the current freight demand that exists, primarily from the forestry sector.

107. The Berth 3 section of the facility is also in high demand at present. This will however be required to support the container terminal in a dual role, at times taking container ships, as well as assisting with other cargo demands on the port, such as break-bulk cargos, project cargos, vehicle, cruise and more.

108. Following the determination of the berth length requirement, the design then focuses on the yard design. This is the area that needs to store containers ready for export, as well as receive containers from vessels as imports ready to be distributed. There are other storage requirements in the terminal, including trans-shipment containers (going from one ship to another), coastal shipping, refrigerated containers, etc.

109. The area required for the yard is a function of the annual throughput and the dwell-time of the containers. The dwell time is the amount of time the container is stored in the terminal before being loaded out. Things that affect the dwell time include the efficiency of the supporting modes, such as road and rail.

110. The yard requirements noted above were reviewed by TBA using simulation. This confirmed that the size of the yard was adequate to meet the project scope of up to c.500,000TEU per annum. The TBA report went on to confirm that depending on a number of factors, including port plant and dwell time, the capacity of the port could be increased well in excess of the design target through future investment in a shift to high density stacking port equipment.

[15] See TBA report appended to Issues and Options Report, AEE Appendix 2.

111. It is also worth noting that although the container terminal has been designed primarily as a container terminal, at times the port may be required to use its flexibility to accommodate other cargo within the terminal area and vice versa. This is not uncommon for ports and is a current operating model that Northport employs today. To restrict operations solely to one area of the port or to not allow some operations to take place in others, will in practice see the underutilization of the facility to undertake its primary role, which is to facilitate trade. The port is, however, organized and will manage the site in a safe and logical manner, as has been demonstrated by the port's current operating practices and the proposed layout of the future port.

Design evolution, including alternatives

112. The design development and evolution of the Project has occurred gradually since 2010. The design progression and alternative options assessed are detailed in the Issues and Options Report.[16]

113. Several broad options were considered by Northport when evaluating how and where additional port capacity could be located to meet the Project objective. In summary, these included:

(a) **A location other than Northport:** Northport considered whether its current location is the most appropriate site for additional port capacity. Several alternative locations in Northland were considered and assessed against the operational requirements. None of the locations were found to have all the necessary features and appropriate transport links to establish a modern container terminal. Further, establishing new infrastructure would require considerable investment and would likely present very significant consenting challenges.

(b) **Reconfigure existing port operations:** reconfiguring the existing 49.1 ha footprint would not enable Northport to provide for any meaningful additional container freight capacity or diversity in the freight it handles, nor would it allow Northport to handle increasing freight volumes from the Northland region. Northport also considered the option of reconfiguring the existing footprint, including the consented, but not yet constructed, Berth 4. As noted elsewhere, Berth 4 will enable some additional capacity but will not be

[16] Sections 9 and 10 of the Issues and Options Report, Appendix 2 of the AEE.

sufficient to serve the long-term predictions for demand. As noted in the Issues and Options Report,[17] a container terminal based on the Berth 4 development with a single berth has therefore been discarded for the following reasons:

- The berth does not have the capacity to serve the predicted freight demand, the number of vessels or the volume of containers.
- Northport considers integration of a rail link is critical to Northport's future role in the wider freight network. Without the rail link a greater load would be placed on the road network and the resilience of the transport network would be reduced. The land needed would require Northport to repurpose existing land used for other freight tasks, including moving the woodchip operation, which has significant fixed infrastructure. This would constrain the existing trades and limit the ability of Northport to handle growth in those freight tasks.

(c) **Extend the port footprint**: Northport considered options of expanding its existing footprint to either the north, south, east, or west. A northward or southward expansion are not practical to achieve the core operational requirements. To the west of Northport's footprint, the harbour bathymetry shallows, there are proximate residential areas, and ecologically and culturally important habitats are present, including those at Blacksmiths Creek. Given these constraints, a westward expansion could not be practicably accommodated.

114. An eastern expansion of the existing footprint was chosen as the preferred option for the reasons set out above and for the following further reasons:

(a) It concentrates the Port development, including visual elements, within the existing industrial setting of the current Northport and Channel Infrastructure facilities.

