

24 October 2025

Minister of Infrastructure  
C/o Ministry for the Environment  
PO Box 103622  
Wellington 6143

Dear Minister

### **Letter of Endorsement – Referral Application under the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024**

IAWAI – Flowing Waters (IAWAI) acknowledges the referral application lodged by Pokeno Development Limited (PDL) for the establishment of a Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) Wastewater Treatment Plant in Pokeno, under the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024.

IAWAI is a joint Water Services Council Controlled Organisation, held in equal shares by Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council. It is established under the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024. From 1 July 2026 IAWAI will become solely responsible for all potable water and wastewater services in the Hamilton and Waikato districts. This will include the area of Pokeno.

### **Regional and Local Growth Context**

Pokeno is the fastest growing town in the northern Waikato Region, consistently delivering approximately 200 new dwellings per year.

The regional significance of enabling urban growth in Pokeno is recognised and reinforced through a range of regional planning instruments, including Future Proof, Waikato 2070, the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (RPS), and the Waikato District Plan.

### **PDL Landholdings and Growth Capacity**

PDL, through its subsidiary companies, owns significant land holdings in Pokeno. These are already zoned and capable of accommodating approximately 2,250 houses, in addition to employment opportunities enabled by the Tata Valley Resort Zone, Industrial Zones, and Local Centre Zones. The majority of planned growth in Pokeno is directly associated with PDL's landholdings.

### **Infrastructure Constraints and Need for the Proposal**

At present, wastewater infrastructure in Pokeno is subject to significant constraints. From February 2025, Waikato District Council issued letters to landowners confirming that no further wastewater connections could be made due to capacity limits. This represents a critical barrier to enabling the planned and regionally significant growth of Pokeno.

While ultimate ownership and responsibility for water and wastewater assets formally transfers to IAWAI on 1 July 2026, in the meantime, on 1 July 2025 Waikato District Council transferred the oversight and delivery

of a waters servicing strategy for Pokeno/Tuakau to IAWAI. Accordingly, IAWAI is currently investigating sustainable long term servicing solutions for all planned growth in Pokeno.

PDL's proposed MBR Wastewater Treatment Plant is understood to be designed with a minimum capacity to service 5,000 household unit equivalents (HUE's). This provides for PDL's landholdings, while allowing for potential expansion to meet wider growth needs. Unlocking this infrastructure constraint is considered an opportunity to realise the strategic housing and economic development aspirations for Pokeno as part of the wider Waikato Region. IAWAI recognises the need for a Wastewater Treatment Plant solution to service all of Pokeno including PDL. IAWAI supports delivery of critical wastewater infrastructure that gives effect to Te Ture Whaimana o te o Waikato and supports the current and future needs of Pokeno and Tuakau.

### **Strategic Importance and IAWAI Position**

IAWAI acknowledges that consenting the MBR as the first stage of the proposal is a critical step. Finding a sustainable long term solution for wastewater servicing in Pokeno is of strategic importance, addressing multiple demand drivers and supporting the long-term economic development of the region. In this respect the project has the potential, in terms of s 22 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA), to deliver infrastructure which will have significant regional benefits.

IAWAI confirms its support in principle for the use of the fast-track consenting process as an appropriate mechanism to advance this proposal. This support is conditional on a robust process, the ability to work alongside PDL to further develop the proposal, and IAWAI being afforded status to provide comments in any fast-track consenting process under s 53 of the FTAA, as a minimum,

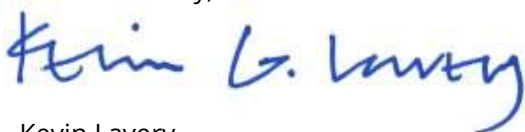
IAWAI's support will require the project to meet appropriate infrastructure standards, give effect to Te Ture Whaimana o te o Waikato and, ensuring the facility is sized and consented to meet the needs of the broader Pokeno area.

While IAWAI has signalled its support for the referral application as set out in this letter, it reserves all of it's rights, including a full and unfettered assessment of the substantive application for approvals under the FTAA. Nothing in this letter of support fetters IAWAI's regulatory responsibilities.

### **Partnership and Next Steps**

IAWAI looks forward to providing formal comments on the specifics of the proposal should the Minister approve the referral request. We also welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with the applicant and central government agencies on the shape and form of a potential substantive application for resource consent and any other approvals under the FTAA.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Lavery  
Executive Chair  
IAWAI Flowing Waters