



FTAA–2604–1213: Application received for referral of the project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 1 decisions

Project Name: Hokonui Wind Farm

Date submitted:	19 June 2026	Tracking #: 26-BRF-01693	
Security level:	In-Confidence	MfE priority:	Urgent

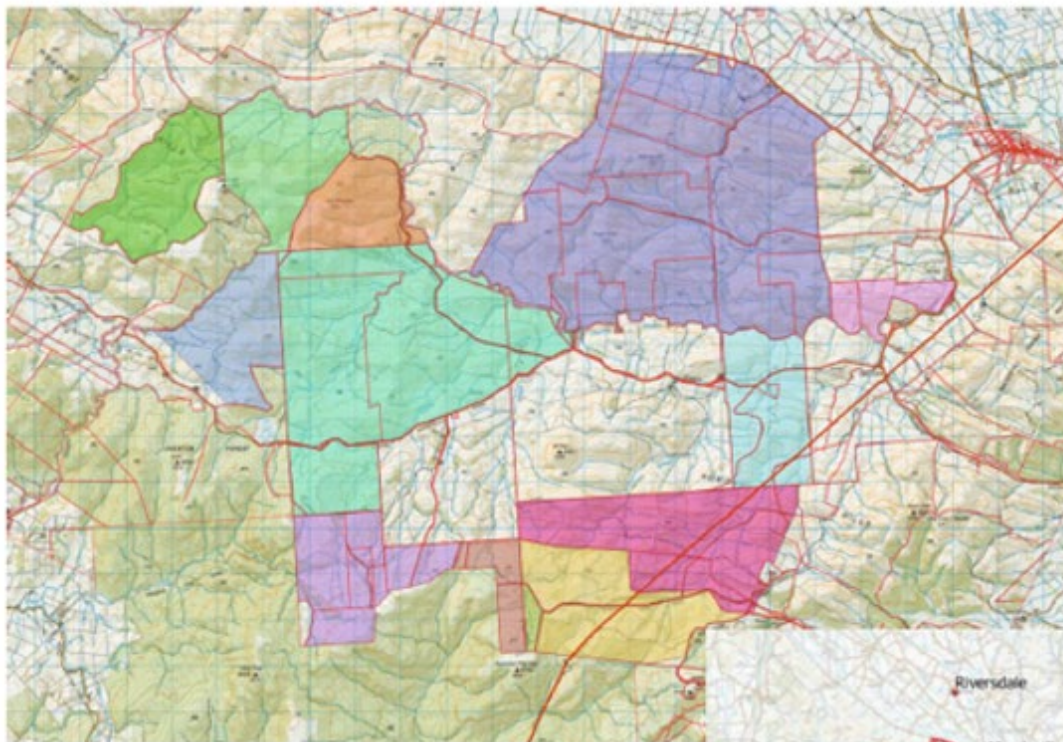
	Action sought:	Response by:
To Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations in Table A	25 June 2026

Actions for Minister's Office staff	Return the signed briefing to the Ministry for the Environment – email: FTAreferrals@mfe.govt.nz Send email to Ministers' to invite written comments
Number of appendices: 3	Appendices: 1. Statutory framework summary 2. Application documents for Hokonui Wind Farm project 3. List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Ministry for the Environment contacts:

Position	Name	Cell phone	1 st contact
Principal Author	Stephanie McNicholl		
Manager	Stephanie Frame	s 9(2)(a)	✓
General Manager	Ilana Miller	s 9(2)(a)	

Project area



The project area is approximately 1100 hectares, located across 12 properties in the Hokonui Hills, near Mandeville and mostly in the Southland District, and partly in the Gore District, Southland Region



