



FTAA-2604-1219: Application received for referral of the project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 2 decisions

Project Name: Franco Farms Project

Date submitted	3 September 2026	Tracking	26-BRF-02375
Security level	In-Confidence	Priority	Urgent

To	Action sought	Response by
Hon Chris Bishop Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations	10 September 2026

Actions for Minister's Office staff	Return the signed briefing to the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport - email: FTAreferrals@mfe.govt.nz
Number of appendices: 7	Appendices: 1. Statutory framework for making decisions 2. Application documents for Franco Farms project 3. Stage 1 Briefing Note and decisions 4. Section 18 Report on Treaty settlements and other obligations 5. Section 19 Report on public conservation land 6. Written comments received from invited parties 7. Draft Notice of Decisions

Ministry contacts

Name	Position	Telephone	1 st contact
Stephanie McNicholl	Principal Author		
Stephanie Frame	Manager	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Ilana Miller	General Manager	s 9(2)(a)	



Project area



Key messages

1. This briefing seeks your decisions under section 21 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) on an application from Sabys 101 Limited (the applicant) to refer the Franco Farms Project (the project) to the fast-track approvals process.
2. A copy of the application is in Appendix 2. This is the second briefing on this application. The first (Stage 1) briefing (BRF-01525) with your initial decisions annotated is in Appendix 3.
3. The project is to establish and construct an urban development over approximately 35 hectares to deliver approximately 350 residential lots (to enable future housing construction) with supporting infrastructure (roading, three waters services, stormwater management), neighbourhood centre services and amenities, and riparian enhancement.
4. The project area is located across Lot 3 DP 68573 Sabys Road and 6 Wroots Road in Halswell, near Christchurch, in the Canterbury Region.
5. We note the project area is located across two local authorities' boundaries. Lot 3 DP 68573 Sabys Road is located within Christchurch City Council's jurisdiction, and 6 Wroots Road is located within Selwyn District Council's jurisdiction.
6. The project will require the proposed approvals under the fast-track approvals process:
 - a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)



- b. wildlife permits under the Wildlife Act 1953
 - c. archaeological authorities under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014
 - d. approvals under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983.
7. We recommend you **accept** the referral application as the project meets the criteria set out in section 22 of the Act and does not appear to involve an ineligible activity.
8. We seek your decisions on this recommendation, any proposed directions to the applicant and expert panel, and the notification of your decisions.

Assessment against statutory framework

9. The statutory framework for your decision-making is set out in Appendix 1. You must apply this framework when you are deciding whether to accept or decline the referral application and when deciding on any further requirements or directions associated with referral of the project.
10. Before accepting the project, you must consider the application in Appendix 2, the section 18 Treaty settlements report in Appendix 4, the section 19 public conservation land report in Appendix 5, the written comments from invited parties in Appendix 6, and any document that requires your consideration under section 16 and comply with any procedural requirements under section 16.
11. Following that, you may accept the application if you are satisfied that it meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act and if there are no reasons you must decline the application. We provide our advice on these matters below.

Section 18 Treaty settlements and other obligations report

12. The section 18 report in Appendix 4 identifies five groups as relevant Māori groups under section 18(2) of the Act. Two groups invited to comment on the application provided a response.
13. The Treaty settlement that is relevant to the project area is the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. We have not identified any other obligations such as Mana Whakahono ā Rohe or joint management agreements.
14. While other redress provided through the Ngāi Tahu settlement provides important context for this application – such as that relating to Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere, taonga species, and the conservation protocol – we have not identified any other principles and provisions of the settlement which are directly relevant. We note that the project area is within an area subject to regulations made under Part 9 of the Fisheries Act 1996, which established the customary food gathering area/rohe moana of Te Taumutu Rūnanga.
15. In response to the invite to comment under section 17(1)(d) of the Act, you received comments from Whitiara Centre Limited (which are also made on behalf of Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga) and Mahaanui Kurataiao (including on behalf of Te Taumutu Rūnanga and Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki)). Whitiara Centre Limited and Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited both noted that the project area is within the culturally significant catchment of Te Waihora.
16. Whitiara Centre Limited made recommendations to ensure that the proposed activities do not contribute to further degradation of Te Waihora, including in relation to works in streams, stormwater discharges, monitoring water quality, planting indigenous species, and riparian setbacks. Whitiara Centre Limited seeks further information from the applicant on some of these



matters, and concern at whether the cumulative impacts of residential subdivisions in this area are being adequately considered.

17. Comments provided by Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited, Te Taumutu Rūnanga and Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki) recommend that the application be declined for reasons including potential discharges into the Halswell (Hurutini) River, and the risk of flooding and liquefaction. Mahaanui Kurataiao request that a cultural impact assessment be undertaken.
18. We consider the section 18 report does not raise any matters that would make it more appropriate to authorise the proposed approvals under another Act or Acts.