(b) Naturally deep water exists at the berth face, minimising dredging requirements. Dredge spoil can be fully utilised in the reclamation, avoiding the need for sea-based disposal.

[17] Section 9.2.2.2 of the Issues and Options Report, Appendix 2 of the AEE.

(c) Noise sensitive receptors are further from the eastern location, minimising noise impacts and making effective noise management more achievable.

(d) The development can be built without significant disruptions to existing port operations. This will enable Northport to continuing serving the freight needs of its customers throughout the construction.

(e) The same quay line is maintained, minimising further protrusions into the harbour with the resulting changes in hydrodynamics and coastal geomorphology, and minimising effects on other harbour users.

Design development

115. The Issues and Options Report sets out a detailed discussion of the design development and methodology,[18] which I summarise below.

Design analysis – TBA Group

116. As outlined, Northport engaged TBA Group, a specialised container terminal design and operations consultancy, to assist with the container terminal concept design. TBA undertook a series of design evaluations, with each step analysing various external factors and how they would impact the overall design.

117. Mahim Khanna explains in his evidence TBA's process and findings. In summary, the detailed analysis by TBA has independently confirmed key aspects in Northport's initial concept design, namely:

(a) 700m of berth length is required for container handling operations.

(b) Two mobile harbour cranes and two fully operational STS gantry cranes will allow the wharf to theoretically handle 650,000 TEU/annum.

(c) A fully developed terminal on the proposed footprint will have a theoretical capacity of 630,000 TEU/annum assuming a full build out with rubber tyred gantry cranes (RTGs) and a 7-day dwell time.

118. Having confirmed the key parts of the concept design, and selected an eastern expansion as the preferred option, Northport developed a high-level concept for the eastern container terminal. That high-level concept sought to achieve Northport's

[18] Section 10 of the Issues and Options Report, Appendix 2 of the AEE.

design objectives[19] while integrating with existing port operations and surrounding constraints, including but not limited to, the vessel movements associated with the Channel Infrastructure jetties.

Concept design - reclamation

119. Based on its high-level concept, Northport engaged WSP to provide initial design advice and to prepare a Concept Design Report.[20] WSP advised that reclamation, as opposed to a piled wharf, was the only practicable option to gain hardstand storage area, including for the following reasons:

(a) Reclaimed ground can better support the substantial loading typical of marine operations including bulk cargo, containers and associated lifting and handling plant and machinery. This is achieved through engineered densification and compaction of fill.

(b) Exceedance of the geotechnical capacity of a pile supported deck could lead to settlement of piles and damage to deck slabs.

(c) Reclamation is a more resilient construction form. Reclamations require little to no maintenance and are not vulnerable to section loss or decay.

(d) While concrete decks and supporting piles can be designed and constructed to meet durability demands, it is to be expected that the structures will require inspection and maintenance (which practically can be difficult) with significant intervention towards end of life. The operational cost of a suspended deck structure in the longer term is therefore expected to be very high per unit area when compared to reclaimed land.

(e) Reclamation offers better resilience to natural hazards and in particular, earthquakes. The timeframe and cost for a return to operations following a seismic event is significantly lower for a reclamation as compared to a suspended (piled) deck structure. This is because ‘damage’ to the reclamation would take the form of settlement, which could feasibly be repaired by filling and resurfacing works; whereas damage to a pile supported structure will be concentrated at the pile head to deck connection, requiring concrete repair to the top of piles with potential reconstruction of the pile/deck joint.

[19] Described by Mr Moore in his evidence.
[20] Appendix 18 to the AEE.

120. Northport also asked WSP to provide advice on a piled suspended deck as an alternative to reclamation. WSP provided advice on the two alternative methods to construct storage and handling hardstand. It is estimated that the construction cost of a piled suspended deck would be nearly three times the cost. As noted above, the whole of life costs would then only increase for the suspended deck option, while providing a facility that would have loading restrictions due to design and cost limitations. Further to that, dredge spoil would also need to be disposed of as this would no longer be used in the formation of reclamation. This would likely require disposal at sea.

