

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

MINUTE 11 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Groundwater and ecological matters

Drury Quarry Expansion - Sutton Block [FTAA-2503-1037]

25 November 2025

Groundwater and ecological matters

[1] The Panel has received and reviewed the Applicant and Auckland Council's responses to Mr Williamson's hydrogeological report.

[2] To provide the parties with an indication of the Panel's current remaining concerns, in light of this Thursday's deadline for parties to comment on the draft conditions (Minute 10), we indicate remaining areas of concern below.

Additional piezometer

[3] We did not see a response from the Applicant to Mr Williamson's proposal for an additional piezometer location for MG1 within the headwaters of the Mangawheau Catchment, as shown on Figure 3 of his report. This location is right on the edge of the zone of influence for the existing quarry and appears a reasonable location to provide information regarding the impacts of dewatering from the Sutton Block.

[4] Wording may be needed to provide flexibility with the location, for example should a slight shift be needed due to property access requirements.

The 'three year wait'

[5] We remain concerned with the 'three year wait', which could see ecological losses occur in the Mangawheau and Hingaia Tributary Streams while a trend is established. This manifests particularly in conditions 194(a) and 197 (Panel's 13 November 2025 set, noting the Panel's comments included), but is also for example reflected in the after the fact nature of condition 203, where augmentation rates are only implemented in subsequent dry conditions.

Reverse the onus – condition 197

[6] Subject to comments, the Panel considers it may be more appropriate to reverse condition 197. Augmentation would be required unless a report from a SQEP established, from three consecutive years of gauging, that losses were not attributable to the Site's dewatering, and / or, were caused by drought conditions.

[7] There would need to be periodic review of this (i.e. if augmentation ceased because those conditions were met, it would need to recommence when they were no longer met), and appropriate certification (e.g. a management plan may be the more appropriate location, rather than the annual monitoring report).

Augmentation rates

[8] We note the absence of details around augmentation for the Mangawheau and Hingaia Tributary Streams, and reference instead to rates being provided in the annual monitoring report. We would prefer more information regarding the intent of augmentation (e.g. in relation to MALF) within the conditions, or alternatively, if information is not currently available, that a SQEP be involved and certification be required (rather than reliance on the annual monitoring report). We note the methodology is to be included in the Groundwater Monitoring Plan (condition 203), but not the augmentation rates, which sit in the annual monitoring report and are to be determined annually.

[9] We note that condition 194(a) references condition 196, which may need to be corrected to condition 197.

Baseline survey

[10] We consider that the baseline survey condition (condition 180) needs to be more specific about when the baseline surveys are required. If augmentation is needed, it seems circular to only undertake baseline monitoring before implementing an augmentation programme. Condition 184 only requires establishment of gauging stations at particular RL levels, which may or may not be early enough to give warning of unintended impacts on surface features.

[11] For the Mangawheau and Hingaia Tributary Streams, augmentation currently is only required where there is a 'downward trend' (condition 194(a)), but how is that downward trend established if no baseline exists and no surveying is being done? Clear points or stages should be included, for example before dewatering commences, at the start or end of each (or a particular) stage, and so on.

[12] Condition 180(b) should list the seven streams where augmentation may be required.

Table 5 query

[13] We query whether conditions 192 and 193 appropriately refer to stages (which may be fluid and are not elsewhere defined in the conditions), when it may be more accurate to refer instead (or additionally) to the metrics in columns 2 and 3 of Table 5.



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