Section 16 Effects of Treaty settlements and other obligations on decision-making

19. Based on the above section, we consider there are no relevant documents and procedural requirements under section 16 that apply to your consideration of the application.

Section 19 Report in relation to use of public conservation land

20. As the project area includes the use of public conservation land (PCL), the Director-General of Conservation has prepared a report in Appendix 5 which sets out:
 - a. the use of PCL as part of the consideration of the referral application for Franco Farms by Sabys 101 Limited
 - b. the information that must be contained in a report in relation to PCL as set out in s19(2)(a) and (b) of the Act and outlines any consultation undertaken as required by s19(3), as outlined in the report.
21. The summary of advice provided in the report is that:
 - a. two areas of PCL are identified as local purpose reserves under the Reserves Act 1977 and vested in two local authorities
 - b. Halswell River Esplanade Reserve is vested in Christchurch City Council who state the reserve is not currently or actively being used but wish to retain, if possible, as it will likely be required for drainage or access with future development in the area
 - c. Halswell River Endowment Area is vested in Canterbury Regional Council who have existing scheme assets located within the reserve for flood protection and catchment drainage, that is protected by the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaw 2016.
 - d. DOC considers there is no risk or liability to the Crown posed by this application that would not otherwise exist for any project on or off PCL.

Written comments received

22. Written comments were received from Canterbury Regional Council (CRC), Christchurch City Council (CCC), Selwyn District Council (SDC), five Ministers, the Department of Conservation (DOC), Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT), two identified Māori groups and NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA).
23. Written comments were received after the specified time frame from Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited and the Associate Minister of Housing. You may consider their comments, at your discretion, under section 17(7)(b) of the Act. All other comments were received in time for this application and must be considered.



24. The key points of relevance to your decisions are included in Table A, with the full comments attached in Appendix 6. Comments from two identified Māori groups comments are addressed in the section 18 above; all other comments are summarised below.
25. A summary of the key points is below:
- a. CRC does not oppose the application progressing and does not disagree with the applicant's economic assessment that the project is likely to have regional benefits.
 - b. CCC does not support the project as there are significant concerns about the feasibility of the project due to the current infrastructure capacity constraints and the availability of funding to provide additional network capacity required. The project is unplanned and out-of-sequence creating significant funding challenges. It is recognised that other matters, including in relation to stormwater, geotechnical, earthworks, and contamination are considered to not be prohibitive of a future development in this location.
 - c. SDC does not oppose the application progressing and considers there are no reasons to decline. SDC indicates reliance will be on Christchurch City Council to service the development. SDC notes any agreement intended by the applicant between the two councils, including future maintenance responsibility for all services would need to be agreed prior to a substantive application being lodged and that there have been no discussions to date.
 - d. the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti and the Minister for Māori Development support the application progressing and encourage the applicant and the panel to have due regard to relevant Treaty settlement legislation and instruments and any feedback received from identified Māori groups.
 - e. the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage confirms no comment on the application.
 - f. the Minister for Economic Growth does not oppose referral and considers the economic benefit is concentrated during the four-year construction and development period. The Minister notes that while the site comprises highly productive land, the analysis provided by the applicant suggests that the quantified economic benefits of the residential development are likely to outweigh the long-term loss of rural production.
 - g. the Associate Minister of Housing has no objection to the application progressing, noting further assessment required to address wastewater servicing capacity, flood management, and natural hazards.
 - h. DOC does not oppose referral and confirms the reserves administrators.
 - i. HNZPT does not oppose referral and confirms the potential to encounter archaeological material or sites. HNZPT confirm an archaeological authority is required, and a cultural impact assessment should support any substantive application.
 - j. NZTA does not oppose the application and requests to be invited to comment and that an integrated traffic assessment be specified, if referred.

Reasons to decline

26. The statutory framework in Appendix 1 sets out the situations where you must decline the application for referral under section 21(3) of the Act. We do not consider you must decline this application.



27. You may also decline the application for any other reason under section 21(4). The Act gives some guidance on matters you could consider when deciding whether to decline an application and these are set out in Table A.
28. We have considered the matters under section 21(4), and these are discussed in Table A. We do not consider you should decline the application for referral for any of these reasons.

Reasons to accept

29. The statutory framework in Appendix 1 sets out the reasons you can accept a project for referral.
30. Our assessment of these matters is summarised in Table A. We consider the project meets the requirements of section 22, as:
- a. it is a development project that would have significant regional benefits because it:
 - i. will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, and contribute to a well-functioning urban environment with the development of residential dwellings by approximately 350 units
 - ii. will deliver significant economic benefits by generating a direct one-time contribution of approximately \$37 million to gross domestic product (GDP), by supporting approximately 74 direct FTE roles per year and generating approximately \$25 million in direct wages and salaries. Indirect impacts are estimated to support a further approximately 167 FTE roles per year, contributing approximately \$58 million in wages and salaries and approximately \$101 million in GDP value-add over the same period.
 - b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and more cost-effective way than under normal processes because it precludes public and limited notification in an RMA context and enables multiple approval types under specific Acts to be considered under a singular process, and appeals under the Act are to the High Court and limited to points of law.
 - c. referring the project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process because the project is neither novel in the New Zealand context nor beyond the scope of what a panel would typically assess where multiple approval types are sought under the fast-track approvals process.