Concept design - wharf

121. The WSP Concept Design Report also considered the user requirements, constraints, and selection criteria (and assessment against those criteria) for several wharf designs.

122. Based on the relevant criteria, an open piled marginal wharf with rock revetment was the chosen option. Various alternative wharf design options were considered and discarded, including:

(a) *Hybrid wharf:* two legs of container cranes supported on the piled portion of the wharf and two legs supported on backfilled backlands. This option was determined to have operational risks and would result in higher levels of damage and require longer operational outage times.

(b) *Diaphragm wall with tie back anchors:* would require more extensive and expensive ground improvement and, if damaged, repair of the diaphragm wall would be more challenging.

(c) *Interlocking circular caissons with gravel or sand infill:* an expensive option and, with the current pricing volatility for steel in the global market, there is potential for further significant cost increases.

(d) *Single combi-pile wall with tie back anchors:* would require significant and expensive ground improvements.

(e) *Twin combi-pile wall structure:* gives rise to similar issues as with the hybrid option.

It is worth noting that the design report is based on the inputs provided to WSP based on today's requirements and constraints. The final design will need to be able to review all of the user requirements and constraints against the design standards of the time, which may result in an alternative design to that provided by WSP and may include for example, reclamation to the seaward edge of the berth.

Tug Facility

123. The current tug facility utilises a Northland Harbour Board designed and built jetty. This jetty has been modified as the reclamation has developed around it, with mainly only the head of the jetty remaining. This is what is used to secure the tugs and pilot vessel, providing land access to the Northtugz staff.

124. While still in the detailed design phase, Northport is currently designing a floating pontoon structure to accommodate the tugs for the separate consented Berth 3 expansion project (to construct berth 4). This will be designed to sit on the eastern edge of the berth 4 reclamation.

125. A number of design inputs need to go into the Tug facility design for the Project, including the tug fleet configuration (size, number, handling ability, etc), depth of water, grade of batter slope adjacent to the mooring location, environmental conditions (wind, waves, etc). All of these parameters will need to be reviewed, with a detailed design confirmed based on these at the appropriate time.

CONSTRUCTION AND PROCUREMENT

126. The WSP report also sets out an indicative construction programme.[21] The construction programme will last approximately three and half years for the completion of the dredging/reclamation and berth construction, depending on dredge style and piling rig configuration.

127. The WSP report also considers a procurement split, with a contractor undertaking the wharf construction, and a second undertaking the reclamation. This is a sensible split between these main construction tasks, however there are of course other options beyond this.

128. In my experience, projects of this scale will typically be broken into key components to be completed by an experienced and qualified contractor. There may be a lead

[21] Section 11 and Appendix A of the Design Report, Appendix 18 of the AEE.

contractor, utilising the services of subcontractors, or the Principal (Northport) may elect to engage contractors separately for these work packages.

129. The design and construction methodology of the wharf structure will be a critical component. Generally, the methodology for the construction of the reclamation will be influenced by the wharf construction, which in turn influences the methodology for the dredging.

130. During previous construction projects for the existing facility, the design of the wharf needed to reflect the geotechnical constraints and user requirements, as well as the practical constraints with regards to contractor equipment and availability. This has resulted in two different wharf structure designs.

131. There are a number of contractors in New Zealand that have good experience with building these types of structures, typically requiring specialist equipment such as jack up barges and piling cranes, therefore it is highly likely that a New Zealand based company will be able to support this type of construction project.

132. Northport also has experience with dredging, both capital works and maintenance works. To date, all capital dredging has been undertaken using a cutter suction dredge. This method of dredging uses a pipeline. The pipe is connected to the dredge head and conveys the sediment in solution from the seabed to the discharge point, in this case, within the bunded area of the reclamation.

133. A similar technique has been used for maintenance dredging, using a trailer suction hopper dredge. This dredge uses a dredge head to cut the material and pump it onboard to a large hopper for containment. It can then transport it to be discharged, either via a discharge valve into the marine environment, or in our case, via a manifold on the bow to a pipeline, discharging it to a bunded area within the reclamation.

