

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



11 November 2025

PS-COR1670

Ashbourne - Fast-track Application
Environmental Protection Authority
Private Bag 63002
Waterloo Quay
Wellington 6140

By email: substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Re: FTAA-2507-1087 – Ashbourne invitation to the Minister for the Environment to comment

To the Panel,

I am writing in response to your invitation to provide comments on the Ashbourne substantive application under section 53 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) that is currently under consideration.

As the Minister for the Environment, I have statutory functions and responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (EEZ), the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 as well as the Environment Act 1986. I consider section 6 of the RMA and national direction including the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (NPS-IB) are relevant to the proposed application.

As part of its decision making, the panel needs to consider how and to what extent the adverse impacts of the proposal can be managed. The potential adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity may be manageable, in this case, by ensuring that long-term effects on threatened (nationally critical) long-tail bat communities are considered and mitigated. It will be up to you to determine how the environmental effects such as those arising because of the proposed activities will be managed.

Having reviewed the substantive application, including the record of correspondence between the applicant and the local authorities, I have two comments to provide.

The assessments to date have not addressed the potential long-term adverse effects of the proposal on the long-tail bat community. None of the proposed conditions associated with long-term monitoring extend beyond construction of the development.

Acknowledging the Panel is required to take into account Part 2 of the RMA and Part 6 of the RMA including national direction such as the NPS-IB, I request that you consider:

- a. the site contains highly mobile fauna habitat.
- b. significant adverse effects on the habitat of significant indigenous fauna may occur during the construction phase and also over the longer term as a result of the project.
- c. no conditions to manage effects, over the long term, to threatened highly mobile fauna have been proffered by the applicant.

I also suggest that the following be further conditioned to help address the matters raised above:

- a. Long-term protection of riparian margins, indigenous vegetation and other vegetated corridors.
- b. Long-term maintenance of bat-friendly outdoor lighting.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on this application.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment