



# Guidance Note

Issuer Engagement with NZX

10 December 2020



The purpose of this guidance note is to provide guidance to issuers in relation to engaging with NZX Limited (**NZX**) on applications made under the NZX Listing Rules (the **rules**). This guidance includes information as to the content of applications and the process for engaging with NZX, including the timeframes required to process applications. This guidance replaces the previous Guidance Note 'Issuer Engagement with NZX Regulation' dated January 2019.

Under rule 9.15.1, NZX may act by and through NZX Regulation Limited (**NZ RegCo**) in performing any function or discharging any power set out in the Rules. References in this Guidance Note to NZX therefore also include NZ RegCo in relation to any regulatory activity or discretion.

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Issuers should note that this guidance note is not intended to be a definitive statement of the application of the rules in every situation and is only a guide to NZX's policy and practice. This guidance note does not limit NZX's discretion under the rules. This guidance note reflects the listing rules and law as at 10 December 2020, which are subject to change. NZX takes no responsibility for any error contained in this guidance note NZX may replace guidance notes at any time and issuers should ensure that they have the most recent version of this guidance note by checking NZX's website at [www.nzx.com](http://www.nzx.com).



# 1. Introduction

Issuers may need to engage with NZX when making an application for a waiver or ruling under the rules, or when seeking NZX's formal notice of non-objection to a document under the rules. This guidance note provides information for issuers regarding the information that needs to be included in an application made to NZX. This guidance also sets out NZX's approach to reviewing applications.

Part I of this guidance note contains information that is relevant to all applications made to NZX.

Part II of this guidance note contains specific considerations relevant to waiver and ruling applications, listing applications and applications for formal notice of non-objection in relation to notices of meeting.



## Part I

This section of the guidance note explains the requirements and considerations that are relevant to all types of application made to NZX.

### 2. Content requirements

NZX expects all applications to contain complete and accurate information in all material respects. Any decision made by NZX will be void if it is based on information that was incorrect or was misleading because a material piece of information was omitted.

You should set out in your application the following general information:

- **Contact Details:** If your application is provided to us via a third party (such as your lawyer) we will ask them to provide us with a contact person for you. This allows us to copy correspondence to you, so that you are kept informed on the progress of your application.
- **Details of the application:** You should set out the relevant facts relating to your application.
- **Rules:** You should include a reference to the rules in respect of which your application is being made, and explain the application of the rules to the facts relating to your application.
- **Timetable:** Your application should include a timetable of all dates that are relevant to the application (for example: printing deadlines, the date of a shareholder meeting). In particular, you should state when you are aiming to receive NZX's decision or formal notice of non-objection in relation to a document.
- **Whether urgency is requested:** If your application is urgent, please specify the date by which a determination is needed and the reasons why you require the application to be considered on an urgent basis (see section 4 below headed "Urgency").
- **Whether confidentiality is requested:** If you require your application or any specific information contained in your application and/or NZX's decision in relation to your application to be kept confidential you should specify this in your application and provide reasons for that request.

Part II of this guidance note sets out additional matters that are relevant to specific types of application made to NZX.

### 3. Engaging with NZX

We encourage issuers to engage with us as early as possible in relation to the application process. For example, if you are aware that a waiver on which you rely is due to expire, we would expect to receive a renewal application well in advance of the expiry date. As a general rule all applications, other than listing applications, must be submitted to NZX at least 10 business days prior to the issuer requiring a determination. NZX recommends that issuers allow several additional business days to respond to any questions and comments raised on an application, and to prepare revised documents. NZX does not recommend that an issuer submits its initial application allowing only 10 business days in its timetable to resolve the application, if at all possible.

Issuers are also invited to engage with NZX in advance of submitting an application under the Rules. This will allow NZX to provide preliminary guidance on operational or regulatory matters

that may be relevant to the application, and helps to ensure a smooth process for all parties.

NZX's ability to complete a review of an application within this timeframe will ultimately depend on:

- the quality and completeness of the application;
- the issues raised by our review; and
- the timeliness within which any comments or requests for further information are addressed.

