



FTAA–2604–1219: Application received for referral of the project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 1 decisions

Project Name: Franco Farms Project

Date submitted:	4 June 2026	Tracking #: 26-BRF-01525	
Security level:	In-Confidence	MfE priority:	Urgent

	Action sought:	Response by:
To Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations in Table A	11 June 2026

Actions for Minister's Office staff	Return the signed briefing to the Ministry for the Environment – email: FTAreferrals@mfe.govt.nz Send email to Ministers' to invite written comments
Number of appendices: 3	Appendices: 1. Statutory framework summary 2. Application documents for Franco Farms project 3. List of Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Ministry for the Environment contacts:

Position	Name	Cell phone	1 st contact
Principal Author	Stephanie McNicholl		
Manager	Stephanie Frame	s 9(2)(a)	✓
General Manager	Ilana Miller	s 9(2)(a)	

Project area



Key messages

1. This briefing seeks your initial decisions on an application from Sabys 101 Limited (the applicant) to refer the Franco Farms Project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process.
2. At this stage you can either decline an application for the reasons set out section 21, or provide the application to, and invite comments from, the parties identified in section 17. If you do not decline the application, you will receive a further briefing following receipt of invited comments, to inform your final decision on whether to refer the project.
3. The project is to establish and construct an urban development over approximately 35 hectares to deliver approximately 350 residential lots (to enable future housing construction) with supporting infrastructure (roading, three waters services, stormwater management), neighbourhood centre services and amenities, and riparian enhancement.
4. The project area is located across Lot 3 DP 68573 Sabys Road and 6 Wrooths Road in Halswell, near Christchurch, in the Canterbury Region.
5. We note the project area is located across two local authorities' boundaries. Lot 3 DP 68573 Sabys Road is located within Christchurch City Council's jurisdiction, and 6 Wrooths Road is located within Selwyn District Council's jurisdiction.
6. The project will require the proposed approvals under the fast-track approvals process:
 - a. resource consents approvals under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)
 - b. wildlife approvals under the Wildlife Act 1953

- c. archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014
 - d. approvals under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983
- 7. We have undertaken initial analysis of the referral application, and this is presented along with our considerations and recommendations in Table A.
- 8. We have decided the application is complete and complies with section 14 of the Act, as the application complies with section 13 requirements, may be capable of satisfying the criteria in section 22 and does not appear to involve an ineligible activity. The applicable fee and levy have been paid.
- 9. We recommend you progress consideration of the referral application to the next stage of analysis (Stage 2) and invite written comments from the parties prescribed in section 17(1) of the Act being:
 - a. Canterbury Regional Council, Selwyn District Council and Christchurch City Council as the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, and the Associate Minister for Housing as the relevant portfolio Ministers
 - d. the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as the relevant administering agencies
 - e. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3.
- 10. We recommend that you invite written comments from additional persons under section 17(5) of the Act being:
 - a. the Chief Executive, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
 - b. the Minister for Economic Growth
 - c. the Minister for Regional Development.
- 11. As the project area includes public conservation land, we note you must obtain a report from the Director-General of Conservation under section 19(1) of the Act.

Action sought

- 12. Please indicate your decisions on the recommendations in Table A.

Signature



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Table A: Stage 1 analysis – FTAA–2604-1219

	Project Name	Applicant	Project Area			
Project details	Franco Farms Project	Sabys 101 Limited	The project area is located across Lot 3 DP 68573 Sabys Road and 6 Wroots Road in Halswell, near Christchurch in the Canterbury Region, with a combined area of approximately 35 hectares.			
Project description	The project is to construct and establish an urban development over approximately 35 hectares to deliver approximately 350 residential lots (to enable future housing construction) with supporting infrastructure (roading, three waters services, stormwater management), neighbourhood centre services and amenities, and riparian enhancement. The project area is located across Lot 3 DP 68573 Sabys Road and 6 Wroots Road in Halswell, near Christchurch, in the Canterbury Region. The project will require the proposed approvals under the fast-track approvals process: a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) b. wildlife permits under the Wildlife Act 1953 c. archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. d. approvals under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983					
Notification and/or consultation undertaken	As required by section 11, the applicant has:					
	Notified relevant local authorities	Notified relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities	Consulted relevant MACA groups	Consulted ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou	Notified relevant administering agencies	Notified holder of land to be exchanged
	a. Canterbury Regional Council b. Selwyn District Council c. Christchurch City Council	a. Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited b. Whitiara Centre Limited c. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	N/A	N/A	a. Department of Conservation b. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga	N/A
Section 22 assessment criteria						
The project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits [section 22(1)(a)]	<i>You <u>must</u> consider a relevant Government policy statement (GPS) [s22(1A)]</i> No GPS has been identified as being relevant to the application. You <u>may</u> consider any of the following matters, or any other matters you consider relevant: <i>The project has been identified as 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)]</i> The applicant considers that although the project is not explicitly listed as a priority in a central government, local government, or sector plan or strategy, it fits well with the strategic intent and lens of the need to increase housing supply in the Christchurch Region. The applicant considers the project aligns with the Fast-track Approvals Act purpose of accelerating projects that deliver significant regional benefits <i>Will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020) [s22(2)(a)(iii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will increase the supply of housing and address housing needs and contribute to a well-functioning urban environment by providing approximately 350 new dwellings over a 6-9 year development period <i>Will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]</i> The applicant considers the project will deliver significant regional economic benefits by creating approximately 240 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs over 4 years over the development period), generating approximately \$83 million in wages and \$138 million GDP into the regional economy. <i>Will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions [s22(2)(a)(vii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will support climate change mitigation by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through low-emissions construction practices, energy-efficient urban form and enhancing carbon sequestration through planting. <i>Will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards [s22(2)(a)(viii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will support climate change adaptation and reduce risks arising from natural hazards through improved resilience to risks managed through design and engineering measures. <i>Is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)]</i> The applicant considers the project is consistent with local and regional planning documents, spatial strategies including – Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, Regional Plans, Partially Operative Selwyn District Plan (Appeals Version), Christchurch District Plan, including the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan.					
Referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	<i>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)]</i> The applicant considers the FTAA process enables a single, integrated application process and coordinated approach, which is important for this project which straddles the Christchurch City Council and Selwyn District Council boundaries and provides greater efficiency and aligned conditions. Public and limited notification, and appeal rights is precluded under the FTAA, with shorter timeframes and reduced costs compared to the standard RMA process. <i>Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]</i> The applicant considers there is resourcing in place to process the application efficiently and certainty around timeframes for the applicant to ensure the project remains 'shovel ready'.					

