

Council's Response to Fast Track Referral application-Pouarua Water Storage Scheme-FTAA-2605-1237

From Dalia Evanson s 9(2)(a)
Date Thu 16/07/2026 3:20 PM
To FTAreferalls <FTAreferalls@mfe.govt.nz>
Cc James Baty s 9(2)(a) Nedine Thatcher Swann s 9(2)(a)

 2 attachments (388 KB)

Gisborne District Council Response to the Minister for Infrastructure under Section 17 Fast-track Approvals Act 2024_16.07.26 (002).pdf; Comments Form for Invited parties.pdf;

MFE CYBER SECURITY WARNING

This email originated from outside our organisation. Please take extra care when clicking on any links or opening any attachments.

Kia ora,

Please find attached Gisborne District Council's comments on the referral application for the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme (Application no. FTAA-2605-1237)

Please accept our apologies for the one-day delay in submitting our comments. Due to technical difficulties, we were unable to submit the attached response by the requested deadline. We contacted the Fast-track team yesterday and were advised to email our response through instead.

We respectfully request that the attached comments be considered as part of the Minister's assessment, should the referral decision not yet have been made.

Thank you for your understanding.

Ngā mihi nui,

Dalia



Dalia Evanson

Principal Planner

Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti - Gisborne District Council

E: s 9(2)(a)

P: +64 6 867 2049, 0800 653 800

A: 15 Fitzherbert Street, Gisborne | [Web](#) | [Fb](#) | [App](#)

Invitation to provide written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

You have been invited to provide written comments to the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) on an application to refer a project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track process.

Please upload comments directly via the portal by completing this template.

Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Written comments must be received by MfE, on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure, no later than the due date.

Important information

Your personal information will be held by MfE and be used in relation to the project application and process. You have the right to access and correct personal information held by MfE.

A copy of your comments, including all personal information, will be provided to the Minister and the applicant.

If you are a corporate entity making comments on this application, your full contact details will be publicly available.

For individuals, your name will be publicly available, but your contact details (phone number, address, and email) will not be publicly available.

A copy of your comments will also be published on the Fast-track website. If you believe any of the information you have provided is confidential or sensitive and should be withheld from publication, please highlight the information concerned and provide an explanation to support your request for withholding it. Your comment and explanation will be decided by the Ministry on whether to withhold the information from publication.

Please do not use copyright material without the permission of the copyright holder.

All information held by MfE is subject to the Official Information Act 1982.

More information on the fast-track approvals process and providing comments can be found at [Process overview](#) | [Fast-track website](#)

Your written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Project name	Pouarua Water Storage Scheme (Application No: FTAA-2605-1237)
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Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

All sections of this form with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)	Gisborne District Council		
*First name	James		
*Last name	Baty		
Postal address	15 Fitzherbert Street, Gisborne		
*Contact phone number	+64 6 867 2049	Alternative	0800 653 800
*Email	s 9(2)(a)		

2. Please provide your comments on this application
If you need more space, please attach additional pages. Please include your name, page numbers and the project name on the additional pages.

Note: All comments will be made available to the public and the applicant when the Ministry for the Environment proactively releases advice provided to the Minister for the Environment.

Managers signoff



James Baty

Acting Chief Executive

Gisborne District Council

Date: 16 July 2026

16 July 2026

Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations
Ministry for the Environment

**Gisborne District Council Response under
Section 17 – Fast-track Approvals Act 2024**

**Project: Pouarua Water Storage Scheme
Application No: FTAA-2605-1237**

Dear Stephanie,

These comments are provided in response to the Minister's invitation under section 17 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. The comments are directed to matters relevant to the Minister's consideration under sections 21 and 22 of the Act.

1. Statutory Matters Required under Section 17(3)

1.1 Competing applications

There are currently no lodged applications that would constitute competing applications for the purposes of section 17(3)(a) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. There are applications relating to the renewal of existing water permits and new smaller-scale water takes from the Waipaoa River B Block; however, these do not compete with the proposed Pouarua Water Storage Scheme.

1.2 Existing resource consents (sections 124C(1)(c) and 165ZI RMA)

There are currently no existing resource consents for which sections 124C(1)(c) or 165ZI of the Resource Management Act 1991 would apply if this project were lodged as a substantive resource consent application.

1.3 Consistency with local and regional planning documents

The proposal is generally consistent with the strategic direction of the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan.

The consistency with the planning framework will ultimately depend on the final project design, the outcome of technical investigations and the effectiveness of measures to avoid, remedy, mitigate, offset or compensate for adverse effects.

The planning assessment provided with the application is weighted towards provisions that enable infrastructure and water resource development. A more balanced assessment acknowledging provisions relating to freshwater values, natural character, indigenous biodiversity, cultural values, natural hazards and environmental limits would provide greater confidence that the proposal has been considered within the full planning context.

