

File Ref: BRF-00903/FTAA-2512-1152

20 April 2026

Vesa Barron
Auckland Council
Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Vesa,

Notice of Decisions on the referral application for the Nga Wairau – Stage 1 project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for an application received from Auckland Council for referral of the Nga Wairau - Stage 1 project (project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).

Project Details

The project involves the development of flood resilience infrastructure across approximately 50.91 hectares of reserve land within A F Thomas Park, located in Wairau Valley, Auckland.

The project comprises:

- a. flood resilience infrastructure works, including:
 - i. excavation of the park to increase flood storage capacity
 - ii. creation of a wetland and dry flood storage areas
 - iii. modifications to an existing dam (reducing height, increasing storage, adding spillway)
 - iv. construction of a new spillway channel to optimise flood flow storage and release
 - v. stream reclamation and diversion of waterways
 - vi. vegetation removal and ground reshaping
 - vii. establishment of a temporary construction laydown area.
- b. reserve reinstatement, including:
 - i. site stabilisation, landscaping and revegetation
 - ii. construction of new multi-use maintenance accessways
 - iii. reconfiguration of recreational areas.

The project will require the proposed approvals under specified Acts:

- a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) as described in section 42(4)(e) of the Act
- b. wildlife approval under the Wildlife Act 1953 as described in section 42(4)(h) of the Act.

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Fast-track referrals are administered on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure by the Ministry for the Environment | PO Box 10362 | Wellington 6143, New Zealand | NZBN: 9429041908853

Statutory framework for referral applications

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

The project can only be accepted if the Minister is satisfied the criteria in section 22 is met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process..

Under section 21(3) of the Act, the Minister must decline a referral application if:

- a. the Minister is satisfied that the project does not meet the criteria in section 22
- b. the Minister is satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity
- c. the Minister considers they do not have adequate information to inform the decision.

Additionally, the Minister has the discretion to decline a referral application for any other reason, even if the project meets the criteria outlined in section 22 of the Act.

Decision on referral application

The Minister has decided to accept the referral application under section 21(1)(c) and refer the whole project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a). The Minister is satisfied that the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act, for the reasons detailed below.

Reasons for accepting referral application

The Minister is satisfied:

- a. the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and
- b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
 - i. would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and
 - ii. is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Specifically, the Minister is satisfied the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act as:

- a. the project is an infrastructure project that would have significant regional benefits [s22(1)(a)] because it:
 - i. is a priority project in a central or local government, or sector plan or strategy or a central government infrastructure priority list [s22(2)(a)(i)] as it:
 - is listed as a key project for delivery within the Auckland Council Annual Plan 2025/2026.
 - ii. will deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure and enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure [s22(2)(a)(ii)] as it:

- will deliver regionally significant flood management infrastructure through approximately 550,000 cubic metres of additional flood storage capacity.
 - enables the continued functioning of existing regionally and nationally significant infrastructure including wastewater assets, State Highway 1 and electricity infrastructure.
- iii. will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards [s22(2)(a)(viii)] as it:
- will deliver significant climate change adaptation and natural hazard risk reduction benefits through additional flood storage.
- iv. will address significant environmental issues [s22(2)(a)(ix)] as it:
- will address flooding caused by natural rain events and associated overland flow paths.
 - will mitigate the adverse effects associated with these events and minimise the risk to property and human safety.
- v. is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)] as it:
- is consistent with key objectives and policies of the Auckland Regional Policy Statement Auckland Unitary Plan, and relevant National Policy Statements.
- b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes [s22(1)(b)(i)] because:
- i. timeframes under the Act are significantly shorter than under the RMA.
 - ii. the Act precludes public and limited notification, and appeals made under the Act are only to the High Court rather than the Environment Court and are limited to points of law.
- c. the project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process because it is neither novel in the New Zealand context nor beyond the scope of what a panel would typically assess under the RMA.

The Minister is satisfied there is no reason they must decline the project under section 21(3) of the Act. The Minister is also satisfied there is no reason to decline the project under section 21(4) or (5) of the Act.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

1. Auckland Council, who lodged the referral application, as the person who is authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2) of the Act.
2. In relation to a substantive application for the project:

- a. a deadline for lodging the application applies under section 27(3)(b)(i) – the application must be lodged within two years from the date of issue of this letter.

Other matters

1. Under section 16(2)(c) of the Act, the Minister directs any panel that considers a substantive application for the project to comply with the following:
 - a. that any panel considering a substantive application for the project must:
 - i. comply with the consultation process set out in the Ngā Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau conservation relationship agreement when engaging with Tūpuna Taonga o Tāmaki Makaurau Trust on the Wildlife Act 1953 approvals being sought (unless a modified arrangement can be agreed);
 - ii. comply with the consultation process set out in Te Kawenata Taiao o Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara – Conservation Charter when engaging with Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara; and
 - iii. consider whether, and how, to apply the consultation process set out in the Ngā Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau conservation relationship agreement when engaging with the relevant iwi members of the Tāmaki Collective.

Under section 28 of the Act, the Ministry for the Environment must also give written notice of decisions made by the Minister on an accepted referral application to the parties specified in Appendix 1 of this letter.

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Rebecca Burton or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

If you have any queries about the substantive process, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz, or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely



Ben Bunting
Acting Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix 1: Section 28 – Notice of Minister’s decision on accepted referral application

Section 28(1)(a) – The applicant	Auckland Council
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Section 28(1)(ii) – Anyone invited to comment on the application

<i>Relevant local authorities</i>	Auckland Council
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<i>Relevant portfolio Ministers</i>	Minister for the Environment Minister for Climate Change Minister of Conservation
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<i>Relevant administering agencies</i>	Department of Conservation
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<i>The Māori groups under s17(d)</i>	Ngā Maunga Whakahii o Kaipara Development Trust Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust Te Kawerau Iwi Settlement Trust Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Trust Ngāti Tamaoho Settlement Trust Ngāti Pāoa Iwi Trust Ngāti Maru Rūnanga Trust Ngāti Tamaterā Treaty Settlement Trust Ngāti Te Ata Claims Support Whānau Trust Ngaati Whanaunga Incorporated Society Ngaati Whanaunga Ruunanga Trust Hako Tūpuna Trust Te Ākitai Waiohua Settlement Trust Te Ākitai Waiohua Waka Taua Inc Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whātua Te Patukirikiri Iwi Trust
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<i>Any other persons under s17(5)</i>	Chief Executive of Vector Limited Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi Minister for Auckland Minister for Regional Development Minister for Economic Growth.
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Section 28(2) – Other parties for an accepted referral application

<i>The Panel Convener</i>	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
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<i>Any iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities (other than those that must be notified as identified above) that the Minister considers have an interest in the matter</i>	No additional iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities have been identified beyond those listed above.
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<i>Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)</i>	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
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<i>Relevant administering agencies</i>	As identified above.
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