Conclusions

31. We consider the project meets the section 22 criteria and you could accept the referral application under section 21 of the Act and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process.

Next steps

32. The Secretary for the Environment (the Secretary) must give notice of your decisions on the referral application, and the reasons for them, to the applicant and anyone invited to comment under section 17 of the Act and publish the notice on the Fast-track website.



33. If you decide to accept and refer the project, the Secretary must also give notice of your decisions to:
 - a. the panel convener
 - b. any additional iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities that you consider have an interest in the matter other than those invited to comment under section 17 of the Act
 - c. the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)
 - d. the relevant administering agencies.
34. You must also provide all of the information you received that relates to this application to the EPA and the panel convener, including:
 - a. the referral application
 - b. any written comments received under section 17 of the Act
 - c. the Treaty report obtained under section 18 of the Act
 - d. the public conservation land report obtained under section 19 of the Act.
35. We will undertake this action on your behalf.
36. We have attached a draft notice of decisions letter to the applicant based on our recommendations in Appendix 7, that we will provide as required (on behalf of the Secretary for the Environment) to all relevant parties. We will provide you with an amended letter if required.
37. Our recommendations for your decisions follow.



Recommendations

38. We recommend that you:

- a. **Note** section 21(3) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) requires you to decline the referral application from Sabys 101 Limited (the applicant) if you are satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity, or you consider that you do not have adequate information to inform the decision under this section or if you are not satisfied that the Franco Farms Project (the project) meets the referral criteria in section 22 of the Act.

Noted

- b. **Agree** that before deciding on the application for project referral under section 21(1) of the Act you have considered the:

- i. application in Appendix 2
- ii. reports obtained under sections 18 and 19 in Appendices 4 and 5
- iii. written comments sought under section 17 in Appendix 6 provided within the required time frame (*written comments were received after the specified time frame that you are not required to consider but may do so at your discretion*).

Yes / No

- c. **Agree** to exercise your discretion and consider the written comments, provided after the specified time frame under section 17 from Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited and the Associate Minister of Housing.

Yes / No

- d. **Note** that in considering this application, and any directions to a panel, under section 7 of the Act, you have considered the:

- i. Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

Noted

- e. **Agree** you are satisfied the project will meet the referral criteria in section 22 of the Act as:

- i. it is a development project that would have significant regional benefits and because it:
 1. will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, and contribute to a well-functioning urban environment with the development of residential dwellings by approximately 350 units
 2. will deliver significant economic benefits by generating a direct one-time contribution of approximately \$37 million to gross domestic product (GDP), by supporting approximately 74 direct FTE roles per year and generate approximately \$25 million in direct wages and



salaries. Indirect impacts are estimated to support a further approximately 167 FTE roles per year, contributing approximately \$58 million in wages and salaries and approximately \$101 million in GDP value-add over the same period

- ii. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes because it precludes public and limited notification in an RMA context and enables multiple approval types under specific Acts to be considered under a singular process, and appeals under the Act are to the High Court and limited to points of law
- iii. referring the project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process because the project is neither novel in the New Zealand context nor beyond the scope of what a panel would typically assess.

Yes / No

- f. **Agree** there is no reason the project must be declined under section 21(3) of the Act.

Yes / No

- g. **Agree** to accept the referral application under section 21(1)(c) and refer the whole project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a) of the Act.

Yes / No

- h. **Agree** to specify Sabys 101 Limited as the person who is authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project.

Yes / No

- i. **Agree** to specify under section 27(3)(b) of the Act:

- i. the deadline for lodging the substantive application is two years from the date of the referral notice of decisions letter to the applicant
- ii. the following information that the applicant must submit with the substantive application:
 - (1) an infrastructure capacity assessment that considers the downstream network capacity, including the capacity of the Christchurch Wastewater Treatment Plant, and should consider the capacity required to facilitate the urban growth that has been planned for through the District Plan
 - (2) an assessment of the upgrades required to facilitate the project, including water, wastewater network, wastewater treatment plant and roading. This will need to address how all necessary upgrades will be funded and align with Christchurch City Council's maintenance, renewal and upgrade programmes.

Yes / No



- j. **Note** that the Secretary for the Environment must provide your notice of decisions to:
- i. the applicant and anyone invited to comment on the application including relevant local authorities, relevant portfolio Ministers, relevant Māori groups and any additional parties
 - ii. the panel convener
 - iii. the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)
 - iv. the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as the relevant administering agencies
 - v. publish the notice to the Fast-track website.

