

FTAA-2505-1062: Application received for referral of the project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 1 decisions

Project Name: Whiterock Quarry and Managed Fill

Date submitted:	29 August 2025	Tracking #: BRF-6751
Security level:	In-Confidence	MfE priority: Urgent

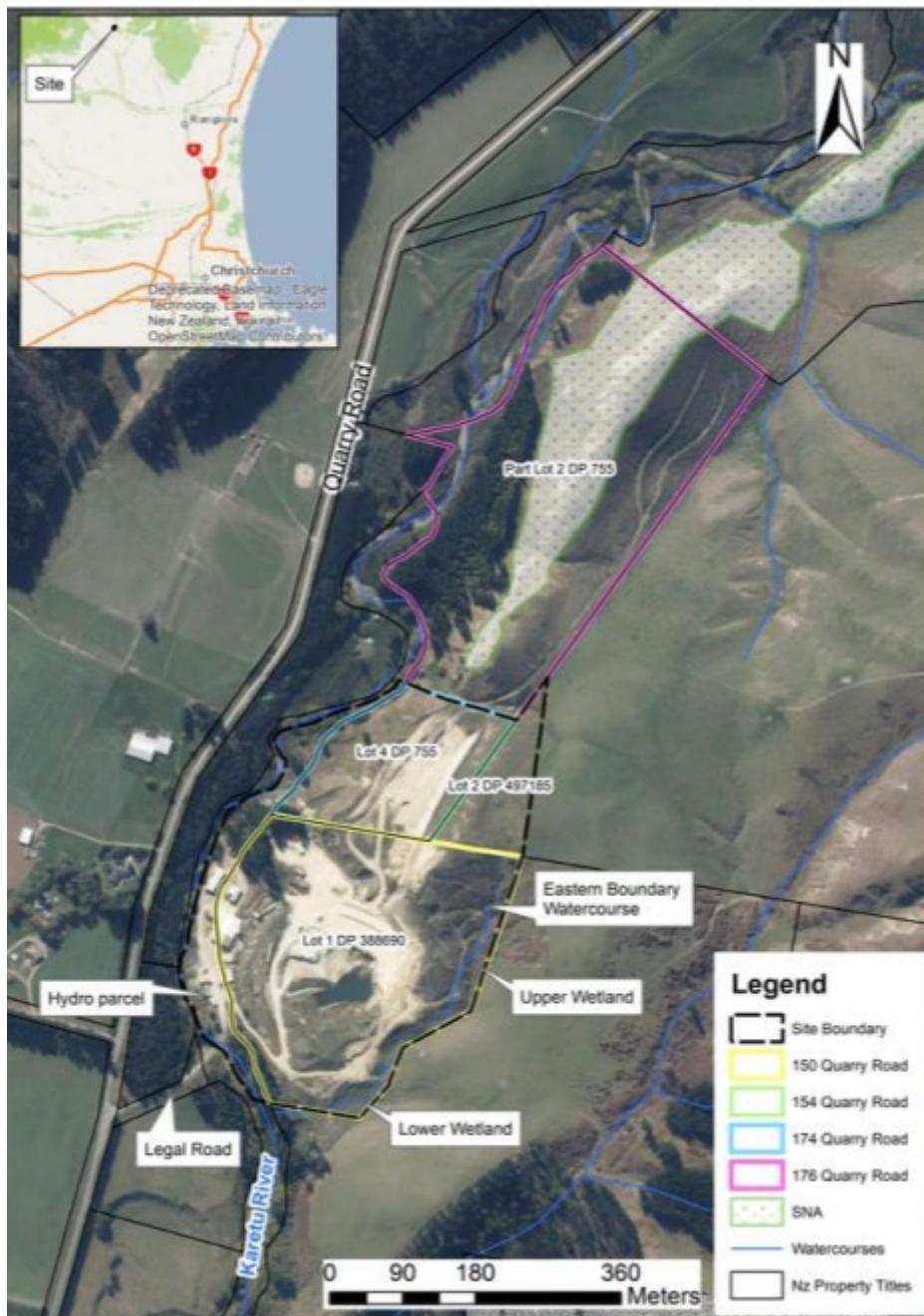
	Action sought:	Response by:
To Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations in Table A	5 September 2025