134. Both options are viable dredging options that can manage the scale of the dredging works. Both also use a pipeline, when means onsite sediment dispersal is easily managed, with the benefits of hydraulically placing the sediment. Both options are currently available in New Zealand waters, so procurement should not be a problem. Larger trailer hopper dredgers are available offshore, which may be beneficial, however the benefit of dredging faster will need to be balanced with the speed at which the sediment will be pumped into the reclamation, as well as the management of that sediment and the waters used to transport that sediment.

135. Any construction works will need to work with existing commercial port operations. This not only includes Northport commercial shipping operations, but will include those undertaken at the Channel Infrastructure facilities and those heading further up the harbour, such as Golden Bay Cement vessels and Port Nikau destined vessels. Recreational users on the harbour will also need to be considered, with appropriate notification and management in place to allow for these users. Northport has proposed conditions addressing these matters.

RESPONSE TO THE SECTION 42A REPORT

136. I have addressed in my evidence above several matters that are relevant to the s42A Report. I do not provide additional responses.

137. I note that Northport is a Lifeline Utility as classified in schedule 1 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002.[22] Currently Northport is a member of the Northland Lifeline Group and has assisted with the development of the latest (December 2022) version of the Northland Lifeline Group Plan. Northport also currently has an emergency Procedures manual. This manual is periodically updated, and will be updated when any significant changes are made to the port or the operations of the port.

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

138. Throughout the public engagement process, Northport made it clear to the community that it was making a commitment to pursue a transparent process, with full public notification and engagement encouraged. Northport therefore sought full notification following lodgement of the application. Northport also sought additional time for submitters to be able to respond, seeking six weeks from notification.

139. The notification process closed with a total of 175 submissions. A total of 126 were in support the application, 45 in opposition, and four neutral. In general, the proposal is well understood and well supported. However, there are those that do not support the application, with Northport turning further attention to these submitters following the submission period to better understand and respond to their concerns.

[22] Refer s42A para 594

140. While matters raised in submissions are comprehensively responded to by Northport's witnesses, I briefly address the issue of noise below.

Noise

141. Submissions regarding noise typically have concerns around the adoption of the 'Port Noise Standard' and future increases in noise in the community from the port.

142. To assist in understanding this better, as well as to offer the opportunity to further engage with the community on this issue, we held two community-based meetings. These meetings included Northport's noise expert Craig Fitzgerald, to provide a more detailed explanation to the group, as well as answer any technical questions the community might have.

143. Feedback from the community meetings was positive, with many people expressing that they felt like they have been heard and that they were a part of the process and that their concerns aren't being ignored.

144. Following the community meetings, Northport is still of the view that the proposed 'Port Noise Standard' is the best mechanism available to appropriately control the noise concerns raised by the community. As outlined above, Northport remains committed to appropriately managing noise effects on its neighbours. Taking advice from its independent expert, Northport has proposed through consent conditions a framework that it considers will achieve this.

COMMENT ON DRAFT PROPOSED CONDITIONS ADVANCED BY NORTHPORT

145. The conditions attached to Mr Hood's evidence include several new sections, on:

(a) cultural conditions, including the "cultural mitigations proposal";

(b) the monitoring and management of turbidity from dredging;

(c) marine spatial planning; and

(d) management of effects on Channel Infrastructure.

146. The conditions are commented on in detail by Northport's expert team. Below I address one matter regarding the noise mitigation conditions.

Noise mitigation

147. The proposed conditions require the consent holder to offer to the landowner the option of installing noise mitigation (e.g. mechanical ventilation/cooling) where noise at a property reaches a certain level. The conditions accompanying the s42A Report propose the following change to the relevant condition from that originally proposed by Northport:

> If the offer under condition 73 is accepted by the landowner, the mechanical ventilation, cooling, and/or other noise mitigatory works must be installed at the expense of the consent holder within one (1) year of the offer being accepted~~, except that the Consent Holder shall not be responsible for more than [10] such installations in any calendar year~~.