Noted

- k. **Note** that under section 21 you **must** decline a referral application if:
- i. the application **may not** be accepted under section 21(1) (which relates to the criteria for assessing a referral application in section 22); or
 - ii. you are **satisfied** that the project involves an ineligible activity; or
 - iii. you are **satisfied** that you do not have adequate information to inform your referral decisions.

Noted

- l. **Note** that you **may** decline a referral application for any other reason, whether or not the project meets the criteria in section 22, including (but not limited to) the reasons for decline set out at section 21(5) of the Act.

Noted



m. **Approve** the draft notice of decisions letter to the applicant in Appendix 7.

Yes / No

Signatures

Ilana Miller
General Manager – Investment Strategy and Operations

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure

Date:

Table A: Stage 2 analysis – FTAA–2604–1219

Recommendation	Accept the referral application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process		
Project details	Project Name	Applicant	Project Area
	Franco Farms (the project)	Sabys 101 Limited (the applicant)	The project area is located across Lot 3 DP 68573 Sabys Road and 6 Wroots Road in Halswell, near Christchurch in the Canterbury Region, with a combined area of approximately 35 hectares.
Project description	The project is to construct and establish an urban development over approximately 35 hectares to deliver approximately 350 residential lots (to enable future housing construction) with supporting infrastructure (roading, three waters services, stormwater management), neighbourhood centre services and amenities, and riparian enhancement. The project area is located across Lot 3 DP 68573 Sabys Road and 6 Wroots Road in Halswell, near Christchurch, in the Canterbury Region. The project will require the proposed approvals under the fast-track approvals process: - resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) - wildlife permits under the Wildlife Act 1953 - archaeological authorities under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 - approvals under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983.		
Minister invites comments [section 17] and requests information [section 20]	Written comments from invited parties		
	Written comments from Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited and the Associate Minister of Housing were received after the specified time frame. You may consider these comments, at your discretion, under section 17(7)(b). All other comments were received within the specified time frame for this application and must be considered. Local authorities <i>Canterbury Regional Council (CRC)</i> – did not oppose referral and commented that: - the site is within the Selwyn-Waimakariri combined surface water / groundwater allocation zone, which is over-allocated and the referral application contains insufficient detail to confirm compliance or otherwise with the water take for dust suppression or dewatering rules or what consents are required. Further detail in any substantive application would assist CRC in confirming applicable regional consent requirements - CRC do not disagree with the applicant’s economic assessment nor question it - it has a different view from the applicant’s Ecological Constraints Report and does not support the recommendation on the presence of bats, does not agree with the classification of ‘waterways’, considers that all the waterbodies described would also meet the definition of ‘natural inland wetland’ in the NPS-FM, does not agree with the assertion that the ‘Artificial Drain’ is “not a natural inland wetland” and considers further information is needed to explain how “potential adverse effects could be effectively managed through minimisation and mitigation measures - a cultural impact assessment should be undertaken on the proposed site due to the flooding and sensitive nature of the site - there are no applications lodged with CRC that would be a competing application if a substantive application were lodged and no existing resource consents issued where sections 124(1) (c) or 165ZI of the Resource Management Act 1991 could apply, if the project were to be applied for as a resource consent. <i>Christchurch City Council (CCC)</i> – does not support the project and commented that: - CCC have not identified any reasons under section 21(5) to decline the application for referral - it has significant concerns about the feasibility of the project due to the current infrastructure capacity constraints and the availability of funding to provide for additional network capacity required. Due to these matters, which have not been adequately addressed in the information provided, the project is not supported. - there is insufficient wastewater capacity and a new connection to the water supply network is likely to require upgrades ahead of planned renewal. The proposed development is unplanned and out-of-sequence, creating significant funding challenges. It is recognised that other matters, including in relation to stormwater, geotechnical, earthworks, and contamination are considered to not be prohibitive of a future development in this location and can be addressed in further detail at any substantive application stage, if referred. - the project is considered to be inconsistent with the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan, Christchurch District Plan and parts of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement and is not required to address any shortfall in housing capacity - CCC requests the Minister to specify information to be provided with a substantive application including – - an infrastructure capacity assessment that considers the downstream network capacity, including the capacity of the Christchurch Wastewater Treatment Plant, and should consider the capacity required to facilitate the urban growth that has been planned for through the District Plan - an assessment of the upgrades required to facilitate the project, including water, wastewater network, wastewater treatment plant and roading. This will need to address how all necessary upgrades will be funded and align with CCC’s maintenance, renewal, and upgrade programmes to ensure efficient provision of infrastructure in a manner that avoids re-work - an economic assessment that considers the net benefits of the project, having regard to infrastructure costs and transfer effects, and provides quantification of the net benefits in regional terms. - while it is recognised that there continues to be strong market demand for stand-alone housing across Greater Christchurch, there is currently limited capacity to support additional greenfield development in the remaining Christchurch rural areas. Recognising this market demand for greenfield development, Council has a growth programme in place to evaluate options and investigate infrastructure provision. - fast-track projects are not resolving a current regional issue in terms of insufficiency, nor if approved will be effective in improving market competitiveness, given the significant current infrastructure capacity constraints - the project will require agreement between CCC and SDC in relation to the servicing of wastewater, water supply and stormwater and how these assets that span the jurisdiction boundary will be maintained		

