

13 November 2025

MAY IT PLEASE THE PANEL CONVENER

1. This memorandum is provided on behalf of Canterbury Regional Council (**CRC**) in response to Minute 2 of the Panel Convener dated 6 November 2025 (**Minute 2**), regarding the Far North Solar Farm Ltd (**FNSF**) application for approvals for The Point solar farm.

Minute 2, Schedule 1 - Participant's estimated timeframe

2. CRC considered the application to be complete and does not generally consider that further information is required to decide the application. CRC proposes the below timeline to accommodate for some further discussions around conditions, and account for capacity at CRC to review ecological conditions. This timeline is consistent with s53-72 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) obligations.
3. CRC is happy to discuss timeframes further at the Panel Convener Conference.

Task	Working days	Date
Panel commencement	N/A	15 December 2025
Invite comment from relevant parties	10 W/D later	19 January 2026
Comments close (ss 53 & 54)	20 W/D later	16 February 2026

Comments close for applicants (s 55)	5 W/D later	23 February 2026
Any other procedural steps, evaluation and decision writing	20 W/D later	23 March 2026
Draft decision is to approve		
Draft decision and conditions to Ministers (s 72)	5 W/D later	30 March 2026

Minute 2, Schedule 2¹ – Matters to consider when preparing for conference

Approvals

[1] The number and range of approvals sought

4. FNSF, in their application, seeks six approvals from CRC for activities described in the RMA.
5. Two approvals are required under section 9, and four under section 15 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**), as follows:
 - (a) Two land use consents (s9) – Restricted discretionary activity – to use land over an aquifer for excavations, which includes:

¹ It is noted that Minute 2 gives “Schedule **1** – Matters to consider when preparing for conference”. CRC considers this to be a typographical error, and treats this as “Schedule **2** – Matters to consider when preparing for conference”

- (i) Establishing access tracks/roading throughout the site;
- (ii) Trenching for electrical cables throughout the site; and
- (iii) Ground preparation for concrete foundations required for various electrical equipment, including electrical substation at site.

(b) Two discharge permits (s15) – Restricted discretionary activity – to discharge construction-phase stormwater to land, which includes:

- (i) The discharge of construction-phase stormwater to land from construction phase activities related to land development / preparation / earthworks.

(c) Two discharge permits (s15) – Discretionary activity – to discharge operational stormwater to land, which includes:

- (i) The discharge of stormwater from solar panel arrays to land; and
- (ii) The discharge of stormwater from electrical substation to land.

6. CRC understands that the duplication of consents sought such that one set² can cover the Grid Injection Point (GIP) that would connect the wider solar farm site to the overhead powerlines of the national grid, while the other set would cover the wider solar farm site and solar farm substation that feeds into the GIP.

² A set being one s9 consent, one construction-phase s15 permit, and one operational s15 permit.

Complexity

6. **Table 1** below provides consideration of the matters set out in Schedule 2 Minute

2. The content in the first two columns of the table is copied directly from Schedule 2.

Table 1: consideration of complexity		
Level of complexity	Specific provision	CRC comment
(a) Legal Complexity: novel or difficult legal issues	(i) involve untested law or interpretation of statute;	CRC does not consider that there is any legal complexity relating to untested law or interpretation of statute.
	(ii) involve application for multiple approvals;	Three approvals are sought, reflecting activities specified in sections 9 and 15 of the RMA. There are a number of activities within each approval, as described in [1] above (totalling six consents).
	(iii) interface with two or more statutes; and	<p>Setting aside the FTAA, the RMA is the primary statute for this proposal.</p> <p>Within the RMA framework the following legislative documents apply to this proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 2) National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Generation 2011 3) Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2021 <p>The applicable regional plan for classifying the proposed activities is the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP).</p> <p>The activities, if bundled, would have a discretionary activity status under the LWRP.</p>
	(iv) engage constitutional law and public law.	Constitutional and public law is not anticipated to apply.

<p>(b) Evidentiary Complexity: stemming from the volume, type, or technical nature of evidence</p>	<p>(i) include challenges like managing expert reports or dealing with conflicting factual or opinion evidence; and</p>	<p>CRC science experts have reviewed the information supplied with the application and, while some questions have been raised around the level of detail in the application, there is general agreement that the assessments provided are appropriate.</p> <p>The applicant has provided assessments and records of consultation with relevant parties, and CRC experts generally consider it appropriate to adopt the recommendations in the technical assessments provided by the applicant.</p> <p>Areas where further information could assist in the assessment of the proposal include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirming the appropriate conditions to monitor and mitigate potential effects to meet s108 RMA monitoring requirements to avoid later enforcement disputes, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Monitoring and adaptive management of soil resources at the site. b. Monitoring and mitigating conditions to address potential effects to ecologically important avifauna. c. Appropriate conditions/mitigations to address potential cultural effects in consultation with relevant iwi authorities.
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	(ii) often involve technical or scientific analysis	<p>The applicant submitted several technical assessments and information documents as appendices with the application. The technical assessments relevant to the approvals relevant to CRC are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Appendix G – Ecological Assessment. 2) Appendix J – Proposed Conditions 3) Appendix K – Stormwater Assessment (solar farm) 4) Appendix L – GIP Civil Design Plans 5) Appendix M – GIP Flood Assessment 6) Appendix P – Ecological Enhancement Plan 7) Appendix T – Bird Strike Reports 8) Appendix Y – Dust Management Plan 9) Appendix Z – Flood Assessment <p>CRC science staff have undertaken a detailed review of these documents and are generally satisfied with the content of these assessments. Discussions are underway with the applicant regarding aspects where clarification is required, primarily around the details of conditions.</p>
(c) Factual Complexity: arises from the volume and nature of evidence -	<p>(i) requires careful management of extensive information or reports, including expert opinion in specialised fields; and</p> <p>(ii) necessitates analysis if technical, scientific, or highly specialised subject matter are involved.</p>	<p>The applicant has provided a significant quantity of assessments in support of the application. As above, CRC experts have reviewed this information and are generally satisfied that the correct information has been supplied.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, further clarification of the appropriate mitigating conditions, and if these conditions appropriately adopt the recommendations of the assessments provided with the report, is considered necessary.</p> <p>As such, while time may be required to address the outstanding matters, the overall complexity of the proposal is not of concern.</p> <p>It is of note that CRC's ecologist is on leave from 2 December to 20 January. As such, the timeframe proposed above is intended to ensure CRC has the capacity to review the ecological conditions for the s53 comments stage.</p>