Actions for Minister's Office staff	Return the signed briefing to MfE – email to: FTAreerrals@mfe.govt.nz Send email to Ministers to invite written comments
Number of appendices 3	Appendices: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory framework summary Application documents for the Whiterock Quarry and Managed Fill Project (in File Exchange) 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(s)	Antonia Croft / Ben Bunting		
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 Whiterock Lime Limited (the applicant) to refer the Whiterock Quarry and Managed Fill 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 to refer the project.
2. The project is to construct and operate a Class 3 Managed Fill at Whiterock, Loburn. The

project area is located approximately 23.5 kilometres from the centre of Rangiora and 50 kilometres to the centre of Christchurch, in the Canterbury Region.

3. The site currently operates as a lime quarry and processing facility. Quarrying and limestone extraction will continue, shaping the floor and sides for the managed fill component as part of ongoing operations.
4. The project includes:
 - establishing and operating a 'Class 3 Managed Fill' for the Canterbury Region (note that 'class 3 managed fill' is a landfill category under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008)
 - accepting sorted inert construction and demolition waste, contaminated soils, and asbestos—excluding any degradable organic materials
 - an expected operational life of 20 years, with a capacity of 800,000 tonnes (approximately 40,000 tonnes per year)
 - continuing lime quarrying and processing for approximately 10 years.
5. The project will require the proposed approvals:
 - consents under the Resource Management Act 1991.
6. We have undertaken initial analysis of the referral application, and this is presented along with our considerations and recommendations in Table A.
7. 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.
8. 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 Attachment 3.
9. We recommend that you invite written comments from the Chief Executive of Hurunui District Council, the Chief Executive of Christchurch City Council, and the Chief Executive of Land Information New Zealand as additional persons under section 17(5) of the Act.
10. We recommend that, under section 20 of the Act, you request further information from Canterbury Regional Council, and the Ministry for the Environment in its capacity as a relevant administering agency (and as the responsible agency over the Waste Minimisation Act 2008) as detailed in Table A.

Action sought

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

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ilana Miller".

Ilana Miller
General Manager – Delivery and Operations

Table A: Stage 1 analysis

Project details	Project Name		Applicant		Project Location													
	Whiterock Quarry and Managed Fill		Whiterock Lime Limited c/- WSP Opus		Quarry Road, Whiterock, Loburn approximately 23.5km from the centre of Rangiora and 50km to the centre of Christchurch in the Canterbury Region.													
Project description	<p>The applicant states the Whiterock site currently operates as a lime quarry and processing facility. Quarrying and limestone extraction will continue, shaping the managed fill's floor and sides as part of ongoing operations.</p> <p>The project includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Class 3 Managed Fill for the Canterbury Region (note that 'class 3 managed fill' is a landfill category under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008) • accepting sorted inert construction and demolition waste, contaminated soils, and asbestos—excluding any degradable organic materials • an expected operational life of 20 years, with a capacity of 800,000 tonnes (approximately 40,000 tonnes per year). • continued lime quarrying and processing for approximately 10 years. <p>The project will require the proposed approvals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991. 																	
Consultation undertaken	<p>As required by s11, the applicant has consulted with:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Relevant local authorities</th> <th>Relevant iwi authorities, hapu and Treaty settlement entities</th> <th>Relevant MACA groups</th> <th>Ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou</th> <th>Relevant administering agencies</th> <th>Holder of land to be exchanged</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canterbury Regional Council • Waimakariri District Council </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Ngāi Tahu) • Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga (Ngāi Tūāhuriri) </td> <td>N/A</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>Ministry for the Environment</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Relevant local authorities	Relevant iwi authorities, hapu 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"> • Canterbury Regional Council • Waimakariri District Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Ngāi Tahu) • Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga (Ngāi Tūāhuriri) 	N/A	N/A	Ministry for the Environment	N/A
Relevant local authorities	Relevant iwi authorities, hapu 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"> • Canterbury Regional Council • Waimakariri District Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Ngāi Tahu) • Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga (Ngāi Tūāhuriri) 	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>You may consider any of the following matters, or any other matters the Minister considers relevant.</p> <p><i>Assess the factors that are relevant to the application. How is the factor relevant and is it being met by the project?</i></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></p> <p>The project is infrastructure of regional significance because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the lime quarry will enable the continued operation of regionally significant infrastructure • the managed fill will be regionally significant infrastructure <p><i>Will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]</i></p> <p>The managed fill will have significant economic benefits through reduced waste transport costs, reduced landfill costs and reduced costs to dispose of contaminated soils and materials.</p> <p>The applicant estimates that the combined savings attributed to the reduced transport costs and reduction in gate fees of the Whiterock Quarry project over 20 years to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to Kate Valley: \$74.6 million total • Compared to Taiko Road: \$39.3 million total • Compared to Hororata: \$36.3 million total <p><i>Will support primary industries, including aquaculture [s22(2)(a)(v)]</i></p> <p>The applicant states that the continued activity at the lime quarry contributes significant regional benefits to primary industries because quarried lime is widely used to increase farm pasture productivity and quality and crushed bulk lime can be used in farm tracks and roadways.</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></p> <p>The managed fill will support climate change mitigation by reducing travel time/distance and consequently greenhouse gas emissions associated with carbon emissions arising from the transport of waste.</p> <p>The applicant states there will be reduced carbon emissions due to shorter transport distances estimated at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to Kate Valley: 45,284 kg CO₂/year • Compared to Taiko Road: 434,727 kg CO₂/year • Compared to Hororata: 36,227 kg CO₂/year <p><i>Any other matters that may be relevant [s22(b)]</i></p> <p>Nil</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></p> <p>The applicant considers that the fast-track approvals process would likely facilitate the project, by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal (RMA) processes. The applicant also states that this type of application (landfill) would likely meet opposition and therefore be subject to appeals resulting in further costs and delays under normal (RMA) processes.</p> <p><i>Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]</i></p>																	

