File ref: BRF-01697 / FTAA-2604-1215

6 July 2026

Bruce Harvey
Waikato Thoroughbred Racing Incorporated (the applicant)
Email: s 9(2)(a)

c/- Josh Caddigan
BCD Group Ltd
Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Bruce

Section 28 – Notice of Decisions on the referral application for the Waikato Thoroughbred Racing Greenfield Racing Hub project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for a referral application received from Waikato Thoroughbred Racing Incorporated (the applicant) for the Waikato Thoroughbred Racing Greenfield Racing Hub project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).

Project description
The project is a greenfield racing hub and commercial/residential development across approximately 164 hectares in the Waikato District.

The project includes:

a. thoroughbred racing and associated activities, including:
    i. a racing facility with a main track and 1200m starting chutes
    ii. facilities for race days, industry functions, and events
    iii. a thoroughbred training track
    iv. a warmup track
    v. on-site stables and yards for trainers' allotments
    vi. a bloodstock office and sales business across approximately 63,200m^2 with barns, yarding, sales pavilion and administration
    vii. an operations and events building across approximately 2,040m^2 with a parade ring and tie up

b. harness racing, including:
    i. a harness racing and training track
    ii. facilities for race days, industry functions and events
    iii. on site stables and yards for trainers' allotments

c. other land uses, including:
    i. a retirement residential development with approximately 70-80 single storey villas, approximately 200 attached units and a community centre
    ii. a residential precinct with up to approximately 90 lots
    iii. an equestrian events ring
    iv. facilities to host temporary events
    v. a village centre including a bar, café and other small scale commercial activity
    vi. parking areas for up to approximately 2,030 vehicles
    vii. commercial equine support services
    viii. rehabilitation of the existing Kahikatea stand within the project site
    ix. all associated infrastructure, construction, subdivision and earthworks including potential roading upgrades.

The project will require the proposed approvals:

a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991
b. approval under the Wildlife Act 1953
c. archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2013.

Statutory framework for referral applications

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

The project can only be accepted if the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) is satisfied the criteria in section 22 is met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost effective way than under normal processes, and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Under section 21(3) of the Act, the Minister must decline a referral application if:

- the Minister is satisfied that the project does not meet the criteria in section 22
- the Minister is satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity
- the Minister considers they do not have adequate information to inform the decision.

Additionally, the Minister has the discretion to decline a referral application for any other reason, even if the project meets the criteria outlined in section 22 of the Act.

Decision on referral application

The Minister has decided to accept the referral application under section 21(1)(c) and refer the whole project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a). The Minister is satisfied that the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act, for the reasons detailed below.

Reasons for accepting referral application

The Minister is satisfied the project:

a. is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and

b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
    i. would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and
    ii. is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Specifically, the Minister is satisfied the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act because:

a. it is a **development project** that would have **significant regional or national benefits** [*section 22(1)(a)*] as it:

    i. will provide significant regional economic benefits [section 22(2)(a)(iv)] including providing approximately $406 million in direct expenditure and approximately 1,156 full-time equivalent jobs over an estimated eight-year development period, and support the long-term viability of the Waikato Region racing industry and associated industries
    ii. will increase the supply of housing and contribute to a well-functioning urban environment [section 22(2)(a)(iii)] by providing approximately 70-80 retirement villas, 200 attached retirement units and approximately up to 90 residential lots, while also enabling indirect housing benefits by freeing up approximately 159 hectares of existing racecourse land within established urban areas with residential zoning to enable future residential development

b. referring the project would facilitate its delivery *[section 22(1)(b)(i)]* by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes, as the project would otherwise require a plan change under the RMA and approvals under multiple Specified Acts, with an increased likelihood for appeals

c. referring the project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process *[section 22(1)(b)(ii)]* because the applicant is sufficiently advanced and supported by the necessary expertise.

The Minister is satisfied there is no reason they must decline the project under section 21(3) of the Act. The Minister is also satisfied there is no reason to decline the project under section 21(4) or (5) of the Act.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

1. Waikato Thoroughbred Racing Incorporated, who lodged the referral application, as the person who is authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2) of the Act.

2. In relation to a substantive application for the project, pursuant to section 27(3)(b)(iii), a panel must invite comments from the following groups, in addition to those specified in section 53:
    a. the Chief Executive of Waikato Regional Airport Limited
    b. Hamilton City Council
    c. Waipā District Council
    d. the Minister for Seniors.

3. Under section 27(3)(b)(i) of the Act, a deadline of two years from the date of issue of this letter applies for lodging the substantive application.

Other matters

4. Under section 16(2)(c) of the Act, a panel must comply with the following matters:

a. to have particular regard to Te Ture Whaimana
b. to give notice to the Waikato River Authority of the application (which may be fulfilled by an invitation to comment under section 53 of the Act)
c. to consider the provisions for appointing hearing commissioners from the register maintained by the Waikato River Authority as they may be applied to the appointment of a panel
d. to have regard to the Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan, including how to provide for continued partnership with Waikato-Tainui
e. to consider the detailed information-sharing provisions of the relevant Joint Management Agreements, as they may be applied to the fast-track process.

Under section 28 of the Act, the Secretary for the Environment must also give written notice of decisions made by the Minister on an accepted referral application to the parties specified in Appendix 1 of this letter.

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email *referral@fasttrack.govt.nz* and include the name of the lead contact – Helen Willis. If you have any queries about the substantive process, please email *contact@fasttrack.govt.nz*, or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix 1: Section 28 – Notice of Minister's decision on accepted referral application

Section 28(1)(ii) – Anyone invited to comment on the application	
Relevant local authorities	Waikato Regional Council Waikato District Council
Relevant portfolio Ministers	Minister for the Environment Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti Minister for Māori Development Minister for Racing Associate Minister of Housing Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage Minister of Conservation
The Māori groups under s17(d)	Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust Raukawa Settlement Trust Waikato Raupatu River Trust Waikato River Authority Ngaati Maahanga Ngāti Tamainupō Ngāti Wairere Ngāti Koroki Kahukura Te Haa o te Whenua o Kirikiriroa Ngaati Hauaa Tribal Trust
Any other persons under s17(5)	Minister for Regional Development Minister for Economic Growth Minister for Seniors Chief Executive of NZ Transport Waka Kotahi Limited Chief Executive of Waikato Regional Airport Limited Waipā District Council Hamilton City Council

Section 28(2) – Other parties for an accepted referral application	
The Panel Convener	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
Any iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities (other than those that must be notified as identified above) that the Minister considers have an interest in the matter	No additional iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities have been identified beyond those listed above.
Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).