Key messages

1. This briefing seeks your initial decisions on an application from Hokonui Wind Farm Limited Partnership (the applicant) to refer the Hokonui Wind Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process.
2. At this stage you can either decline an application for the reasons set out section 21, or provide the application to, and invite comments from, the parties identified in section 17. If you do not decline the application, you will receive a further briefing following receipt of comments, to inform your final decision on whether to refer the project.
3. The project area is approximately 1100 hectares, located across 12 properties in the Hokonui Hills near Mandeville, mostly in the Southland District, and partly in the Gore District, Southland Region.
4. The project is to:
 - a. construct, operate, maintain and carry out end-of-life decommissioning of a wind farm with a peak generation capacity of up to 500 MW (Megawatts) and an annual expected output of 1,905 GWh (Giga-watt hours)
 - b. establish a mixed-use industrial area of approximately 30 hectares to enable co-

location of complementary industrial or energy-related activities.

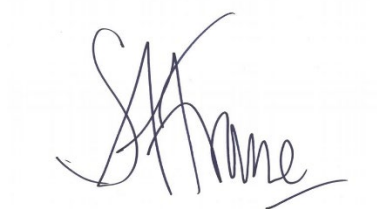
5. The project includes associated infrastructure and ancillary activities to connect and supply electricity to the National and local grids that will comprise:
 - a. up to 83 wind turbines comprising 3-blades, atop a tower height of up to 150 metres (maximum blade height up to 240 metres above ground level)
 - b. electrical reticulation consisting of underground and overhead cables and wind turbine transformers
 - c. a new switching station and two new substations and associated transmission lines and connections to the National Grid
 - d. construction of internal roading and access tracks, turbine foundations and hard-stand areas adjacent to the wind turbines
 - e. ancillary activities associated with the construction including earthworks and quarrying, concrete batching plants (4000m² in area), operation and maintenance of the wind farm including permanent on-site facilities comprising a 400m² building
 - f. mixed-use activities that may include data storage and processing facilities (including data centres), battery energy storage systems and associated grid support infrastructure, electricity-intensive processing or manufacturing activities, renewable energy conversion activities, and directly associated ancillary facilities supporting industrial and logistics operations
6. The project will require the proposed approvals under the fast-track approvals process:
 - a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991
 - b. concessions under the Conservation Act 1987
 - c. wildlife permits under the Wildlife Act 1953
 - d. archaeological approvals under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014
 - e. approvals under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983
7. The project involves a land exchange of approximately 11.67 hectares of privately owned land with 22.02 hectares of public conservation land that is administered by the Department of Conservation (DOC). The applicant states the land exchange is administrative and aligns boundaries of land parcels with historic and existing activities, including the fenceline. The land exchange application would be lodged with the Director-General of Conservation to process and report on, after the referral and before any substantive application can be lodged.
8. We have undertaken initial analysis of the referral application, and this is presented along with our considerations and recommendations in Table A.
9. We have decided the application is complete and complies with section 14 of the Act, as the application complies with section 13 requirements, may be capable of satisfying the criteria in section 22 and does not appear to involve an ineligible activity. The applicable fee and levy have been paid.
10. We recommend you progress consideration of the referral application to the next stage of analysis (Stage 2) and invite written comments from the parties prescribed in section 17(1) of the Act being:

- a. Southland Regional Council, Gore District Council and Southland District Council as the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, and the Minister for Energy as the other relevant portfolio Ministers
 - d. the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as the relevant administering agencies
 - e. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3.
11. We recommend that you invite written comments from additional persons under section 17(5) of the Act (as detailed in Table A) being:
- a. the Minister for Economic Growth – as the project proposes significant economic growth to the region
 - b. the Minister for Regional Development – as the project proposes significant regional development
 - c. the Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited – regarding whether connection to, and capacity within, the National Grid will impact timely delivery of the project
 - d. the Chief Executive of PowerNet Limited (manager of the local electricity distribution and lines) – regarding whether capability to connect to the local grid will impact timely delivery of the project.