148. The proposed limit of ten installations per year acknowledges practical constraints for the business. In order to install noise mitigation as required by the proposed conditions, the consent holder will be needing to work with the home owner, as well as an independent installer(s). Including due to timeframes for reviewing, quoting, approving, ordering and installing, an upper threshold per annum would be a pragmatic acknowledgment of the practicalities involved. While this would be an upper threshold with respect to compliance, Northport could of course elect to undertake a higher level of installation in that period. I am aware of other ports in New Zealand also having an upper annual threshold for their mitigation, such as Port Otago and Napier Port. Such an approach also has the benefit of providing mitigation in batches, which will allow for a review of adequacy.

149. I therefore support the conditions proposed in Mr Hood's evidence, which provide that the consent holder is not required to undertake more than ten installations per year.

Gregory Blomfield
Northport Limited

25 August 2023

Annexure A: Additional Figures and Images

Northport marks 15th anniversary with a vision for the future

NORTHPORT ANNIVERSARY 15 YEARS www.vision4growth.co.nz

Growth. Cargo volumes at Northport have more than doubled since 2002 to a record 3.64 million tonnes in 2016/17

www.vision4growth.co.nz Northport is launching a public discussion about the potential future size and shape of the port.

Record ship and cargo movements and ongoing growth marked the 15th anniversary of New Zealand's northernmost port. Northport, situated at the mouth of Whangarei Harbour, has seen cargo volumes at Marsden Point more than double since 2002 to a record 3.64 million tonnes in 2016/17.

Last year it handled 250 ship calls. In its first year of operation it managed 93.

Sensible management has seen Northport grow consistently with demand over the years. During the world economic downturn between 2007 and 2011 the port saw an average compounding growth in forestry exports of 27.8 percent a year. It managed successfully the staged introduction of 22ha of log storage infrastructure needed to enable that increase in traffic, ensuring that the Northland economy continued to benefit from forestry earnings while the region's income from other sectors plummeted.

In 2007 Northport Ltd opened the port's third berth. Since then it has completed a $10m expansion of its paved storage area, developed a $2.5m dedicated truck queuing and log scaling facility, and introduced container handling and storage capabilities. Currently it is undertaking enabling works on 10ha of the Northport site, levelling the area and preparing it for paving and development as a future storage area for cargo.

Average berth occupancy is at a record 60.5 percent, up from 52.9 percent just five years ago. Industry norms suggest that port operators of break-bulk and bulk terminals start considering additional berth space once this figure reaches 65 percent.

Northport chief executive Jon Moore said that in recent years, and particularly in the run-up to the recent general election, there had been much discussion about what should happen at Northport. Although Northport Ltd has no firm growth plans at this stage, its management team has today released its vision for growth at the port.

The company has published its vision online at www.vision4growth.co.nz and is inviting people to ask questions or make their views known to its management team via the website.

"Some of the most frustrating narrative we've listened to over recent months has been around the perception that it's not possible to grow Northport beyond its existing footprint," Mr Moore said. "Our vision for growth demonstrates clearly that this is not the case.

"There has been a lot of public comment and discussion about what can and can't happen at Northport. The reality is now outlined factually on the Vision for Growth website and demonstrates that we are well positioned to support economic growth both in Northland and in Auckland."

Mr Moore stressed that the vision was not a confirmed plan, or even a formal proposal. No decision had been made by Northport's Board to extend the port, he said, but Northport would need to grow if it was going to play a key role in the future growth of the upper North Island.

"Importantly, we don't need to expand northwards into the harbour. Instead, we can extend our existing linear wharf east and west," he said.

Mr Moore said his team felt this was necessary if Northport was to play a meaningful role in developing Northland's economy and supporting Auckland's growth.

"Growing a port is an expensive and complex undertaking. To support economic growth and meet the forecast demand for shipping across the upper North Island we need to plan and build for the future, not just for today."

The vision Northport Ltd is presenting is based on many years of research, technical planning and engineering input from a raft of experts in this field. The company now has a good idea about what is physically and technically possible at Northport.

Built specifically as a multi-purpose facility, Northport is ideally positioned to handle substantial growth in imports and exports, and flexible enough to accommodate whatever business comes its way, Mr Moore said.