Minister invites comments	You <u>must</u> copy the application to, and invite written comments from [s17(1)]: a. the relevant local authorities – Canterbury Regional Council, Selwyn District Council and Christchurch City Council b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development c. the relevant portfolio Ministers – the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, and the Associate Minister of Housing d. the relevant administering agencies – the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga e. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3	You <u>may</u> copy the application to, and invite written comments from, any other person [s17(5)]: We recommend you invite comments from: a. the Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) – regarding connection and impacts on the intersection with State Highway 75 b. the Minister for Economic Growth as the project proposes significant economic growth to the region c. the Minister for Regional Development as the project proposes significant benefits to the region.	You <u>may</u> request further information about a referral application from the applicant, or relevant local authorities, or relevant administering agencies to be provided within the time frame specified in the request. N/A
Recommendations			Minister's decision
a. Note that section 25 of the Act permits you to decline the referral application without inviting comments from the relevant local authorities, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development, any other relevant portfolio Ministers, any relevant administering agencies and any Māori groups identified in the list provided.			Noted
b. Note that you have not yet provided the application to, nor sought any written comments on it from, the parties listed in section 17(1) but that you are required to do so if you do not decline the application under section 21 of the Act.			Noted
c. Note that section 17(5) of the Act permits you to forward an application to, and invite written comments from, any other person.			Noted
d. Note that if written comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame you are required to consider them, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.			Noted
e. Note that section 20 of the Act permits you to request further information from the applicant or the relevant local authorities or the relevant administering agencies at any time before you decide whether to accept or decline an application.			Noted
f. Note that you have agreed to delegate to the Secretary for the Environment your responsibility to send all correspondence, other than to Ministers.			Noted
g. Note that section 19(1) of the Act requires you to obtain and consider a report in relation to the use of public conservation land for the project from the Director-General of Conservation.			Noted
h. Agree to progress the Franco Farms Project to our Stage 2 analysis (invite written comments and request section 18 Treaty report).			Yes / No
i. Agree to provide the application to, and invite written comments from: i. Canterbury Regional Council, Selwyn District Council and Christchurch City Council as the relevant local authorities under section 17(1)(a) ii. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development under section 17(1)(b) iii. the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, and the Associate Minister of Housing as the relevant portfolio Ministers under section 17(1)(b) iv. the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as the relevant administering agencies under section 17(1)(c) v. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3 under section 17(1)(d) vi. any parties you are required to invite comments from under section 17(1)(d) and (e) who may be subsequently identified.			Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
j. Agree to provide the application to and invite written comments from the following additional persons under section 17(5): i. the Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi ii. the Minister for Economic Growth iii. the Minister for Regional Development			Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
k. Agree to send the email to invite written comments from Ministers.			Yes / No

Signed:

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure

Date:

Appendix 1: Statutory framework summary

1. You are the sole decision maker for referral applications. If you accept a referral application, then the whole or part of the project will be referred to the fast-track approvals process.
2. If a Treaty settlement, the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019, a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe or a joint management agreement provides for consideration of any document or procedural requirements, you must, where relevant:
 - a. give the document the same or equivalent effect through this process as it would have under any specified Act; and
 - b. comply with any applicable procedural requirements.
3. You must decline a referral application if:
 - a. you are satisfied the project does not meet the referral criteria in s22
 - b. you are satisfied the project involves an ineligible activity (s5)
 - c. you consider you do not have adequate information to inform your decision.
4. You may decline an application for any other reason, including those set out in s21(5) and even if the application meets the s22 referral criteria.
5. You can decline an application before or after inviting comments under s17(1). However, if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame, you must consider them, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.
6. If you do not decline a referral application at this initial stage you must copy the application to, and invite written comments from:
 - a. the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. any other relevant portfolio Ministers
 - d. the relevant administering agencies
 - e. the Māori groups identified by the responsible agency
 - f. the owners of Māori land in the project area (if applicable)
 - g. you may provide the application to and invite comments from any other person.
7. You can request further information from an applicant, any relevant local authority or any relevant administering agency at any time before you decide to decline or accept a referral application (see section 20 of the Act).
8. However, if further information has been sought and provided within the required time frame you must consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.

Appendix 2: Application documents for Franco Farms project

Appendix 3: List of Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Name of group	Type of group (section of Act)
Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited	Entity owned by Papatipu Rūnanga – other Māori group with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))
Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga	Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga –Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	iwi authority (s18(2)(a)), Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a) – Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998)
Te Taumutu Rūnanga	Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga –Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a); tangata whenua for customary fisheries regulations (s18(2)(h))
Whitiora Centre Limited	Entity owned by Papatipu Rūnanga – other Māori group with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))