You can expect the following, in relation to your application:

- The NZX solicitor who is leading the review of your application will acknowledge receipt within one business day after it is received by NZX.
- The NZX solicitor may ask you to provide further information to assist NZX to consider the application. For example, NZX may request further explanation of the facts relevant to the application or request underlying documents relevant to the application. If NZX needs further information, the NZX solicitor will request that information from you within 5 business days of the receipt of your application.
- If the NZX solicitor has asked you for further explanation or information, NZX will consider that information and provide you with any further comments within 5 business days of receiving that information. For some complex applications or where the explanation or information provided needs further clarification or raises additional issues that need to be addressed, NZX may ask for further information after the initial request.

The fees payable in respect of applications made to NZX are set out in the listed issuer fee schedule at: [http://www.nzx.com/services/listing\\_fees](http://www.nzx.com/services/listing_fees)

## 4. Urgency

In limited circumstances, NZX may be able to consider an application more quickly than within the timeframes set out above. However, whether an application can be considered under urgency is at NZX's discretion.

Requests for urgency must be made in writing to NZX, together with supporting commercial reasons.

NZX will usually only consider applications under urgency where events have arisen that are outside of your control, or where the lack of an urgent decision by NZX will have a significant impact on your security-holders, your commercial interests, or the market generally. Applications for urgency which result from inadequate planning, or which are submitted otherwise than for reasons of genuine commercial need, are likely to be declined. NZX expects issuers to ensure NZX has adequate time to consider an application by incorporating the timeframes described above into the timetable for any matter requiring NZX approval.

If NZX considers your application under urgency, the additional rates set out in the listed issuer fee schedule at: [http://www.nzx.com/services/listing\\_fees](http://www.nzx.com/services/listing_fees) will be payable.

## 5. How to contact NZ RegCo

All applications should be emailed to [issuer@nzregco.com](mailto:issuer@nzregco.com).

Please do not send applications to individual members of the NZ RegCo team, as this may delay the progress of your application.

The application should:

- Attach all relevant documents that form part of the application. Any updated versions of the documents must be provided to NZX in mark-up form clearly showing any changes;
- Include the date by which the decision is sought and, if required, details of which urgency is required; and
- If provided by a lawyer or other adviser on behalf of an issuer, copy in a person employed by the issuer.

All applications should be clearly marked: Not for Public Release.



## Part II

This section of the guidance note explains the requirements and considerations that are relevant to common types of application that are made to NZX, being applications for:

- listing and quotation;
- waivers and rulings; and
- formal notice of non-objection in respect of notices of meeting and accompanying appraisal reports;

## 6. Listing and quotation applications

### 6.1 New issuers

If you wish to apply to become listed on a NZX Market you may have had informal discussions in relation to your proposed application with NZX's Issuer Relationships team. Once you are ready to formally apply for listing, you should make your formal application to NZX a minimum of 20 business days prior to your intended listing date. Early engagement with NZX is encouraged, in particular if the application is unusually complex or novel, or if significant or unusual waivers are to be sought.

The application should include the draft offering document (including all financial information) and the other information required by the Rules. More information about this can be found in NZX's Practice Notes *Listing and Quotation of Equity Securities*; *Listing and Quotation of Debt Securities*; *Listing and Quotation of Fund Securities* and *Listing of Wholesale Debt Securities*. Copies of NZX's Practice Notes can be found [here](#).

### 6.2 Existing issuers

If you are already listed on a NZX Market and wish to offer and subsequently quote another class of securities (for example, a new class of debt securities), your application should include the draft offering document and the other information required by the Rules. More information about this can be found in NZX's Practice Note *Application for Quotation*.

### 6.3 Engaging with NZX

Once NZX has approved your offering document you will receive a formal letter confirming NZX's non-objection. If your offering document is subject to a legislative post-lodgement consideration period, NZX's non-objection will be subject to you confirming that you did not receive any correspondence from the Financial Markets Authority ("FMA") relating to the offering document during the consideration period.

