

Hon Shane Jones

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Resources
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Energy



4 November 2025

Expert Panel for the Ashbourne Fast-track Application
C/o Environmental Protection Authority, Fast-track Team
Wellington

Fast-track Approvals Act substantive application – Ashbourne (FTAA-2507-1087)

Dear Expert Panel members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Ashbourne substantive application under the Fast-track Approvals Act (FTAA 2024).

The FTAA 2024 has been established to provide a regime that makes it easier and quicker for regionally and nationally significant infrastructure projects to gain the approvals needed for development, in support of this Government's economic growth objectives.

I have considered the information provided in the substantive application for the Ashbourne development and its alignment with the priorities of my Regional Development portfolio. My comments are attached as Annex One.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Jones'.

Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Regional Development

Annex One – Regional Development comments

Project overview

1. Matamata Development Limited has applied for Fast-track approval for a multi-use urban development comprised of:
 - a. A residential community of 530 new residential units and a commercial node.
 - b. A multi-functional greenway linking the residential community to the Waitoa River.
 - c. A retirement community of 218 units, a hospital and additional supporting facilities.
 - d. Two solar farms of 13 and 25 hectares respectively, generating a total of 52,000 megawatt-hours per year (sufficient to power 8,000 homes).
2. Matamata Development Limited has provided an economic assessment to support its application for the Ashbourne development:
 - a. The construction phase is estimated to provide full-time work for more than 380 people for seven years, and boost GDP by nearly \$375 million.
 - b. Once operational, the development is estimated to sustain full-time employment for 180 people and an annual GDP contribution of \$12 million.

Comments

3. Given the scale of the projected economic benefits as set out in the application's economic assessment, the project could deliver significant regional economic benefit.
4. I note that the area of the proposed development includes highly productive land, and the project should consider the trade-offs regarding primary production activity that could support export growth.
5. Comments on potential impacts of the proposal in areas of housing, aged care and energy should be provided by the relevant Ministerial portfolios.