

Official Information Act Request

Requester's details

Date: 23 April 2025

Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Reference number: ENQ-49156-R1S5P3

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

I refer to your request received on 24 March 2025:

On behalf of the Save the Basin Campaign Incorporated, I wish to request the following information in relation to two responses to recent emails from EPA staff regarding the Fast Track Approvals Act process. I have attached both these emails as PDF format files, which show both my email and the response from EPA staff.

I wish to request all documents (including but not limited to briefing papers, file notes, calendar information, reports, policy advice, draft policy advice, meeting minutes or notes, and memoranda), and all communications (including but not limited to meeting notes or minutes, records of telephone calls and any electronic communications via email, SMS, and messaging apps e.g. WhatsApp) regarding:

- (a) the operational decisions that led to the attached responses
- (b) the policy decisions that resulted in these operational decisions.

The email responses you refer to were:

1. Email 1

Thank you for your email.

If an application is received (and assuming it is completed sufficiently) it will be referred to the Panel Convenor, who in turn will establish an expert panel to consider it.

It will be up to the expert consenting panel to determine who should be invited to comment on the application. Panels are independent of any of the administering agencies who are involved in the Fast-track process, including the Ministry for the Environment. You can find out more about Panels [here](#).

In the meantime, I encourage you to keep an eye on the Fast-track website [here](#), for any updates on the projects you are concerned about.

Apologies that I could not assist you further at this point.

2. Email 2

We will not be providing contact details for any panel members or conveners. The Fast-track Approvals Act, Section 17 outlines who will be invited for comments. I have passed on your comment's notification to the relevant team. I would highly recommend reaching out to your local authority if/when this project gets to commenting.
Sorry we could not be of more assistance.

The information in both responses is consistent with the Environmental Protection Authority's role under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 to provide advice and secretariat support to the panel conveners and panel members. Our approach is also consistent with our practice of supporting fast-track panels under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 and the Natural and Built Environment Act 2023.

The response in email 1 was based on a template response to questions from people wanting to comment on a project not yet lodged.

The response in email 2 was based on advice from the Fast-track team.

I hope this information is helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision under section 28(3) of the OIA. You can contact the Ombudsman on 0800 802 602, or by email at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via oia@fasttrack.govt.nz

We may publish your request and our response on our website, www.fasttrack.govt.nz We make OIA responses available so others can read more about the work we do and the questions we are asked. Any information that might identify you will be removed to protect your privacy.

Nāku noa nā



Michelle Ward
General Manager, Climate, Land and Oceans