## 7. Waiver and ruling applications

### 7.1 Additional content requirements

An application for a waiver or ruling must include all material information in relation to the application including the information set out in Part I of this guidance note. In addition, you should include the following information in your application:

**Full details of the matter:** You should set out the full details of the transactions or circumstances relevant to the waiver or ruling sought, including details of the relationships between any relevant parties. Where the transaction and/or relationships to which the application relates are complex, the application should, if possible, present this information diagrammatically. You should address the various elements of the Rules from which you seek a waiver, and clearly explain how the facts apply in the context of the Rule.



- **Policy grounds behind the rule:** Your application should set out:
  - the policy objective behind the rule concerned;
  - why compliance with the rule is not possible, unnecessary or inappropriate in your particular circumstances;
  - how the relief sought is consistent with the policy objective behind the relevant rules; and
  - why you consider granting the relief sought strikes an appropriate balance between avoiding the hardship or mischief that will result if the relief sought is not granted and providing adequate protection to security-holders, and your reasons for that view.
- **Effects on security-holders:** You should explain the effect of the relief you are seeking, including the costs and benefits of that relief, on the interests of security-holders and other stakeholders.
- **Proposed conditions:** You should identify any conditions that you propose should apply to the relief sought, in particular to address the policy objective behind the rule/s you are seeking a waiver from, along with an explanation as to why you consider the proposed conditions to be appropriate.
- **Precedents:** You should identify any existing waiver or ruling decisions which are similar to the waiver or ruling sought and which may provide a precedent for your application. You should also state how the existing decisions are similar to, and different from, the waiver or ruling you are seeking.
- **Draft decision:** Please include a draft of the waiver or ruling decision for which you are applying, following the template set out in Appendix 1 to this guidance note.

## 7.2 Engaging with NZX

NZX will often make further enquiries in relation to waiver and ruling applications, in order to ensure that NZX fully understands the circumstances giving rise to the need for the waiver or ruling that has been sought.

NZX may consider in some cases imposing a condition that the directors provide a certificate confirming that a proposed transaction is in the best interests of the issuer and its shareholders (this is particularly common in relation to waivers from the requirement to obtain shareholder approval for entry into a related party transaction). In those circumstances, NZX is likely to make enquiry as to the basis for the directors providing such a certificate.

NZX releases all final waiver and ruling decisions to the market, subject to limited exceptions. Where NZX determines that it is appropriate for an application, or particular information contained in an application, to remain confidential, NZX will either redact the confidential aspects of the decision or will defer the release of the decision to the market, until such time as agreed with you.

NZX will provide you with a draft decision for comment before the final decision is released to the market. The NZX lead solicitor will provide you with a copy of the final decision at least half a business day prior to releasing the decision to the market. Once the decision is released

to the market it will appear against your ticker code on [nzx.com](http://nzx.com) and under the NZX code, to denote that the decision is an NZ RegCo announcement.

### 7.3 Waivers from continuous disclosure

If you are applying for a waiver or ruling in relation to rules 3.1 to 3.4 (the continuous disclosure provisions), then under the Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013, NZX must consult with the FMA in relation to the application and have regard to any submissions made by FMA.

### 7.4 Right of referral

The NZ Markets Disciplinary Tribunal (**NZMDT**) is a special function body independent of NZX. NZMDT is required to hear matters without bias and to give the parties fair consideration.

NZMDT has authority under the NZMDT Rules, to review waiver and ruling decisions made by NZX under the listing rules on referral. You may refer a waiver or ruling decision to NZMDT for review on the basis that NZX's decision:

- was irrational having regard to the evidence available to NZX and the circumstances at the time NZX made the decision;
- was made in circumstances where NZX did not observe the rules of procedural fairness; or
- was made in circumstances when NZX refused to consider information submitted by the applicant.

If you wish to refer a waiver or ruling decision made by NZX to NZMDT, you can find more information about this in the User Guide to the NZ Markets Disciplinary Tribunal Rules which is available here: <https://www.nzx.com/NZMDT/rules-publications>

## 8. Applications for formal notice of non-objection to notices of meeting and accompanying appraisal reports

You must obtain NZX's formal notice of non-objection to a notice of meeting where the matters to be considered at that meeting are matters other than:

- the consideration of the annual report or financial statements;
- the election of directors or the fixing of their remuneration;
- a change in name of the issuer;
- the appointment of auditors and the fixing of their remuneration; or
- a resolution required or permitted under the Takeovers Code, or a resolution for a scheme of arrangement under Part 15 of the Companies Act 1993 where the issuer is the target company; or
- a shareholder proposal under the governing document of the issuer or under Schedule 1 of the Companies Act 1993.