Issues

[3] In addition to the matters noted in the Minute, describe:

- (a) the issues that have arisen during pre-lodgement and post-lodgement consultation and engagement.*
 - (b) if the application concerns an activity the same or similar to one previously lodged with a consent authority, state how requests for information pursuant to section 92 of the RMA have been addressed in this application.*
 - (c) any statutory process that coincides with the 30-working day period (if proposed)*
7. At this stage, CRC has concerns around the potential cultural impacts at the site, and the finer details of appropriate conditions to mitigate ecological and soil erosion effect, as noted above.
8. CRC met with FNSF on 12 November 2025 to discuss outstanding issues. From that meeting, CRC understands that FNSF has not been in recent contact with the relevant iwi authorities, but that FNSF is willing to continue to engage with the relevant iwi authorities to better understand the cultural impacts of the proposal. CRC further understands that FNSF is willing to work with CRC to ensure the ecological and soil monitoring conditions are appropriate.
9. CRC is willing to engage with FNSF to further refine the proposed conditions and will continue discussions throughout the process.

Panel membership *[4]*

Consider:

- (a) the knowledge, skills and expertise required to decide the application under clause 7(1) of Schedule 3.*
- (b) whether there are factors that warrant the appointment of more than four panel members, such as:*
 - (i) the circumstances unique to a particular district or region; or*

- (ii) *the number of applications that have to be considered in that particular district or region; or*
- (iii) *the nature and scale of the application under consideration; or*
- (iv) *matters unique to any relevant iwi participation legislation.*

10. In relation to item [4](a), CRC considers the following skills and areas of expertise would be beneficial for inclusion on the Panel:

- (a) Planning and RMA expertise, given the issues outlined above; and
- (b) Experience in condition drafting, to ensure that any approval is accompanied by conditions that are both monitorable and enforceable.

11. While the following areas fall outside CRC's core functions, discussions with FNSF and Mackenzie District Council (**MDC**) suggest that the inclusion of the following skills and knowledge would also be valuable:

- (a) Landscape architecture expertise to assess the cumulative effects of large-scale solar installations on the Mackenzie Basin landscape; and
- (b) Cultural understanding – CRC considers that an appreciation of cultural values is relevant to decision-making. It is CRC's understanding that the relevant iwi authorities and Treaty settlement entities listed in Schedule 3 of the minute will be invited to nominate a panel member with the appropriate cultural expertise, and this is supported.

12. CRC and MDC have identified a number of potential Panel nominees who are considered to possess cultural skills and experience. These potential nominees can be provided to the Panel when requested.

13. In relation to landscape architecture expertise, the CRC does not have a current approved nominee to put forward. It may be something that the panel convenor wishes to consider when forming the panel.

Procedural requirements

[6] Consider and prepare to indicate:

- (a) willingness to engage directly with the panel as necessary to advance progress of the application efficiently (briefings, meetings, conferencing).*
- (b) the timing of expert conferencing or wānanga;*
- (c) the referral of two or more participants or topics to mediation;*
- (d) the requirement for any form of hearing process including:*
 - (i) disputed facts or opinions*
 - (ii) proposed conditions; or*
 - (iii) legal issues.*

12. CRC is willing to engage directly with the Panel as necessary. As noted above, CRC is happy to discuss specific matters with FNSF in more detail and intends to continue ongoing discussions with FNSF and other relevant parties.

13. CRC does not currently expect that any expert conferencing or mediation will be required.

Anything else?

[7] Is there any other information needed to decide time frames or panel composition?

14. CRC does not consider that any other information, beside that discussed above, will be required.

Confirmation of Attendance

[15](b) Confirmation of panel attendance

- 14.** The following CRC staff will attend the panel conveners conference on Monday 17 November:
- (a)* Robyn Fitchett – CRC General Counsel
 - (b)* Nardia Freehan – CRC Principal Consents Advisor
 - (c)* Reuben Herz-Edinger – CRC Senior Consents Planner

Dated: 13 November 2025



Robyn Fitchett

General Counsel for Canterbury Regional Council