"We are ready to respond to whatever role we might be required to play in the development of Northland's economy, as well as Auckland's."

Northport has not put any dates to its decision-making process around possible growth.

This initial discussion period will be followed by further technical and environmental studies and modelling, and if there are no surprises the company will then embark on a more detailed stakeholder consultation exercise.

The port is already playing a role in Auckland's growth. Nearly 10,000 tonnes of high quality, fabricated structural steel destined for both the New Zealand International Convention Centre and the 190m tall Commercial Bay high-rise at the bottom of Quay Street is being landed at Northport.

Leading Northland community and business personalities are encouraging the people of the region to take part in the conversation about growth at Northport on the vision4growth website. These include Whangarei Mayor Sheryl Mai, Northland Inc Chair Karleen Everett, local businessmen Jacques Jongejans and Barry Tuas, and community leaders Peter Hope and Rod Gates.

The website will be updated as additional information comes to hand and people can register to receive update notifications by email.

Northport chief executive Jon Moore

Input sought

Northport, a 50/50 joint venture between Marsden Maritime Holdings Ltd and Port of Tauranga, is marking its 15th anniversary by launching a public discussion about the potential future size and shape of the port. It has published its 'vision for growth' and is inviting people to ask questions or make their views known to its management team via the website.

Chief executive Jon Moore stressed that the vision was not a confirmed plan, or even a formal proposal. No decision has been made by Northport's Board to grow the port, but understanding the options and securing a footprint will enable growth long term.

"It's a conversation-starter, a vision based on what we believe is possible here," he said. "Before any decisions are made we want to hear from Northlanders about what role they see us playing in the future of our region."

www.vision4growth.co.nz

ADVERTORIAL

Figure 8 - Advertorial Published in Northland Advocate and distributed via Public Maildrop

Northport

Northport Limited

P O Box 44, Ruakaka 0151
New Zealand
Telephone + 64 9 432 5010
Facsimile + 64 9 432 8749

December 2017

Dear local residents

Re: **Northport's Vision for Growth**

Northport Ltd has recently celebrated its 15th anniversary. Cargo volumes at Marsden Point have more than doubled since the port opened in 2002 to a record 3.64 million tonnes last financial year. Ship calls have increased from 93 a year to 250 a year over that period, with berth occupancy now at a record 66.4 percent, up from 52.9 percent just five years ago. Northport is marking these milestones by launching a public discussion about the potential future size and shape of the port.

You may have already seen through the media that there has been a lot of discussion around what role the port may play in the future, as a local resident, you too may have your own opinions on this. Over the past couple of years, Northport has been busy working on what it believes is a good starting point – a vision to start the conversation.

We have developed a website to assist with the consultation of this vision - www.vision4growth.co.nz. Please take a look at what the port looks like today and what it may look like in the future. Through the website, you can see what others are saying about the vision, as well as provide your feedback. If you would like a tour of the port to know more about our vision – please use the website to book a port tour (in groups of up to 10).

Studies associated with the vision are also underway to assist with the planning and understanding of the options. As the final drafts are presented, they will be posted on our website. Please use the 'get site updates' feature if you would like to stay informed through the process.

On behalf of Northport Ltd, I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and safe and relaxing festive season.

Jon Moore
Northport CEO

Figure 9 - Letter to local residents distributed by Public Maildrop

Figure 10 - Public Maildrop 2017 One Tree Point / Marsden Bay Coverage

Figure 11 - Public Maildrop 2017 Whangarei Heads

Northport

Vision for Growth
Our Future Footprint

We've spent the past couple of years listening and learning about what you think about our Vision for Growth. As a result of the feedback you've given us we think it's time for the next step. We plan to prepare a Consent application that, if successful, will tell us what Northport can look like in the future. Our 'Future Footprint'.

This Future Footprint will allow Northport to grow to match the freight demands of Northland and North Auckland over the next 30 to 40 years. It will enable us to provide more land and berthage to support growing freight demand and changing vessel sizes. It also provides for the possibility of a shipyard with a floating dry-dock.