- i. the project will see the delivery of an increase of housing. Acknowledging the potential issues involving the servicing of unplanned greenfield development, it is unclear if the project will result in a well-functioning urban environment
- j. there are no applications lodged with CCC that would be competing application if a substantive application were lodged, however, an existing subdivision consent, RMA/2025/2041 requires that part of the area which the project seeks to residentially develop is required for stormwater management.

Based on the project reliance on CCC services, which includes supporting the Selwyn District portion, we recommend specifying the infrastructure capacity assessment and an assessment of the upgrades required to facilitate the project in your decisions, if referred. We do not recommend specifying the economic assessment, as we note that a panel is able to seek further information on this matter when presented with a comprehensive substantive application, if referred to the fast-track process.

Selwyn District Council (SDC) – did not oppose referral and commented that:

- a. SDC have not identified any reasons under section 21(5) to decline the application for referral
- b. SDC has no services in the vicinity that the project can connect to. There will likely be reliance on the network infrastructure provided by Christchurch City Council to service this development including the part within Selwyn District. The application states that agreement would need to be established between the two Councils around servicing of the development with wastewater, water supply, stormwater management and discharge, including future maintenance responsibility for all of these services. There has been no discussion on the need for these matters to be agreed to date. Should this project be referred, this is a matter that would need to be agreed prior to a substantive application being lodged.
- c. the project is unique in that it straddles the district boundary, between Selwyn District and Christchurch City, with the larger proportion of the proposed residential development located within Christchurch City
- d. the development is proposed to be serviced from within Christchurch City, including water and wastewater connection and connection to local transport networks. SDC rely on the comment from Christchurch City Council with regard to whether the project site is infrastructure ready but note existing constraints in the availability of water and wastewater capacity for the site to connect to.
- e. the site is zoned rural; it is not included in the urban growth overlay within the Partially Operative Selwyn District Plan. The site is also not subject to wider spatial strategies, including the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan, which have the aim of coordinating urban growth within the Greater Christchurch area. Given this the project represents unplanned and out of sequence growth
- f. SDC rely on the comment of Christchurch City Council with regard to whether their housing and business capacity assessment identifies a need for this development in this area, and the significance of the project's benefits regarding increasing the supply of housing. The application economic assessment states that the project to establish 350 residential sites will have a significant economic benefit and will support climate change mitigation. SDC have no information available to verify the claimed benefits.
- g. there are no applications lodged with SDC that would be competing application if a substantive application were lodged.

Ministers

Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti and Minister for Māori Development – commented with support for the application progressing subject to the applicant and the panel having regard to relevant Treaty settlement legislation and instruments; and any feedback received from relevant Māori groups, as set out in the Treaty settlements and other obligations (Section 18) report.

Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage – confirmed no comments on the application.

Associate Minister of Housing – did not oppose referral and commented that:

- a. Christchurch continues to experience strong housing demand. In the three years to March 2026, rents in Christchurch increased by 14.7 percent compared with 4.3 percent nationally, while house prices increased by 8.5 percent compared with a 1 percent decline nationally
- b. the scale of the project would provide a substantial increase in housing supply and help meet future housing demand in the city. The site is currently zoned Rural Urban Fringe and General Rural but is located adjacent to the existing urban area and would extend the established residential area of Halswell and is within a short driving distance of amenities in Halswell. While there is not currently convenient access to public transport, a bus route terminates nearby.
- c. the project is expected to deliver positive housing and community benefits through increased housing capacity, supporting infrastructure, neighbourhood services and environmental enhancements. While not aware of any significant infrastructure constraints, the application identifies matters requiring further assessment, including wastewater servicing capacity, flood management, and natural hazards.

Minister for Economic Growth – did not oppose referral and commented that:

- a. this proposal is to establish a 35-hectare urban development to deliver approximately 350 residential lots and enable future housing construction at Sabys Road in Halswell, Christchurch. The development includes a neighbourhood centre, roading networks, stormwater management systems and other related infrastructure. This proposal is expected to enable further residential development in the area, adjacent to the northern end of the site which has already been zoned for residential use.
- b. based on the independent economic assessment provided by the applicant, the economic benefit of the proposal is concentrated during its four-year construction and development period. During this time, the development is estimated to have a direct one-time contribution of \$37 million to GDP, support around 74 direct FTE roles per year and generate \$25 million in direct wages and salaries. Indirect impacts are estimated to support a further 167 FTEs per year, contributing \$58 million in wages and salaries and \$101 million in GDP value-add over the same period.
- c. While the site comprises highly productive land, the analysis provided by the applicant suggests that the quantified economic benefits of the residential development are likely to outweigh the long-term loss of rural production.
- d. Overall, the project is expected to provide short-term economic benefits during construction and longer-term benefits through increased housing supply and supporting infrastructure. The primary long-term benefit is the provision of additional housing to support a growing economy, and the proposal may therefore be considered under section 22(2)(a)(iii) of the Fast-track Approvals Act as contributing to increased housing supply, addressing housing needs, and supporting a well-functioning urban environment in Christchurch.