This section of the guidance note sets out the content requirements and other considerations that are relevant to applications for formal notice of non-objection in relation to a notice of meeting, that are in addition to the matters described in Part I of this guidance note.

## 8.1 Content Requirements

Please refer to NZX's Practice Note *Notices of Meeting* for a set of checklists to assist you in producing your notice of meeting.

You must ensure that a notice of meeting contains or is accompanied by sufficient explanation to enable a reasonable person to understand the effect of the resolutions proposed in the notice of meeting, and the consequences if a resolution is not passed. In addition, there are specific matters that the rules require a notice to include, in relation to particular resolutions, as set out below.

### Resolutions to consider the issue, acquisition or redemption of securities

The rules<sup>1</sup> prescribe specific contents for a notice of meeting that contains a resolution:

- to issue equity securities, in accordance with rule 4.1;
- to acquire or redeem equity securities, or to provide financial assistance, in accordance with rule 4.16; and/ or
- to issue, acquire, or redeem securities that is significantly likely to result in a group of persons materially increasing their ability to effectively control the issuer, in accordance with rule 4.13.

In the circumstances set out above, the following information must be included in the notice of meeting:

- **Number of securities:** The number of financial products that will be issued, acquired or redeemed. If the number is not known, the notice of meeting must include the formula to be applied to determine the number, and the maximum number of financial products that will be issued, acquired or redeemed.
- **Purpose:** Details as to why the financial products are being issued, acquired or redeemed. If the purpose is to raise cash, you should explain the specific purpose for raising the cash.
- **Price / consideration:** The issue, acquisition or redemption price of the financial products. If there is no fixed price, you should state the formula that will be used to determine the price, and the time or times for payment with sufficient detail to enable financial product holders to ascertain the terms to or from any party.
- **The parties involved:** You should name the persons to whom the financial products will be issued to or acquired from. If they will be issued to or acquired from any director or associated person, state the names of the directors or their associated persons.
- **In the case of an issue:** the consideration for the issue and, where that is cash, the specific purpose for raising the cash. You must also disclose the ranking of the financial products to be issued for any future benefit.
- **Timing:** When the issue, acquisition or redemption will be made.
- **Financial assistance:** If financial assistance is being proposed, describe the amount and full terms of the financial assistance. Also, state the parties to whom the assistance will be given. If assistance will be given to any director or associated person of a directors include the names of those persons.

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<sup>1</sup> NZX Listing Rule 7.8.4

## Resolutions where issuer is obliged to buy out dissenting shareholders

Where a resolution is included in a notice of meeting where shareholders who have voted against the resolution have the right to be bought out by the issuer, under either section 110 or section 118 of the Companies Act 1993, the notice must include a prominent statement to that effect. This is usually attached as a schedule to the notice that sets out the procedure in relation to the buyback by the company of a dissenting shareholder's shares.

## 8.2 Appraisal reports

Under the rules), an appraisal report is required where a notice of meeting contains a resolution:

- that requires approval under rule 4.13 ("*issues and buybacks of securities affecting control*"); or
- to approve an issue intended or likely to result in more than 50% of the securities to be issued, acquired or redeemed being acquired by directors or associated persons of directors of the issuer (rule 7.8.5);
- To approve the provision of financial assistance where more than 50% of the financial assistance to be given is intended or likely to go to directors or associated persons of directors;
- where a notice of meeting contains a resolution to approve a transaction with a related party (rule 7.8.8); or
- where a notice of meeting relates to a reverse or back door listing (refer to NZX's Guidance Note [Backdoor and Reverse Listing Transactions](#)).

The requirements for appraisal reports are set out in the rules. Please refer to NZX's Guidance Note [Approval of Appraisers](#).