It's important we make clear that we are not planning for a relocation of Ports of Auckland to Northport. Our Vision for Growth, and the size of the Future Footprint we are seeking consent for, does not allow for expansion on that scale.

Building new port facilities require a long period of careful planning, design and development. There is a long lead-time for this type of infrastructure, so we must start planning now. The consent application is a vital part of this planning process.

We are a critical infrastructure owner and we forecast freight demand as accurately as we can. This enables us to build our new infrastructure in stages so we can continue to support the regional economy and play our part in securing Northland's economic future.

As we move through the consenting phase we are working with a range of experts to understand, and manage, the potential impacts of our Vision for Growth. We have outlined these in brief on our Vision for Growth website (www.visionforgrowth.co.nz).

If you think of anything we've missed we want to hear from you. The experts full reports are now on our website for you to review and comment on.

Vision For Growth Drop in Sessions

We invite you to come and meet our consents team to discuss the Future of Northport.

Mcleod Bay Hall - 14th August 2021
12:30 - 3:30pm

Parua Bay **Hall - 15th August 2021**
09:00 - **12**:00pm

www.visionforgrowth.co.nz

Figure 12 - VFG Van at Taurikura

Figure 13 - Jon Moore handing out brochure to Whangarei Heads Resident

Figure 14 - VFG Van at Waipu Markets

Figure 15 - VFG Van at Marsden Cove

RUAKAKA RESIDENTS AND RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

PO Box 151. Ruakaka, 0151

E:mail: wjdaniel39@gmail.com

14 November 2020

Mr Jon Moore,

Chief Executive Officer,

Northport Ltd.,

PO Box 44,

Ruakaka, 0151

Dear John,

The Committee of our Association wishes to sincerely thank you and your colleagues for having attended and addressed our Meeting on 10 November.

We found it to be a most interesting presentation and credit must be given to the foresight and planning being put into a project which will give rise to positive effects for Ruakaka.

We welcome the intentions to fully involve the Public on your path to obtaining Resource Consents and we look forward to working together.

Kind regards.

(Warren Daniel) Secretary

Figure 16 - Letter from Ruakaka Resident and Ratepayers Association following presentation to the group

Northport launches its "Vision for Growth"


The port as it is today

Northport has launched what it is calling "A vision for growth" but says it has no firm plans in place and will undergo a community consultation exercise before any are drawn up.

"If we are going to help Northland's economy grow, and support Auckland's growth, it's clear that we are going to have to grow too. However, no decision to expand has been taken by the Board of Northport Ltd. We are simply taking prudent steps to ensure that we are able to grow if that is what we, our customers and our communities decide is in the best interests of our region. One of those steps is asking for your views, concerns and input."

Rather then expanding the wharf northwards into the harbour, the "vision" is to extend the wharf to the east and west.

Initial modeling has already been undertaken on this proposal and suggests that this development would not be blocking views.

The Port acknowledges that an expansion might result in more noise but says, "We currently operate under strict noise criteria which we manage for compliance."

NZ Refining Ltd is currently seeking resource consent to deepen the shipping channel and material from this could be used for this expansion if this is available but the Port says its expansion plans are not linked to this project.

"Any growth of the port will be a solely commercial decision based on the growth of Northland's trade. As part of the decision-making process, though, consideration will be given to any suitable opportunities for reclamation material. The Refinery's dredge material may be an opportunity that we could investigate as the overall port concept currently has a shortfall of material to complete the reclamation."

Northport's average berth occupancy is at a record 66.38 percent up from 52.9 percent five years ago.

Mr. Moore said the Port's berth occupancy is at a record 66.38 percent, up from 52.9 percent just five years ago.

"Given the time it's likely to take to consult on, consent and implement the sort of growth we envisage, now is the right time for us to be sharing our vision and prompting informed discussion."

A video accompanying the Vision for Growth page on the Northport website shows a cruise liner approaching the wharf. Asked if visits by cruise liners were part of the Northport plans Peter Heath a communications manager, said there were no firm plans in place for this but the image was just show that this is a possibility.

