

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

MINUTE 1 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Project overview conference

Haldon Solar [FTAA-2508-1097]

5 December 2025

- [1] The purpose of this Minute is to confirm the time and the details for an on-line briefing from the applicant.
- [2] The briefing will be held on 10 December at 4:30 pm. It may last up to two hours.
- [3] The purpose of the briefing is for the Applicant to familiarise the Expert Panel with:
- a) the content of the application for approvals;
 - b) the content and structure of proposed conditions;¹
 - c) the key points of evidence (technical reports, assessments and other information) provided in support of the application;
 - d) proposed site visit details;
 - e) relevant legal tests and legal issues in contention; and
 - f) other relevant matters including issues raised by the Panel.

¹ Including management plans and strategic plan, drafting style

[4] During the briefing :

- a) the Applicant has an opportunity to present a high-level overview of the application;
- b) the Expert Panel has an opportunity to ask any questions about the application noting that by the time of the briefing panel members will have familiarised themselves with the documents.

[5] The Expert Panel requests that the applicant make available the appropriate experts they believe will assist in the Panel's understanding of the application in the briefing, recognising that this is a preliminary meeting of limited duration.

[6] To facilitate the overview of the application referred to in paragraph 3(a) above, it is suggested that the Applicant provides a short PowerPoint presentation to the EPA's Application Lead, June Cahill, no later than 5pm, 9 December 2025 and then speak to it at the briefing on 10 December 2025. It is appreciated that there will not be an opportunity to respond fully to the matters raised by the Panel.

[7] The details for the briefing session will be provided by June Cahill and she can be contacted at: info@fastrack.govt.nz.

[8] Following the briefing, the applicant may wish to provide a written update on matters discussed that would be included in the information to be considered by the parties invited to comment on the application. Any such written material would need to be received by the Expert Panel by 5pm on Friday 12 December 2025.

[9] The Panel now sets out the matters of particular interest in respect of which it is seeking further assistance. These matters may be addressed in the course of speaking to the PowerPoint presentation, or following the presentation.

Mana Whenua issues

[10] It is necessary to understand exactly what the Applicant has done to engage mana whenua, which groups, and what are the important issues raised through that engagement

or through any other due diligence the Applicant has undertaken. A summary of interchanges and consultation would be helpful.

[11] Please advise what responses have been provided to date to any issues raised. It is necessary for there to be an understanding of how mana whenua rights and interests have been considered and accommodated.

[12] It is important for the Panel to understand the Applicant's view at this point and their understanding of key issues for mana whenua. Are there any nohanga sites in that area? Are mahinga kai there?

RMA issues

[13] Are any concessions from the Department of Conservation (DoC) or wildlife permits required? What progress, if any, has been made?

[14] What leases are in place or are being proposed? Does the lease duration trigger a subdivision consent under section 218 of the RMA?

[15] Operational stormwater discharge consent for the substation area – given this is a higher risk activity, where is the point of discharge, what treatment and mitigation is proposed, and what is the discharge standard?

[16] In terms of dust, there is not a draft management plan with the application. What is the proposed management regime? If this is to include the use of water for dust suppression purposes, where is that water to be sourced? Similarly, the fire comments say there will be access to water – what is the likely source of this?

[17] What, if any, anti reflective coating is proposed to be used? Do these contain any per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)?

[18] Given the proximity of the Twizel airport to the site, what assessment of glare for aircraft has been undertaken? Are any mitigation measures proposed? Has there been any consultation with the airport and/or the Civil Aviation Authority?

[19] There is an adjacent solar farm fast-track application, and at least one other possible nearby. Have cumulative effects been considered?

Landscape issues

[20] How does the Applicant see the wider landscape of the Mackenzie Basin ONL (Outstanding Natural Landscape) evolving at present – recognising the pressures associated with:

- a) Farming in general;
- b) Farm intensification;
- c) Other forms of development within the Basin (including the Waitaki HEPS, Twizel, Tekapo and tourism-related development);
- d) The spread of wilding conifers;
- e) The depauperate state of much of the Basin, impacted by the likes of rabbits and ragwort.

[21] Could the Applicant outline its original proposals for the mitigation of landscape effects, explaining its decisions on screen planting around parts of the solar farm?

[22] Could the applicant and Boffa Miskell Ltd explain the rationale for changing from this planting / screening approach to adopting larger open space buffers around the solar farm with no planting (ie. expand on the ‘site characterisation and analysis process’ discussed under Recommendations in section 6 of BML’s report)?

Ecology issues

[23] Please provide further information on the suite of nationally threatened or at-risk flora or fauna that are potentially present but that were not detected.

[24] Please provide additional commentary on the adequacy of survey methodology

and level of effort and the corresponding likelihood that the full suite of notable flora or fauna was detected – noting that many species are cryptic and/or only present seasonal.

[25] Please comment on the assessment of effects methodology and how conclusions on the level of effect were reached in relation to impacts on nationally threatened or at-risk flora and fauna, with particular focus on:

- a) How the assessment factored in the likely or potential presence of nationally threatened or at risk species;
- b) How the interplay between threat status and magnitude of effects was addressed to arrive at a level of effect;
- c) Whether the potential for impacts associated with the exclusion of livestock and rabbit proof fence were considered, particularly for:
 - nationally at-risk plants susceptible to moisture changes and competition from exotic weeds, and
 - threatened birds that utilise farmland, particularly where adjacent to braided rivers or lakes.
- d) How the assessment factored in uncertainty and the level of risk versus consequence for nationally threatened or at risk birds, particularly for black stilt.

[26] In broad terms please provide comment on how the application has demonstrated best endeavours to ensure the protection and maintenance of habitat that meets criteria for ecological significance in accordance with the relevant policies and objectives in the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement.

[27] In addition, please outline potential options for addressing ecological effects, including (but not limited to) trade-up compensation, should this be considered necessary.

[28] Has there been or is there proposed to be any further ecology work undertaken to support the application since lodgement.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raynor Asher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Raynor Asher KC

Hadon Solar Expert Panel Chair