Where an appraisal report is required to accompany a notice of meeting, NZX will not commence its review of the notice until it has also received the appraisal report.

## 8.3 Proxy forms

A notice of meeting must be accompanied by a proxy form, for NZX review. A proxy form:

- should provide for at least two-way voting (for or against) on each resolution;
- should enable a shareholder to appoint a proxy to cast their vote on their behalf; and
- should not be sent with any name of an officer, or position (e.g. chair) filled in as proxy holder.

A proxy form may also provide for shareholders to abstain from voting on each resolution and/or for the proxy to exercise a discretion to vote for or against each resolution. NZX will require a shareholder to take an active step to appoint a discretionary proxy to vote on that shareholder's behalf. A proxy form should include notes that state that persons who are prohibited under the rules from voting on a resolution are also unable to act as a discretionary proxy.

## 8.4 Engaging with NZX

Once NZX has completed its review of your notice of meeting you will receive a formal letter confirming whether or not NZX will issue a notice of non-objection. Once you have received a notice of non-objection, the rules require you to send your notice to NZX for release to the market no later than the time at which you send it to your security-holders.

## Appendix 1: Draft Waiver Template

As noted in section 7.1 of this Guidance Note please complete this template and provide it with your application, including the italicised information, if applicable.

### Decision

1. *[On the condition in paragraph [x] below]* and on the basis that the information provided by [Name of Issuer] [“(Issuer’s Ticker Code”)] is complete and accurate in all material respects, NZX (“**NZX**”) grants [“(Issuer’s Ticker Code”)] a waiver from [NZX Listing Rule] (“**Rule**”) *[include rule number]* to the extent this rule prohibits [describe action that would otherwise be prohibited by the Rule)].
2. *[The waiver in paragraph [x], above, is provided on the condition that [include a description of the condition(s)].*
3. The material information on which this decision is based is set out in Appendix One to this decision. This waiver will not apply if that information is not, or ceases to be, full and accurate in all material respects.
4. The Rules to which this decision relates are set out in Appendix Two.

### Reasons

5. In coming to the decision to provide the waiver set out in paragraph [x] above, NZX has considered that: [list the reasons for the decision]

### Confidentiality

6. *[“(Issuer’s Ticker Code”)] has requested that this application and any decision be kept confidential until [describe the event that will terminate the confidential status of the application].*
7. *In accordance with Rule 9.7 NZX grants [“(Issuer’s Ticker Code”)]’s request.*

### Appendix One

8. [“(Issuer’s Ticker Code”)] is a Listed Issuer with Securities Quoted on [the NZX Main Board / Debt Market].
9. [Include a statement of the facts that are material to the waiver.]

### Appendix Two

10. [Set out the Rules that are relevant to the application.]

## Appendix 2: Draft Ruling Template

As noted in section 7.1 of this Guidance Note please complete this template and provide it with your application, including the italicised information, if applicable.

### Decision

1. On the basis that the information provided by [Name of Issuer] [{"Issuer's Ticker Code"}] is complete and accurate in all material respects, NZX ("NZX") grants [{"Issuer's Ticker Code"}] a ruling that [NZX Listing Rule ("Rule")] *[include rule number]* that [describe ruling].
2. The material information on which this decision is based is set out in Appendix One to this decision. This waiver will not apply if that information is not, or ceases to be, full and accurate in all material respects.
3. The Rules to which this decision relates are set out in Appendix Two.

### Reasons

4. In coming to the decision to provide the waiver set out in paragraph [x] above, NZX has considered that: [list the reasons for the decision]

### Confidentiality

5. *[{"Issuer's Ticker Code"}] has requested that this application and any decision be kept confidential until [describe the event that will terminate the confidential status of the application].*
6. *In accordance with Rule 9.6 NZX grants [{"Issuer's Ticker Code"}]'s request.*

### Appendix One

7. [{"Issuer's Ticker Code"}] is a Listed Issuer with Securities Quoted on [ the NZX Main Board / Debt Market].
8. [Include a statement of the facts that are material to the ruling.]

### Appendix Two

9. [Set out the Rules that are relevant to the application.]