Māori Groups

Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited – commented that:

	a. Hurutini (Halswell) River is an area of high cultural significance for mahinga kai within the Te Waihora catchment and is significant to both Te Taumutu Rūnanga and Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki). Te Waihora is a tribal taonga representing a major mahinga kai and an important source of mana. Land use and tributary management in the wider catchment has led to a flow-on effect and contributed significantly to the degraded cultural health of Te Waihora. At the bottom of the catchment, Te Waihora is a sink for nutrients and sediment. b. Te Taumutu Rūnanga and Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki) have reviewed this application and have indicated they are not supportive of the fast track proposal and recommend that the application be declined based on the proposed stormwater system, wastewater discharge proposal, uncertainty in infrastructure capacity, previously recorded occurrence of liquefaction, insufficient waterway setback margins and buffer from development and earthworks, potential for wetlands throughout the site, groundwater height above 1 m below ground level and anticipated flooding risk. <i>Whitiora Centre Limited (WCL)</i> – commented that: a. from the Ngāi Tahu settlement matters include – management of construction and operational stormwater to ensure the quality of water that is being treated and then transported via ground and surface waterbodies does not contribute to the existing and cumulative degradation of Te Waihora; and where appropriate to integrate and provide for taonga species within the development, including as part of landscape treatment and within water races, habitat for native fish b. parts of the site are subject to the Ngā wai overlay relating to Knights Stream and the Halswell River which are important waterways and waterbodies, integral to tribal identity and considered to be a Wāhi Taonga. Ngā Wai are a source of mahinga kai as well as being places of significant events, occupation, historic access and travel routes. The condition and treatment of water is considered a reflection on the health and regard for Papatūānuku c. WCL has concerns with the management of earthworks, the availability of water, reticulation of wastewater, management of stormwater, protection of surface waterbodies and the habitat they provide for fish and invertebrates, the use of indigenous and taonga species as part of landscape treatments, protection of springheads, protection and enhancement of mahinga kai. Administering agencies <i>Department of Conservation (DOC)</i> – did not oppose referral and commented that: a. DOC considers there is no risk or liability to the Crown posed by this application that would not otherwise exist for any project on or off PCL. b. the section 19 report in relation to use of PCL identified Halswell River endowment area and esplanade are local purpose reserves administered by Canterbury Regional Council and Christchurch City Council and are responsible for any required approvals under the Reserves Act 1977. The report notes that Canterbury Regional Council have existing scheme assets within the endowment area for flood protection and catchment drainage; and that Christchurch City Council are not currently using the esplanade but wish to retain it, as it will likely be required for drainage or access with future development in the area. c. the application states approvals are required under the Wildlife Act 1953 for lizards and bats and under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 for dam or culvert construction on Knights Stream. d. the information is adequate and that no reasons have been identified why the project should be declined. <i>Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT)</i> – did not oppose referral and commented that: a. a desktop assessment indicated that the area appeared to have been subject to pre-1900 human occupation b. no archaeological assessment has been provided at this stage. The applicant stated they have engaged an archaeologist, and any resulting assessment will form part of the substantive application c. the project area is of significance to Ngāi Tahu hāpori due to their continuing relationship with the cultural landscape. The ara tawhito and freshwater resources found in the area were an integral part of mahinga kai and mahinga toi practices that have supported the iwi for generations d. no cultural impact assessment has been provided. The applicant is exploring commissioning a report to understand the cultural impacts of this development and how these can be mitigated e. HNZPT anticipates ongoing engagement to ensure that if referred, the substantive application is supported by a fulsome archaeological assessment, appropriate methodologies and strategies proposed, appropriate draft management plan and research strategy, evidence of appropriate consultation with tangata whenua; and appropriate draft conditions. We note the referral application seeks an archaeological authority as a proposed approval under the fast-track approvals process. The information requirements are specified under Schedule 8 of the Act. Any other persons or groups <i>NZTA</i> – states no concerns with the project being referred and commented that: a. the development does not propose any new access points from the subject sites directly onto the state highway, however traffic from the proposed development will gain access to the state highway via the existing roundabout at Candys Road / State Highway 75 (SH75) and the signalised intersection of Halswell Junction Road / SH75. b. the zoning under the Christchurch and Selwyn District Plans does not anticipate the scale and intensity of urban development proposed. In order to understand the impact of the proposed development on the wider state highway network, NZTA expects that the substantive application includes a comprehensive Integrated Transport Assessment that assesses the potential impact of the development on existing state highway infrastructure. c. section 27(3)(b) of the Act specifies that NZTA be invited to comment and the information that must be submitted include a comprehensive Integrated Transport Assessment providing an assessment of the potential adverse safety and operational effects of the development on the immediate and wider transport network. We do not recommend specifying any requirements in your decisions that are already information requirements under Schedule 5 of the Act, if referred. We note that a panel is able to consider parties to invite to comment and further information when presented with a comprehensive substantive application, if referred to the fast-track approvals process.
Minister must decline an application if the Minister is satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity [section 21(3)(b)]	We consider you can be satisfied that the project does not involve an ineligible activity because it: a. <i>would not occur on identified Māori land, Māori customary land or a Māori reservation</i> – as confirmed by the relevant records of title and consultation with iwi authorities b. <i>would not occur in a customary marine title area or protected customary rights area</i> – and is land-based c. <i>is not an aquaculture activity or activity that is incompatible with aquaculture activities that would occur in an aquaculture settlement area and for which the applicant is not authorised to apply for a coastal permit</i> – because it will not occur in the CMA and will not occur in an aquaculture settlement area d. <i>would not require an access arrangement which cannot be granted under the Crown Minerals Act (including s61(1A))</i> – because it does not include an access arrangement and would not occur on Schedule 4 land