Asked whether a predicted drop off in log exports over the next ten years would undermine any expansion plans, Mr. Heath said Northport was built as a multi purpose facility and was not dependent on log exports.


What it would look like after expansion

Lifepoint carol service

This year's Lifepoint Church Christmas carol service and dinner will be held on Sunday 17 December, at Lifepoint, 300 One Tree Point Road. People are welcome to arrive from 4:30pm for a meal of sheep on the spit, mussel fritters, sausages and coleslaw served from 5pm. The music program will start at 6:30pm. This service, including the dinner, is free.

Figure 17 - Article in Bream Bay News following the public launch of the Project

July 2023

Northland Rail Programme

Kia ora

KiwiRail's teams continue working to repair around 200 damage sites on the North Auckland Line (NAL) from the late January weather event and Cyclone Gabrielle.

We have completed repairs to more than 100 minor damage sites, are making good progress remediating the major slip at Tahekeroa and are planning work on numerous other weather damaged parts of the line.

However, at this stage we still expect the NAL to remain closed until at least the end of this year.

We are also about to begin more work related to the Marsden Point Rail Link, which will extend rail to Northport.

We had submitted a business case to build the spur line to the Government and have been given the go ahead to progress the project to its next stage – Detailed Design.

It will include engineering investigations into geo-technical (below ground conditions), track, signalling, flood modelling, drainage design, earthworks, and confirmation of construction delivery methodology.

It focuses as much on how to build quickly and cost effectively, as the technical design itself. It will also allow us to work out how much work could be delivered by local firms.

This is an important step forward for the Marsden Point Rail Link project, and we will be engaging with mana whenua and other stakeholders about it in the weeks and months ahead.

The detailed design is expected to take at least 18 months to complete.

If you have any questions about the work we're doing, please contact us at **northlandrail@kiwirail.co.nz**

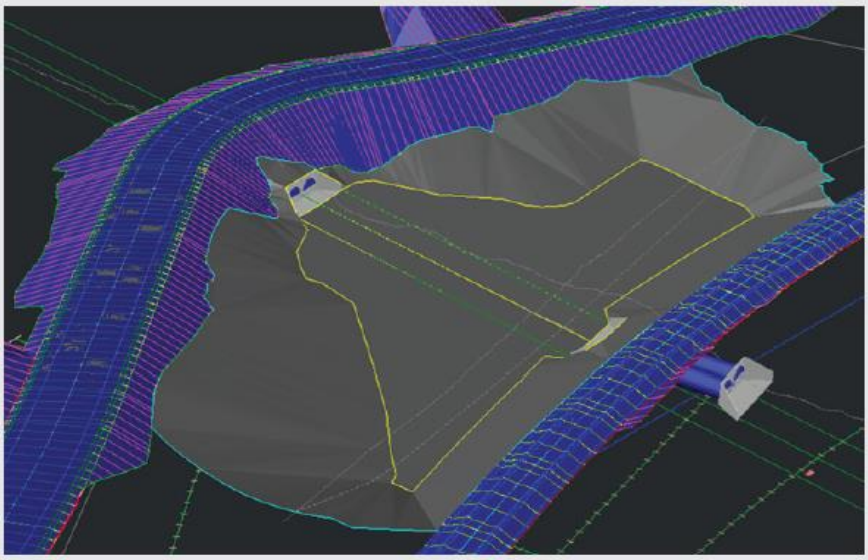
Eric Hennephof
Northland Rail Upgrade Programme Director

Progress repairing the North Auckland Line

We've completed repairing more than 50 kilometres of line north of Swanson (to near Makarau), including repairs to significant washouts in north Auckland.

A design to temporarily remediate two slips (at the 78 and 83km marks) under the rail line south of Tahekeroa (86km mark) is underway, following successful ground condition testing. In the next month we are aiming to have the work done and the line open for work trains to deliver track for rebuilding the line at Tahekeroa.

At Tahekeroa, where a 35,000 cubic metre slip fell across the road and rail line, works have progressed well despite continued wet weather during July.



Indicative design for the Tahekeroa rebuild – showing the road over a bund (top left), culverts and basin area to protect the rail line, and rail line (bottom right)