

Patents

Technical Focus Group (TFG) Meeting Minutes

Date/Time	10 June 2026
Location	15 Stout Street & online via MS Teams

Participants

MBIE / Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand (IPONZ)	Members
Gaby Cowcill Gillian Sharp Simon Maguire Steven Hong Penny Walsh Vaughan Trounson Rob Holt (minutes) Apologies: Ed Barclay	David Nowak – Henry Hughes Tom Robertson – Pipers David Herman – FB Rice & IPTA Jonathan Lucas – James & Wells Sam Ting – AJ Park Jon Ashen – Blue Penguin IP & NZIPA Apologies: Jillian Lim - DCC Jason Wach - NZ Law Society

Minutes

Matters arising / actions from the previous meeting	
Action	Status
IPONZ to provide further updates on authorisation of agent for Designs for feedback.	Ongoing
IPONZ to Initiate Designs TFG.	Ongoing
IPONZ to consider TFG Terms of reference	Ongoing
IPONZ to incorporate Member's Section 39 Manual feedback by the end of March	Done
Matters arising – IPONZ noted that the March minutes had not been published	

Update from MBIE policy team	Gillian Sharp
The Patents Amendments Bill passed through parliament, and received Royal Assent on 5 June. Members raised concerns around late-stage amendments to dates, and the urgency with which the Bill moved through parliament and gained assent. This gave attorneys little time to react to the amendments and engage their clients accordingly. This may also be raised via NZIPA. Last week saw the announcement of copyright updates due to free trade agreements with UK and EU. The Minister also recently announced changes to the PVR Act relating to term of protection, provisional protection and joining up Patents and PVR fees regimes.	
IPONZ Updates	Gaby

People: Patents team is currently recruiting for 2x Associate Examiners (Science). The current team size is 64 Examiners.

Current filing trends and figures

Patent pendency (updated in May):

- Mechanical – 18 months (no change)
- ICT & Electrical cases – 20 months (no change)
- Chemistry – 28 months (up 1 month)
- Biotech – 32 months (up 1 month)

May 2026 saw the highest number of PCT applications received for over two years. Requests for examination remain stable; incoming mail has come down.

There were 71 1953 Act cases as of 8th June 2026 (all filed before the Patents Amendments Act came into force).

Upcoming engagements:

- WIPO General Assembly
- IPSANZ conference
- NZIPA conference
- ElectrifyNZ

Update on PPH Requests:

- Applications that are PPH *and* s.52 PCT should no longer be declined for not providing reasons for the expedited exam request.

Examination Manual Updates

Penny, Simon

Patents Amendment Bill – 1953 Examination Section Update:

- The proposed examination manual section update was presented. There was no feedback at this point. IPONZ will progress with publication.

Section 39:

- No further feedback has been received. IPONZ will progress with publication.

Upcoming examination manual updates:

- Work on the next two manuals sections is expected to begin soon: one relating to the Māori Advisory Committee and case referrals, and Section 14 Manner of Manufacture. If there are particular topics within these that would be of interest or need attention, please let IPONZ know.

Practice Updates

Simon

Postponement of acceptance:

- Following [NXT Building System Pty Lt v Commissioner of Patents \[2024\] NZHC 2141](#) and [Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. \[2026\] NZIPOPAT 1](#), IPONZ is encouraging applicants and agents to take care using the postponement of acceptance functionality in case management facility. This follows an increase in correction of error requests resulting from mistakes relating to the postponement of acceptance functionality.
- Members also provided some suggestions around supporting this via changes to the functionality of the case management facility. For example, better use of prompts, dialogue boxes, pop-up warnings or help-text. IPONZ will capture this feedback and work through possible options.
- Members also discussed possible client-side approaches, where attorneys do not remove postponement until final client instructions are received. IPONZ confirmed that removing the postponement after an examination report (advising the application is in order for acceptance) does not create additional work on the office.

Setting deadlines in examination reports:

- [AbbVie Inc v The Commissioner of Patents \[2026\] NZHC 1140](#).
- IPONZ noted this case may result in some changes to how deadlines are communicated in reports. This will be worked through in due course.

Terms of reference for TFG

Gaby

Review of TFG membership:

- IPONZ confirmed that the current TFG membership includes representatives from firms that are strongly represented in patent examination activity data, based on data of the firms most often recorded as agent during patent examination, alongside key industry stakeholders NZLS, NZIPA and IPTA. IPONZ proposed this provides a reasonable balance of sufficient representation and membership size.
- There is no substantive progress to report on ToR at this stage. IPONZ may reach out individually to members for feedback on the TOR and other topics as part of refreshing these.

Any other business

All

Gaby: Proposed date of next meeting – **mid October**

One member queried whether any additional feedback on s 39 guidelines would be received & considered, IPONZ confirmed that feedback is always welcome though there may not be time to address prior to publication.

Actions summary

IPONZ to provide further updates on authorisation of agent for Designs for feedback.

IPONZ to Initiate Designs TFG.	
IPONZ to consider TFG Terms of reference.	
IPONZ to publish the March minutes.	
IPONZ to capture the feedback on postponement of acceptance functionality.	
IPONZ to publish the s 39 Manual section.	
IPONZ to publish the 1953 Act examination guidance update.	
Meeting closed at: 10:58 am	