Action sought

12. Please indicate your decisions on the recommendations in Table A.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Frame', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Table A: Stage 1 analysis – FTAA–2604–1213 Hokonui Wind Farm

	Project Name	Applicant		Project Area		
Project details	Hokonui Wind Farm project (the project)	Hokonui Hills Wind Farm Limited Partnership – Hokonui Energy Limited and the Hokonui Rūnanga (the applicant)		The project area is approximately 1100 hectares, located across 12 properties in the Hokonui Hills, near Mandeville, mostly in the Southland District, and partly in the Gore District, Southland Region.		
Project description	The project is to: a. construct, operate, maintain and carry out end-of-life decommissioning of a wind farm with a peak generation capacity of up to 500 MW (Megawatts) and an annual expected output of 1,905 GWh (Giga-watt-hours) b. establish a mixed-use industrial area of approximately 30 hectares to enable co-location of complementary industrial or energy-related activities. The project area is approximately 1100 hectares, located across 12 properties in the Hokonui Hills, near Mandeville, mostly in the Southland District, and partly in the Gore District, Southland Region. The project includes associated infrastructure and ancillary activities to connect and supply electricity to the National and local grids that will comprise: a. up to 83 wind turbines comprising 3-blades, atop a tower height of up to 150 metres (maximum blade height up to 240 metres above ground level) b. electrical reticulation consisting of underground and overhead cables and wind turbine transformers c. a new switching station and two new substations and associated transmission lines and connections to the National Grid d. construction of internal roading and access tracks, turbine foundations and hard-stand areas adjacent to the wind turbines e. ancillary activities associated with the construction including earthworks and quarrying, concrete batching plants (4000m² in area), operation and maintenance of the wind farm including permanent on-site facilities comprising a 400m² building f. the mixed-use activities may include data storage and processing facilities (including data centres), battery energy storage systems and associated grid support infrastructure, electricity-intensive processing or manufacturing activities, renewable energy conversion activities, and directly associated ancillary activities supporting industrial and logistics facilities The applicant seeks the proposed approvals under the specified Acts: a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 b. concessions under the Conservation Act 1987 c. wildlife permits under the Wildlife Act 1953 d. archaeological approvals under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 e. approvals under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983.					
Notification and/or consultation undertaken	As required by section 11, the applicant has:					
	Notified the relevant local authorities	Notified the relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities	Consulted relevant MACA groups	Consulted ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou	Notified relevant administering agencies	Notified the holder of land to be exchanged
	a. Southland Regional Council b. Gore District Council c. Southland District Council	a. Papatipu Rūnaka ki Murihiku b. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu c. Hokonui Rūnanga d. Te Ao Marama Inc	N/A	N/A	a. Department of Conservation b. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga	Department of Conservation (Note: the parcel is Crown-owned land identified as conservation area that is managed under the Conservation Act 1987)
Section 22 assessment criteria						
The project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits [section 22(1)(a)]	You <u>must</u> consider a relevant Government policy statement (GPS) [s22(1A)] No GPS has been identified by the applicant as being relevant to the application. You <u>may</u> consider any of the following matters, or any other matters the Minister considers relevant: <i>The project has been identified as a priority project in a central or local government, or sector plan or strategy or a central government infrastructure priority list [s22(2)(a)(i)]</i> The applicant considers that while the project is not specifically identified, it will indirectly contribute to and aligns with some of the Government's strategies and policies, such as: contributing to the greenhouse gas emission reduction target of net zero by 2050 for long-lived gases, established in the Climate Change Response Act 2002, by contributing to the objective to double renewable energy generation by 2050 as set out in the Electrify New Zealand policy and is consistent with the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 by increasing renewable electricity generation capacity and output. <i>Will deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure or enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure [s22(2)(a)(ii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will deliver a new regionally or nationally significant source of renewable electricity, with an annual expected output of 1,905 GWh, which is sufficient to power up to 238,000 homes, which also meets the definition of 'regionally significant infrastructure' in the Southland Regional Policy Statement. <i>Will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020) [s22(2)(a)(iii)]</i> The applicant considers that while not increasing housing or within an urban area, that indirectly, electricity is critical to housing needs and the functioning of urban environments which are both reliant on electricity supply that the project will deliver.					

