



FTAA–2502-1008: Application received for referral of the Ayrburn Screen hub project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 1 decisions

Project Name: Ayrburn Screen Hub

Date submitted:	25/02/2025	Tracking #: BRF–5884	
Security level:	In-Confidence	MfE priority:	Urgent

	Action sought:	Response by:
To Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations in Table A	To be advised

Actions for Minister's Office staff	Return the signed briefing to MfE: FTAreferrals@mfe.govt.nz Send attached letters (if signed)
Number of attachments: 4	Attachments: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Application documents for Ayrburn Screen Hub: (see external file exchange link in email)2. Parties to invite comments from (including list of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2))3. Draft Letter to relevant portfolio Ministers – inviting written comments on the project4. Statutory framework summary

Ministry for the Environment contacts:

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

Project location



Key messages

1. This briefing seeks your initial decisions on an application from Waterfall Park Developments Limited to refer the Ayrburn Screen Hub project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. 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 support your final decision on whether or not to refer the project.
2. The project is to construct and operate a film production facility in Arrowtown, Queenstown, including studios, worker accommodation units, and supporting facilities and amenities. The project also proposes environmental enhancement measures including sediment traps and riparian planting to improve water quality in Lake Hayes. The applicant noted a previous proposal (retirement village complex) was consented on the same site, but that project was withdrawn by the applicant.
3. The project will require the proposed approvals: resource consents under the specified Act – Resource Management Act 1991.
4. We have undertaken initial analysis of the referral application and this is presented along with our considerations and recommendations in Table A below.
5. 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 has been paid.
6. 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: relevant local authorities, the Minister for the Environment and relevant portfolio Ministers, relevant administering agencies, the owners of Māori land within the project area and identified Māori groups from section 18(2) of the Act. The parties are listed in Appendix 2.
7. We recommend that you invite written comments from the following parties as additional parties under section 17(5) of the Act:
 - a. Queenstown Trails Trust
 - b. Wai Whakaata Strategy Group

Action sought

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

Signature



Ilana Miller
General Manager – Delivery and Operations

Table A: Stage 1 analysis

	Project Name	Applicant		Project Location		
Project details	Ayrburn Screen Hub	Waterfall Park Developments Limited c/- Barker and Associates; c/- Winton Land Limited		A 26.25 hectare site, within the wider Ayrburn Farm, on Ayr Avenue (between Arrowtown township and Lake Hayes). Lots 1,2 3 and 4 DP 540788.		
Project description	The project is to construct and operate a film production facility, including worker accommodation and associated site works (including works to improve water quality of Lake Hayes which an onsite ephemeral stream flows into). The project involves activities such as earthworks, construction (15 buildings) sediment control, riparian and mitigation planting, worker accommodation and ongoing operation of the facility.					
Consultation undertaken	As required by s11, the applicant has consulted with:					
	Relevant local authorities	Relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities:	Relevant MACA groups	Ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou	Relevant administering agencies	Holder of land to be exchanged
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Queenstown Lakes District Council (Economic Development Manager - with support indicated, and Planning Manager (yet to receive response))Otago Regional Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Te Runanga o Ngāi TahuAukahaTe Ao Mārama Inc (consultation is underway)	N/A	N/A	Ministry for the Environment	N/A
Section 22 assessment criteria						
The project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits [section 22(1)(a)]	<p><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> No</p> <p><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> No</p> <p><i>The project will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment [s22(2)(a)(iii)]</i> The project will includes 185 worker accommodation units, noting housing affordability is currently a barrier to development of screen production activities in the Queenstown Lakes area.</p> <p><i>The project will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]</i> The application provides an economic impact assessment by Property Economics, which outlines benefits including during the construction phase (\$278 million to the regional economy, and 640 full time jobs annually (totalling 2,040 'job years'), and operational phase (\$485 million within Otago over 10 years, and 370 full time jobs annually).</p> <p><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 project itself is not a climate change adaptation project, but it does propose measures to mitigate site-level natural hazard risk (flooding and sedimentation)</p> <p><i>Will address significant environmental issues [s22(2)(a)(ix)]</i> The application proposes riparian planting, sediment traps, and stormwater management initiatives which are expected to reduce phosphorus and other contaminants entering Lake Hayes</p> <p><i>Is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)]</i> The application quotes Queenstown Lakes District Council's economic development manager: "supporting the film industry and growing its value in the district is a project identified in our Economic Diversification Plan".</p>					
referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	<p><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 application notes recent experience that proposals can take 3-5 years or longer to reach a final outcome, compared with the faster timeframe under the Fast-track Approvals process. The applicant expects this to reduce delays and associated costs for this project.</p> <p><i>Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]</i> The project only requires RMA-equivalent resource consents, and no other approvals under other legislation. No issues are identified in relation to this project regarding the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.</p>					
Any other relevant matters [section 22(2)(b)]	The application provides a report from the film industry (with supporting letters) which concludes that, due to under-resourcing in regard to screen infrastructure in the Queenstown Lakes and wider Otago/Southland region, "some productions choose to shoot elsewhere in the country or may not even come to New Zealand. Projects that come, spend less time and money in the area because of the lack of studios, support buildings and accommodation". The report concludes the project "can be expected to result in more screen productions happening in New Zealand, and significantly higher film and television production expenditure in the Queenstown Lakes and wider Otago/Southland region". We recommend you invite comments from the Minister for Economic Growth and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage onwhether or not the project would have significant regional or national benefits.					
Minister invites comments	You must copy the application to, and invite written comments from [s17(1)]: a. Queenstown Lakes District Council b. Otago Regional Council c. Minister for the Environment d. Ministry for the Environment e. The Māori groups identified in Attachment 2		The Minister may also copy the application to, and invite written comments from, any other person[s17(5)]. We recommend you invite comments from the following additional parties: • the Wai Whakaata Strategy Group, which the applicant identified and consulted with as a collaborative partnership focused on restoring and		The Minister 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.	