	e. <i>would not be prevented by section 165J, M, Q, ZC or ZDB of the RMA</i> – because it will not occur in the CMA f. <i>would not occur on Schedule 4 land</i> – as confirmed by the records of title referred to in the application g. <i>would not occur on a national reserve</i> – as confirmed by the records of title referred to in the application h. <i>would not occur on a reserve held under the Reserves Act 1977 that is managed by or vested in someone other than the Crown or a local authority and that person has not consented in writing</i> – as confirmed by the records of title and applicant’s evidence of consultation i. <i>is not a prohibited activity or decommissioning activity under the EEZA, 15B or 15C of the RMA</i> – and as no such activities are proposed j. <i>is not for the purpose of an offshore renewable energy project</i> – and as no such activities are proposed. No comments raised by parties invited to comment have indicated that the project would be ineligible for referral.
Minister must decline an application if the Minister considers they do not have adequate information to inform the decision [section 21(3)(c)]	We consider you have adequate information to inform your decisions on the referral application.
Relevant considerations and procedural requirements in Treaty settlement, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe, joint management agreement, or the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 or the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 [section 16]	We have not identified any matters under section 16 of the Act that apply to your consideration of the referral application.
Section 22 assessment criteria	
The project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits [section 22(1)(a)]	<i>You <u>must</u> consider a relevant Government policy statement (GPS) [s22(1A)]</i> No GPS has been identified by the applicant as being relevant to the application. <i>You <u>may</u> consider any of the following matters, or any other matters you consider relevant:</i> <i>The project has been identified as a priority project in a central or local government, or sector plan or strategy or a central government infrastructure priority list [s22(2)(a)(i)]</i> The applicant states although not explicitly listed as a priority project, it fits well with the strategic intent and lens of the need to increase housing supply in the Christchurch region and aligns with the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 purpose of accelerating projects that deliver significant regional benefits. We consider the project has not been identified as a priority project which does not satisfy the criterion. We do not recommend that you refer the project on this basis. <i>Will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020) [s22(2)(a)(iii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will increase the supply of housing and address housing needs and contribute to a well-functioning urban environment by providing approximately 350 new dwellings over a 6 to 9-year development period. We consider the project will increase the supply of housing which satisfies the criterion and recommend that you can refer the project on this basis. <i>Will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]</i> The applicant state the project will deliver significant regional economic benefits by creating approximately 240 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs over the 4 year development period), generating approximately \$83 million in wages and \$138 million of GDP into the regional economy. The Minister for Economic Growth states that the economic benefit is concentrated during the four-year construction and development period. While the site comprises highly productive land, the analysis provided by the applicant suggests that the quantified economic benefits of the residential development are likely to outweigh the long-term loss of rural production. We consider the project will deliver significant economic benefits to the region in the construction phase and satisfies the criterion. We consider you can refer the project on this basis. <i>Will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions [s22(2)(a)(vii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will support climate change mitigation by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through low-emissions construction practices, energy-efficient urban form and enhancing carbon sequestration through planting. We consider the applicant’s quoted benefits are project specific and does not satisfy the criterion. We do not consider you should refer the project on this basis. We note the applicant retains the ability to provide further analysis on this with a substantive application to assist a panel in understanding the extent of the project’s significant regional or national benefits. <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> The applicant considers the project will support climate change adaptation and reduce risks arising from natural hazards through improved resilience to risks managed through design and engineering measures.