	<i>Will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]</i> The applicant considers the project will deliver significant economic benefits both regionally and nationally, and that the most enduring economic benefit is the utilisation of the wind resource to produce electricity, contributing to the increase in renewable electricity capacity. The project will generate approximately 185–250 full-time equivalent (FTE) direct construction jobs over the development period and 24-33 FTE once operational. The project will deliver \$256.7 million in total direct expenditure for the construction period and up to \$18 million once operational into the local economy. <i>Will support primary industries, including aquaculture [s22(2)(a)(v)]</i> The applicant considers the project will support primary industries by providing a secure electricity supply as New Zealand's primary industries reduce reliance on fossil fuels. <i>Will support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum [s22(2)(a)(vi)]</i> The applicant considers that utilising wind to generate electricity is an efficient use of natural resources, which will support the primary sector and extractive industries by providing a reliable electricity supply <i>Will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions [s22(2)(a)(vii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will support climate change mitigation by generating an annual output of up to 1,905GWh of renewable electricity, providing greater flexibility (alongside geothermal and hydro sources) in responding to short-term electricity demand. <i>Will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards [s22(2)(a)(viii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will strengthen New Zealand's resilience to the effects of climate change by increasing the supply and diversity of electricity generation sites, which will aid recovery from events caused by natural hazards. <i>Will address significant environmental issues [s22(2)(a)(ix)]</i> The applicant considers that climate change is a significant environmental issue addressed by the project providing a significant new source of renewable electricity, which supports decarbonisation, reduces reliance on coal combatting the effects of climate change. <i>Will promote competition in the grocery industry [s22(2)(a)(ixa)]</i> The applicant considers that indirectly, the grocery industry is reliant on access to electricity to operate and the project will contribute to the continued efficient operation of the grocery industry. <i>Is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)]</i> The applicant considers the project is consistent with local or regional planning documents including spatial strategies – Southland Regional Policy Statement, Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan, Regional Air Plan, Environment Southland Renewable Energy Position Statement, Southland District Plan, Gore District Plan, Proposed Gore District Plan, Operative Gore District Plan.		
Referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	<i>Would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes [s22(1)(b)(i)]</i> The applicant considers the use of the FTAA to authorise the project will facilitate the delivery of the project in a more timely and cost-effective manner than would otherwise occur under the standard legislative processes, which under the standard RMA process would likely be publicly notified, result in submissions and likely lead to a hearing process and likely appeal to the Environment Court, adding additional time and cost to the consenting process. The FTAA process will therefore significantly reduce the processing timeframe for the project and the associated cost that would occur with consenting under the standard RMA process. <i>Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]</i> The applicant considers the project is not overly complex, is for a development of which the effects are largely understood and can be addressed through the implementation of appropriate management measures, as has occurred for the development of other wind farms around the country. Independent technical reports that will support the substantive application are being prepared and engaging with key stakeholders throughout preparation of the substantive application will ensure the application can be processed in an efficient manner and will therefore not materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.		
Minister invites comments	<i>You must copy the application to, and invite written comments from [s17(1)]:</i> - relevant local authorities – Southland Regional Council, Gore District Council and Southland District Council - the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development - other relevant portfolio Ministers – the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, and the Minister for Energy - relevant administering agencies – the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga - the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3.	<i>You may copy the application to, and invite written comments from, any other person [s17(5)]:</i> We recommend you invite comments from the following additional persons, for the specified reasons: - the Minister for Economic Growth – as the project proposes significant economic growth to the region - the Minister of Regional Development – as the project proposes significant benefits to the region - the Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited – regarding whether capacity within and capability to connect to the National Grid will impact timely delivery of the project - the Chief Executive of PowerNet Limited (manager of the local electricity distribution network and lines) – regarding whether capability to connect to the local grid will impact timely delivery of the project.	<i>You may request further information about a referral application from the applicant, the relevant local authorities, or the relevant administering agencies to be provided within the time frame specified in the request.</i> N/A
Recommendations			Minister's decision
a. Note that section 25 of the Act permits you to decline the referral application without inviting comments from the relevant local authorities, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development, any other relevant portfolio Ministers, any relevant administering agencies and any Māori groups identified in the list provided.			Noted

