Boffa Miskell

Memorandum

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Attention:	Jackson Bull
Company:	CDL Land New Zealand Limited
Date:	27 October 2026
From:	Andrew Blayney, Senior Principal Ecologist
Message Ref:	R2 Growth Cell (FTAA-2609-1298): Response to EPA request for further information, Wildlife Approval items 1 to 4
Project No:	BM210549

This memorandum responds to items 1 to 4 of the EPA letter dated 22 October 2026 (FTAA-2609-1298). These items were raised by the Department of Conservation (DOC) and relate to the wildlife approval information requirements in Schedule 7, clause 2(1) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. The numbered headings below follow the item numbers listed in the letter under section 43(3)(h) of the Act, and each heading identifies the Schedule 7 clause the item relates to.

"EcIA" refers to the R2 Growth Cell Ecological Impact Assessment (Boffa Miskell, 21 August 2026; Appendix 26 of the application). "LMP" refers to the draft Lizard Management Plan (Boffa Miskell, 10 March 2026; Appendix 15 of the EcIA).

1. Purpose of the Wildlife Approval (clause 2(1)(a))

The Wildlife Approval is sought on the following terms.

Activities:

a. catch alive, handle, transport and release protected lizards;
b. humanely euthanise injured lizards that cannot recover, in accordance with the LMP; and
c. incidentally kill protected lizards, provided all reasonable steps are taken in accordance with the approval and the LMP to avoid killing wildlife.

Species: copper skink (*Oligosoma aeneum*) and ornate skink (*Oligosoma ornatum*).

Purpose: to protect indigenous lizards affected by the Project. Vegetation clearance and earthworks will remove approximately 7.1 ha of potential lizard habitat. Native skinks are sedentary and cryptic, and shelter in place when disturbed, so without salvage most lizards within this habitat would be killed or injured. The approval will enable these lizards to be salvaged and relocated to a release site around the northern ponds. As part of the Project, that site will be retained as reserve, enhanced with refugia and planting, and subject to predator control, with these measures secured through the certified LMP (LMP Sections 9.0 and 10.0). Salvaged lizards will therefore have a materially better prospect of survival than if left in the works area, supporting the persistence of the local population.

Methods: in accordance with the LMP, as certified by DOC under proposed condition WA2.

Relocation is sought, with holding limited to transport to the release site. This corrects item (i) of EcIA Table 6-1. A 20-year duration is sought (proposed condition WA1).

2. Species present and numbers affected (clause 2(1)(d))

The protected lizard species known or predicted to be present are:

- copper skink (*Oligosoma aeneum*, At Risk – Declining), confirmed present at low density; and
- ornate skink (*Oligosoma ornatum*, At Risk – Declining), not detected, but recorded approximately 3 km south of the site in 2020 and possibly present at very low density.

Plague skink was also recorded but is introduced and not protected. No other native lizards are predicted to be present (EcIA Section 3.2.1).

Three copper skink detections were recorded from 70 artificial cover objects checked three times between October 2025 and January 2026 (EcIA Sections 2.2.3 and 3.2.1.1). This confirms presence at low density but does not allow the number of lizards present or affected to be estimated. Copper skinks are cryptic, occur patchily within small areas of microhabitat, and have low and variable detection rates. Low detections cannot be converted into a reliable abundance estimate.

A reliable estimate would require intensive capture-mark-recapture sampling across all affected habitat, which itself requires a Wildlife Act authority. This would be disproportionate to the risk and would not change the management response, because the LMP already assumes lizards may be present throughout the affected habitat. Specifically, the LMP:

- requires salvage across all potential lizard habitat to be cleared (approximately 7.1 ha), not only where lizards were detected (LMP Section 4.1);
- continues trapping until there are no captures for three consecutive nights, then escalates to hand searching and machine-assisted salvage (LMP Section 5.0); and
- scales release pens, predator control and post-release monitoring to the number of lizards captured (LMP Sections 9.3, 11.0 and 13.0).

All captures will be recorded and reported to DOC (LMP Section 12.0), providing an actual count of lizards affected.

3. Methods and best practice (clause 2(1)(f))

The LMP methods follow the DOC *Inventory and Monitoring Toolbox: Herpetofauna* (2012), the DOC Lizard Technical Advisory Group translocation guidelines (2018), DOC's *Key principles for lizard salvage and transfer* (2019) and Turner et al. (2023) on pitfall trap design. The LMP applies this guidance by requiring salvage only in the active season (October to April), bedding in cover objects and pitfall traps before checking, and using an escalating salvage sequence with hold points that prevent clearance until the herpetologist confirms an area is clear. It also requires minimal handling and holding, soft release into enhanced habitat with predator control close to the capture sites, and procedures for incidental discoveries, injured lizards, contingencies and reporting (LMP Sections 4.0 to 13.0).

Proposed condition WA2 requires the LMP to follow best practice, be signed off by a suitably qualified and experienced person, and be certified by DOC before works start. The certified LMP must then be implemented for the duration of the works.

4. Additional written expert views, advice or opinions (clause 2(1)(o))

No written expert views, advice or opinions on the Wildlife Approval have been obtained other than the EcIA and draft LMP, both of which are included in the application.