	The applicant states that the project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approval processes. The applicant asserts that the project is well-suited to the process and timing expectations of the FTA noting much of the technical documentation is well progressed.		
Minister invites comments	<p>You must copy the application to, and invite written comments from [s17(1)]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Relevant local authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canterbury Regional Council • Waimakariri District Council b. The Minister for the Environment c. Relevant portfolio Minister(s): None identified as relevant. d. Relevant Administering Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry for the Environment e. Māori groups identified in Attachment 3 	<p>You may copy the application to, and invite written comments from, any other person [s17(5)]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minister for Economic Growth • The Minister for Regional Development • The Chief Executive of Land Information New Zealand - to confirm the details of the easement on the Record of Title and that this will not affect the applicant's ability to undertake the works • The Chief Executive of Hurunui District Council - to comment on the application as the project site is adjacent to their boundary • The Chief Executive of Christchurch City Council – on the regional benefits of the proposed managed fill in accepting construction and demolition waste to the facility, including post-earthquake demolition waste. 	<p>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 [s.20].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canterbury Regional Council on the regional benefits of the proposed managed fill noting they administer the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 at the regional level. • Ministry for the Environment on the application as they are the relevant administering agency and responsible for administering the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 so may have views on the regional or national benefits of the proposed managed fill.
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, any relevant Ministers, any relevant administering agencies, and the Māori groups identified in the list provided in Appendix 3.		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.	Agree to progress the Whiterock Quarry and Managed Fill Project to our Stage 2 analysis (invite written comments on the application and request the section 18 Treaty report).		Yes/No
g.	<p>Agree to provide the application to, and invite written comments from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Relevant local authorities: Canterbury Regional Council and Waimakariri District Council ii. The Minister for the Environment iii. Relevant Administering Agency: Ministry for the Environment iv. Māori groups identified in Attachment 3 v. 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
h.	<p>Agree to provide the application to and invite written comments from the following additional entities/persons under section 17(5):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Minister for Economic Growth ii. The Minister for Regional Development iii. The Chief Executive of Land Information New Zealand iv. The Chief Executive of Hurunui District Council v. The Chief Executive of Christchurch City Council 		Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No
i.	<p>Agree to seek further information from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Canterbury Regional Council ii. Ministry for the Environment 		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	Noted
k. Agree to send email and 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 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 relevant portfolio Ministers
 - c. the relevant administering agencies
 - d. the Māori groups identified by the responsible agency
 - e. the owners of Māori land in the project area:
 - f. 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 Whiterock Quarry and Managed Fill Project: (in File Exchange)

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))
Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga	Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga – Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a))
Whitiora Centre Limited	Entity owned by Papatipu Rūnanga (s18(2)(k))