b. Note that you have not yet provided the application to, nor sought any written comments on it from, the parties listed in section 17(1) but that you are required to do so if you do not decline the application under section 21 of the Act.	Noted
c. Note that section 17(5) of the Act permits you to forward an application to, and invite written comments from, any other person.	Noted
d. Note that if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame you are required to consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.	Noted
e. Note that section 20 of the Act permits you to request further information from the applicant or relevant local authorities or relevant administering agencies at any time before you decide whether to accept or decline an application.	Noted
f. Note that you have agreed to delegate to the Secretary for the Environment your responsibility to send all correspondence, other than to Ministers.	Noted
g. Note that section 19(1) of the Act requires you to obtain and consider a report in relation to the use of public conservation land for the project from the Director-General of Conservation.	Noted
h. Agree to progress the Hokonui Wind Farm project to our Stage 2 analysis (invite written comments and request section 18 Treaty report).	Yes / No
i. Agree to provide the application to, and invite written comments from: i. Southland Regional Council, Gore District Council and Southland District Council as the relevant local authorities under section 17(1)(a) ii. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development under section 17(1)(b) iii. the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, and the Minister for Energy as the other relevant portfolio Ministers under section 17(1)(b) iv. the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as the relevant administering agencies under section 17(1)(c) v. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3 under section 17(1)(d) vi. any parties you are required to invite comments from under section 17(1)(d) and (e) who may be subsequently identified.	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
j. Agree to provide the application to and invite written comments from the following additional persons under section 17(5): i. the Minister for Economic Growth ii. the Minister for Regional Development iii. the Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited iv. the Chief Executive of PowerNet Limited.	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
k. Agree to send the email to invite written comments from Ministers.	Yes / No

Signed:

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure

Date:

Appendix 1: Statutory framework summary

1. You are the sole decision maker for referral applications. If you accept a referral application, then the whole or part of the project will be referred to the fast-track approvals process.
2. If a Treaty settlement, the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019, a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe or a joint management agreement provides for consideration of any document or procedural requirements, you must, where relevant:
 - a. give the document the same or equivalent effect through this process as it would have under any specified Act; and
 - b. comply with any applicable procedural requirements.
3. You must decline a referral application if:
 - a. you are satisfied the project does not meet the referral criteria in s22
 - b. you are satisfied the project involves an ineligible activity (s5)
 - c. you consider you do not have adequate information to inform your decision.
4. You may decline an application for any other reason, including those set out in s21(5) and even if the application meets the s22 referral criteria.
5. You can decline an application before or after inviting comments under s17(1). However, if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame, you must consider them, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.
6. If you do not decline a referral application at this initial stage you must copy the application to, and invite written comments from:
 - a. the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. any other relevant portfolio Ministers
 - d. the relevant administering agencies
 - e. the Māori groups identified by the responsible agency
 - f. the owners of Māori land in the project area (if applicable)
 - g. you may provide the application to and invite comments from any other person.
7. You can request further information from an applicant, any relevant local authority or any relevant administering agency at any time before you decide to decline or accept a referral application (see section 20 of the Act).
8. However, if further information has been sought and provided within the required time frame you must consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.

Appendix 2: Application documents for Hokonui Wind Farm project

Appendix 3: List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Name of group	Type of group (section of Act)
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	Iwi authority (s18(2)(a)); Treaty settlement entity – Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (s18(2)(a))
Hokonui Rūnanga	Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Waihōpai Rūnaka	Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Awarua	Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Ōraka Aparima	Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Ao Mārama Incorporated	Entity owned by Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(k))