	We consider the applicant’s quoted benefits are project specific and does not satisfy the criterion. We do not consider you should refer the project on this basis. We note the applicant retains the ability to provide further analysis on this with a substantive application to assist a panel in understanding the extent of the project’s significant regional or national benefits. <i>Is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)]</i> The applicant considers the project is consistent with local and regional planning documents, spatial strategies including – Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, Regional Plans, Partially Operative Selwyn District Plan (Appeals Version), Christchurch District Plan, including the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan. CCC consider the project to be inconsistent with the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan, Christchurch District Plan and parts of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement. CRC state overall, the project appears to be generally consistent with the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, subject to adverse effects on the environment being appropriately avoided, remedied, or mitigated. We consider that at this high–level stage of consideration it is not sufficiently clear if the project is consistent with the full range of planning documents and as such does not satisfy the criterion. We do not recommend that you refer the project on this basis. We note the applicant retains the ability to provide further analysis on this, that a panel is able to consider when presented with a substantive application, if referred to the fast–track process. Conclusion Overall, we consider the project is a development project that would have significant regional benefits aligned with the criteria for accepting a referral application under section 22(1)(a) of the Act. If you agree with this recommendation and are satisfied the project satisfies the criteria in section 22, you may accept the referral application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process in accordance with section 26 of the Act.
Referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	<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> The applicant states the fast–track approvals process enables a single, integrated application process and coordinated approach, which for this project which straddles Christchurch City Council and Selwyn District Council boundaries, will enable greater efficiency and aligned conditions. Public and limited notification, and appeal rights are precluded, with shorter timeframes and reduced costs compared to standard RMA process. We agree with the applicant’s assessment that the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project because notification is precluded, multiple approvals can be considered under a singular process, and appeal rights are limited. We recommend the project satisfies the criterion and that you can refer the project on this basis. <i>Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]</i> The applicant considers there is resourcing in place to process the application efficiently and certainty around timeframes for the applicant to ensure the project remains ‘shovel ready’. We consider the project is consistent with regionally significant developments the fast-track approvals process was established for, noting the project is neither novel in the New Zealand context nor beyond the scope of what a panel would typically assess. We recommend the project satisfies the criterion and that you can refer the project on this basis.
Reasons to decline	
Minister must decline [section 21(3)]	You must decline a referral application if: <i>the application may not be accepted under subsection 1 (meets referral criteria)</i> – We consider the project meets the referral criteria. <i>the Minister is satisfied the project involves an ineligible activity</i> – We have not identified any ineligible activities included in the project scope. <i>the Minister considers that they do not have adequate information to inform the decision under this section</i> – We consider you have adequate information to inform your referral decisions. Overall, we do not consider that you must decline the application under this section.
Minister may decline [section 21(4) and 21(5)(a-h)]	You may decline a referral application for any other reason, whether or not it meets the criteria in section 22. Reasons to decline a referral application under section 21 subsection 4 include, without limitation: <i>the project would be inconsistent with a Treaty settlement, Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019, Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe, or a joint management agreement</i> – No inconsistencies have been identified, including within the section 18 Treaty report or from Māori groups invited to comment. <i>it would be more appropriate to deal with the matters that would be authorised by the proposed approvals under another Act or Acts</i> – No reports or comments received have indicated this is the case. <i>the project may have significant adverse effects on the environment</i> – comments have noted infrastructure servicing capacity, flood management and natural hazard matters which must be resolved, and the project will occur in part over highly productive land, however, no comments indicated that the project would have adverse effects significant enough to decline to refer the project. We note these are matters that a panel is able to consider when presented with a comprehensive substantive application, if referred to the fast-track process. <i>the applicant has a poor compliance history under a specified Act that relates to any of the proposed approvals</i> – No such history has been noted. <i>the project area includes land that the Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations considers necessary for Treaty settlement purposes</i> – No such land has been identified. <i>the project includes an activity that is a prohibited activity under the Resource Management Act 1991</i> – No reports or comments received have indicated any such activity. <i>a substantive application for the project would have one or more competing applications</i> – No competing applications have been identified at this stage. We note the EPA is required to check prior to providing a substantive application to the panel convener. <i>in relation to any proposed approval of the kind described in section 42(4)(a) (resource consents), there are one or more existing resource consents of the kind referred to in section 30(3)(a)</i> – No such resource consents have been identified, including by the applicant and relevant local authorities.

Overall, we do not recommend that you decline the application.

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 section 22
 - b. you are satisfied the project involves an ineligible activity (section 5)
 - 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 section 21(5) and even if the application meets the section 22 referral criteria.
5. You can decline an application before or after inviting comments under section 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 the initial stage you must copy the application to, and invite written comments from:
 - a. the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. any other relevant portfolio Ministers
 - d. the relevant administering agencies
 - e. the Māori groups identified by the responsible agency
 - f. the owners of Māori land in the project area (if applicable)
 - g. 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.