
MINUTE 14 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Request for Information
Ashbourne [FTAA-2507-1087]

4 February 2026

Request for information

1. On 30 January 2026, the Panel received the Applicants response to Minute 11 and 13.
2. Following the Applicants response, the Expert Panel requests the following information be provided by the Applicant under section 67 of the Fast Track Approvals Act in relation to this application. The Applicant is requested to file their response to the questions below to the EPA no later than 5pm 15 February 2026.

Mounding assessment for proposed Stormwater Basin A

3. In the mounding assessment input data provided in the WGA Technical Memorandum of 29 January 2026 (which was provided in response to Panel Minute 13), the input hydraulic conductivity units are shown as m/s. This appears to be an error and should be m/day. Please comment on this.
4. In Figure 2 of the 29 January memorandum the maximum mounding depth arising from a 3 day 100 year ARI rain event is shown as 6m. The Panel's review of the available information on likely groundwater depth at the location indicates that the maximum mounding water level would be approximately RL 67.2m, which is above the design 100 yr WL in the basin per drawing C440-2 and above the ground level adjacent to the basin. This gives the Panel significant concerns about the robustness of the stormwater assessment for disposal from Basin A and the ability to develop consent conditions that adequately deal with the uncertainties of future groundwater levels at the basin location together with uncertainties inherent in the mounding assessment.
5. In addition, the Panel understands that the runoff to Basin A in a 3 day 100 year storm used for the mounding assessment excludes the disposal of stormwater by soakage devices other than Basin A. Please comment on how the infiltration of stormwater to ground from this mechanism might affect the mounding assessment for Basin A.

6. The Panel considers it to be imperative that a mounding assessment for Basin A include a winter season scenario as modelled previously and reported in the Hydrogeological Effects Assessment of June 2025.
7. Finally, the Panel requires advice as to whether the information provided to the Panel is adequate to address the requirements of Policy 5 of the NPS-NH and the 100-year timeframe required by Policy 6.

Timeframes

8. In response to Minute 11 and 13, the Applicant confirmed it also intends to provide an updated set of draft conditions following consultation with the Councils by 12 February 2026.
9. The decision due date by which the Panel must make its decision is currently 11 March 2026.
10. The Panel's concern is that if its interpretation of the calculations referred to at paragraph 4 above are correct, a significant portion of the residential development may not be consentable.
11. In the absence of a qualitative assessment of the natural hazards associated with the mounding calculations the Panel may not be able to approve the application, at least in respect to the residential land affected (not presently defined).
12. This issue is further complicated by the Applicant's advice that draft conditions will not be available for consideration by the Panel until 12th February.
13. The Panel is at this time considering the very real likelihood of declining approval for any development on highly productive land with the exceptions being the solar farms and the Greenway. If that partial decline is confirmed, the draft Decision would need to be issued as soon as possible, creating another obstacle in terms of timing.
14. Given the condensed timeframes the Panel is subject to and the need for the above information to be provided before the Panel can determine the application, the Panel respectfully suggests the Applicant consider requesting a suspension of processing (under s 64 of the Act) pending provision of the above information and for 5 working days thereafter to allow time for it to be considered by the Panel.

15. If the above information (response to the request for further information and the draft conditions) can be provided by 12 February 2026, the suggested suspension would be until 19 February 2026.



Sue Simons
Expert Panel Chair