

Before the Expert Panel appointed under the Fast-track
Approvals Act 2024

FTAA-2604-1207

Under	the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
In the matter	of the substantive application for the Southern Link Inland Port
By	Southern Link Property Limited

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE BY GRANT DRIVER ON BEHALF OF SOUTHERN LINK
PROPERTY LIMITED**

19 August 2026



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My full name is Grant Kevin Driver. I am the General Manager of Bulk Liquid Solutions Limited, a New Zealand company operating under the Dynes Group, based in Dunedin. I am also a member of the Southern Link Inland Port (**SLIP**) Project Team.

1.2 I have worked in logistics, civil construction and maintenance roles for over 30 years. I was the General Manager and Regional Manager for Allied Concrete New Zealand, previously to that I held roles as Regional Manager and Contract Manager for SouthRoads a civil construction and roading maintenance company.

1.3 I have been asked by Southern Link Property Limited (**SLPL**) to provide a response to comments on the SLPL application under s 53 of the FTAA. In summary, commenters (Craig and Joanne Inch, and Jane and Bernie McLeod) raise the following concerns that I respond to:

- (a) the SLIP should have been sited elsewhere, near the main trunk line, SH1, or at Milburn;
- (b) SLIP's existing 7.6 hectares of rail-connected industrial land behind Fonterra is said to already be sufficient, making further expansion onto rural land unnecessary; and
- (c) having two competing inland ports (Mosgiel and Milburn) is an inefficient and unjustified use of public funding.

1.4 My evidence will discuss why in my opinion, the Mosgiel site is the most suitable and alternatives (such as the Milburn site or using the existing land) are not appropriate.

2. THE MOSGIEL SITE IS THE MOST SUITABLE FOR THE SLIP

2.1 The search for a suitable site for an inland port was started some ten years previously by Dynes Group and Port Otago, Numerous sites had been

investigated over this time and had been ruled out because of lack of size, location, access, suitability or lack of proximity to Port Chalmers. The site evaluations were undertaken by either members of the Port Otago project team or senior staff within the Dynes Group utilising external commercial property specialists where appropriate.

2.2 The Mosgiel Site was eventually determined to be the most suitable option because it achieves all of the following criteria that were considered important for the SLIP:

- (a) the SLIP site is located just 32 kilometres from Port Chalmers making it a highly suitable site given its relative proximity to the Port. The site's flat topography reduces construction costs and provides a financially viable site in a region that is otherwise scarce for industrial development;
- (b) is directly adjacent to the Taieri Branch rail line, allowing shuttle trains to Port Chalmers under the automatic signalling system rather than the main trunk track warrant system, with siding capacity already confirmed by KiwiRail;
- (c) KiwiRail already examined operational siding options and confirmed the site can accommodate long freight sidings capable of handling large wagon sets and efficient rail operations;
- (d) sits alongside Fonterra's Mosgiel distribution centre, existing industrial land, and other Dunedin-based logistics operators, enabling freight aggregation and avoiding the double handling of empty containers that a remote site would require, given that around 65% of Port Otago's total container export volume originates locally;
- (e) the site is already identified in the Dunedin City Council Future Development Strategy 2024-54 as the preferred location for a future logistics park / freight hub, consistent with long-term regional land-use planning.

3. ALTERNATIVE SITES ARE NOT APPROPRIATE

3.1 From my understanding, the comments have suggested that the existing Milburn site would be a more adequate alternative to the current proposal. I disagree with these comments and do not believe the Milburn site is a genuine alternative because:

- (a) a Stantec feasibility study commissioned by Kiwirail in 2019 found the rail business case at Milburn to be commercially marginal, describing "little margin to cover the costs of the terminal that would be required" and noting capital costs would likely make rail uneconomic compared with road;
- (b) Milburn is approximately 65 kilometres from Port Chalmers (more than double the distance from Mosgiel), which adds truck travel, handling and storage costs;
- (c) one of Port Otago's current constraints is the amount of land occupied by empty containers. The Southern Link proposal relocates empty container storage close to the existing Port Otago freight network and major freight generators. If empty containers were instead stored at Milburn:
 - (i) containers would need to be repositioned from Port Chalmers to Milburn;
 - (ii) exporters would then need to retrieve empties from Milburn;
 - (iii) exporters north of Dunedin would incur additional transport costs; and
 - (iv) double handling becomes unavoidable.
- (d) The result is a longer and more expensive supply chain compared with storing empty containers in the Mosgiel logistics cluster adjacent to major exporters and logistics operators. This cost implication is consistent with the KiwiRail study's identification of additional handling and terminal costs as a major commercial constraint;

- (e) The forestry sector presents a major challenge to the Milburn concept. With a substantial volume of Otago forests being north of Milburn, this would result in trucking logs further south to Milburn for offloading and reloading onto trains for railing to Port Chalmers which adds unnecessary cost and reduces efficiency and profits for forest owners. There is currently no log transfer facility onto rail or rail handling facilities at Dunedin Bulk Port, where log exports are focused, and the KiwiRail feasibility work found that rail solutions are only attractive where commercial benefits exceed transfer and handling costs, meaning direct trucking to Port Chalmers or Dunedin Bulk Port will remain cheaper for many forestry operations than introducing an additional road-rail transfer point at Milburn.

- 3.2** I also do not agree that the existing SLIP land would be sufficient, as the size of the site limits the ability to store the required large volumes of empty containers prepared for export. As with other sites in Dunedin and surrounding areas, their limited size prevents opportunities for future growth. The site currently operated by SLIP serves the exact purpose of utilising existing rail capacity and connects exporter volume directly to the port via the current rail siding, removing heavy vehicle movements from the Mosgiel roading network.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1** Overall, my opinion is that the Mosgiel site is the most suitable location for the Southern Link Inland Port. The Mosgiel Inland Port is fundamentally different from the Calder Stewart Milburn proposal. The Mosgiel site:

- (a) directly addresses Port Otago's land constraints;
- (b) is strategically identified within regional planning;
- (c) sits adjacent to major freight generators;
- (d) connects directly to existing rail infrastructure;
- (e) creates freight efficiencies through consolidation;
- (f) removes approximately 19,000 truck movements from Dunedin streets;

- (g) supports Port Otago's existing logistics system; and
- (h) has the size required for the needs of the region

4.2 By contrast, the Milburn proposal relies on freight being transported further from its natural origin and destination points, introduces additional handling costs, requires significant terminal infrastructure investment, and was described in KiwiRail's feasibility assessment as having a finely balanced commercial case with limited ability to recover terminal costs.

4.3 For exporters, the practical outcome is straightforward: every additional transfer, storage step, and kilometre travelled through Milburn adds cost. The Mosgiel Inland Port minimises those costs by placing container storage, handling, rail services and warehousing immediately alongside Otago's existing freight and logistics network.

Dated: 19 August 2026



Grant Driver