	f. The owners of Māori land in the project area: None	improving the health of Lake Hayes • the Queenstown Trails Trust, which the applicant has consulted with regarding cycling connections as part of the development.	
Recommendations			Minister's decision
a.	Note that section 25(1)(a) of the Act permits you to decline the referral application without inviting comments from parties identified in section 17.		
b.	Note that you have not yet provided the application to, nor sought any 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.		
c.	Note that section 17(5) of the Act permits you to forward an application to, and invite written comments from, any other person.		
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.		
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.		
f.	Note if you request further information, and it is provided within the required timeframe, you are required to consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.		
g.	Agree to progress the Ayrburn Screen Hub Project to our Stage 2 analysis (invite to comment and s18 report stage).		Yes / No
h.	Agree to provide the application to, and invite comments from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queenstown Lakes District Council and Otago Regional Council under section 17(1)(a) The Minister for the Environment, Minister for Economic Growth and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage under section 17(1)(b) The Ministry for the Environment as the relevant administering agency under section 17(1)(c) Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou, Hokonui Rūnanga, Waihōpai Rūnaka, Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Te Rūnanga o Ōraka-Aparima, Aukaha and Te Ao Mārama Incorporated under section 17(1)(d) 		Yes / No
i.	Agree to provide the application to and invite comments from the following additional entities/persons under section 17(5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wai Whakaata Strategy Group Queenstown Trails Trust 		Yes/No Yes/No
j.	Note that you have agreed to delegate to the Secretary for the Environment your responsibility to send all correspondence other than to Ministers		
k.	Sign and send the attached letters to the Minister for the Environment, Minister for Economic Growth, and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage.		Yes / No

Signed:

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure

Date:

Attachment 1: Application documents for Ayrburn Screen Hub:

Attachment 2: 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))
Te Rūnanga o Moeraki	Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki	Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou	Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Hokonui Rūnanga	Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Waihōpai Rūnaka	Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Awarua	Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Ōraka-Aparima	Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(a))
Aukaha	Entity owned by Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(k))
Te Ao Mārama Incorporated	Entity owned by Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(k))

Attachment 3: Draft Letter to Ministers – inviting written comments on the project

Attachment 4: 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 s 17(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 and the following relevant portfolio Ministers:
 - i. Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage
 - ii. Minister for Economic Growth
 - c. the following relevant administering agency
 - i. the Ministry for the Environment:
 - d. the Māori groups identified in Attachment 2
 - e. 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.