

Your Comment on the Rangitooopuni application

Please include all the contact details listed below with your comments and indicate whether you can receive further communications from us by email to substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)	Auckland Conservation Board Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Tāmaki Makaurau		
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2. We will email you draft conditions of consent for your comment			
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Please provide your comments below, include additional pages as needed.

The Auckland Conservation Board Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Tāmaki Makaurau Commentary on the Fast-Track Proposal for Rangitōopuni – FTAA 2504-1055.

Introduction

- The Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Conservation Board (ACB) is an independent statutory body appointed by the Minister for Conservation. The Board was established by the Conservation Act 1987, s 6L. The Board has a statutory role in advocating its interests in any public forum or in any statutory planning process.

The Auckland Conservation Board feedback on the Fast Track Proposal for Rangitōopuni is restricted to potential conservation impacts with some comment on cultural matters.

Given the largely ecologically positive nature of the project, we have not sought additional advice or technical input from the Department of Conservation or any community-led conservation groups working in the vicinity of the project. Further, we have not obtained additional advice on cultural aspects of the proposal or on the location of any sites of heritage significance.

Our feedback is based on review of the following documents

- Bioresearches May 2025 Rangitōopuni Ecological Assessment. Final (1 May 2025))
- Bioresearches July 2025 Rangitōopuni Lizard Management Plan (25 July 2025)
- Department of Conservation September 2025: Fast-track Approvals Act Wildlife approval report: Section 51(2) wildlife approval report for FTAA-2504-1055 Rangitōopuni

Potential Conservation Impacts of the Proposal

There is no Public Conservation Land (PCL) associated with the site or immediately adjacent. Our understanding is that the nearest PCL is the Rangitōopuni Marginal Strip to the east.

Based on our review, we believe that the most significant potential conservation impact will be disturbance of native lizard habitat. We note, however that:

- no native lizards have been recorded by the applicant within the project site but there is potential for six species to be present, with copper skinks being the most likely
- the Department of Conservation (DOC) have provided significant feedback on the proposed Lizard Management Plan (LMP)
- the applicant has responded to detailed feedback from DOC on the LMP including, specifying timing for lizard salvage, the need to ensure that any lizard release sites have predator control measures in place, and proposed monitoring and reporting.

The LMP identifies that any lizard capture and handling will be carried out by a DOC-authorized herpetologist and we also note that the project's lead herpetologist has 18 years of herpetological

work experience. Given these considerations, we believe that the project's potential impacts on native lizard populations should be effectively mitigated.

In addition to the LMP, the project application documents include an Ecological Management Plan which provides proposed actions to mitigate conservation impacts and restore native ecosystems, such as

- Terrestrial restoration planting
- Sediment runoff control
- Mammalian and pest management
- Protection of birds
- Bat management
- Fish species relocation
- Riparian planting

Conclusion

If the proposed measures included in the LMP and other Ecological Management Plans are all effectively implemented, we believe there should be minimal ecological impacts arising from the project. Based on this information we are satisfied that the proposed project contains sufficient impact mitigation and ecological enhancement measures to ensure conservation outcomes will be non-detrimental, and in some cases, positive.

Our conclusion rests on the assumption that all proposed conservation mitigation/enhancement actions will be fully implemented. We therefore seek assurance from the project developer and Auckland Council, as the regulatory body, that implementation will be actively monitored and publicly reported on.

We acknowledge that the proposal to restore healthy indigenous vegetation cover where possible throughout the site may result in net project ecological gain rather than loss. The long term proposed indigenous forest revegetation will potentially enhance the corridor from Tiritiri Matangi to the West coast for avian native species.

Required Conditions to the Proposal:

We provide, below, a list of what the ACB feels should be among the required conditions for this Proposal to proceed, based largely on the recommendations included within the Proposal's LMP and ecological management plans.

For the project construction stage, we recommend and/or endorse

- all proposed LMP actions to ensure the successful relocation of any native lizards encountered

- restricting vegetation removal to outside the native pipit breeding season (August – March) unless a check for nests is done 24 hours prior
- proposed measures to minimise impacts on the long-tail bats and indigenous freshwater fish species observed at the project site
- planting to improve the health of existing native riparian vegetation which is likely to be acting as a green corridor for native bird movements.

For the project operational stage, we recommend:

- use of downward directed lights, non-reflective and dark surfaces
- the ongoing implementation of a well-planned programme to control exotic weeds (wilding pines, gorse, pampas etc) and exotic animals (possums, rats, stoats, ferrets, pigs and feral cats) is to be put in place to ensure the indigenous flora and fauna can thrive
- protecting potential roosting sites for native bats (long tailed)
- enhancing wetlands and waterways with riparian planting and sediment control measures are a positive step to protect the identified species living in them including koura, eels, kokopu and bullies.

Given the number of plans and associated commitments to mitigate impacts and improve conservation outcomes the Auckland Conservation Board welcomes the opportunity to comment on future proposed conditions.