1.4 Ineligible activities

The referral application does not include any activities that constitute an ineligible activity under section 5 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.





1.5 Potential reasons to decline referral under section 21(5)

There are no identified matters that would warrant declining the referral application under section 21(5) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. The following matters are, however, considered relevant to the Minister's assessment:

- Greater certainty regarding the scope of the project proposed for referral.
- Clearer identification of the statutory approvals and implementation pathway.
- Stronger evidence supporting the claimed regional benefits and projected demand.
- Greater clarity regarding the proposed operational framework and the current level of project development.

2. Other Comments Relevant to the Minister's Referral Decision (section 17(3)(b))

2.1 Council infrastructure

The proposal anticipates the use of Council-managed infrastructure, including local road corridors and potentially bridge structures, for elements of the proposed water distribution network. While this does not preclude referral, the application would benefit from more clearly describing engagement undertaken with the relevant Council asset owners and acknowledging that further assessment of infrastructure constraints and approvals will be required as the project progresses.

2.2 Municipal water supply

The application refers to potential benefits for Gisborne District Council's municipal water supply. At this stage, there is no commitment by the Council to connect to, invest in, or purchase water from the proposed scheme. Any future integration with the Council's water supply network would be subject to separate technical assessment, funding decisions, and any necessary statutory approvals.

2.3 Scope of the Referred Project

The application refers to future municipal water supply, managed aquifer recharge and future expansion as potential benefits of the scheme. These initiatives are not currently proposed as part of the referred project and remain speculative, as their implementation would depend on future investigations, investment decisions, demand, third-party participation and, where required, separate statutory approvals. These matters should be clearly distinguished from the project proposed for referral and presented as potential future opportunities rather than confirmed project outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme referral application. I trust these comments assist the Minister's consideration of the referral application. Should you require any further information or clarification, I would be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely,

James Baty
Acting Chief Executive
Gisborne District Council



FW: CORPG4964 / Invitation to comment on Fast-track referral application for the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – FTAA-2605-1237

From Infrastructure Portfolio <Infrastructure.Portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>

Date Wed 8/07/2026 9:08 AM

To FTAreferalls <FTAreferalls@mfe.govt.nz>

From: Paul Goldsmith (MIN) <P.Goldsmith@ministers.govt.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 8 July 2026 8:57 AM

To: Infrastructure Portfolio <Infrastructure.Portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: CORPG4964 / Invitation to comment on Fast-track referral application for the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – FTAA-2605-1237

Good morning,

No comment from ACH.

Thank you,



Office of Hon Paul Goldsmith

Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage | Minister of Justice

Minister for Media and Communications | Minister for Pacific Peoples

Minister for Public Service and Digitising Government | Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations

Email p.goldsmith@ministers.govt.nz | www.beehive.govt.nz

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

From: Infrastructure Portfolio <Infrastructure.Portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, 23 June 2026 8:07 am

To: Nicola Grigg (MIN) <N.Grigg@ministers.govt.nz>; Shane Jones (MIN) <S.Jones@ministers.govt.nz>; Nicola Willis (MIN) <N.Willis@ministers.govt.nz>; Tama Potaka (MIN) <T.Potaka@ministers.govt.nz>; Todd McClay (MIN) <T.McClay@ministers.govt.nz>; Paul Goldsmith (MIN) <P.Goldsmith@ministers.govt.nz>; Simon Watts (MIN) <S.Watts@ministers.govt.nz>; Mark Patterson (MIN) <M.Patterson@ministers.govt.nz>; Mike Butterick (MIN) <M.Butterick@ministers.govt.nz>

Cc: FTAreferalls <ftareferalls@mfe.govt.nz>

Subject: CORPG4964 / Invitation to comment on Fast-track referral application for the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – FTAA-2605-1237

To:

- Minister for Economic Growth
- Minister for Regional Development
- Minister for the Environment
- Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti
- Minister for Māori Development
- Minister of Conservation

- Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Minister of Climate Change
- Minister of Agriculture
- Associate Minister of Agriculture
- Associate Minister for Regional Development

NOTE - This project lodged an application after 31 March 2026, therefore a 15-day comment period applies.

Dear Ministers,

Hon Chris Bishop, the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister), has asked for me to write to you on his behalf.

The Minister has received an application from Wi Pere Trust for referral of the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track process (application reference FTAA-2605-1237).

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

Invitation to comment on referral application

I write in accordance with section 17 of the Act to invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. I have provided summary details of the project below.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received by **return email** within **15 working days** of receipt of this email, being **15 July 2026**. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Any comments submitted will contribute to the Minister's decision on whether to accept the referral application and to refer the project.

If you do not wish to provide comments, please let us know as soon as possible so we can proceed with processing the application without delay.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the Applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Process

The application documents are accessible through the Fast-track portal. Please note that application documents may contain commercially sensitivity information and should not be shared widely. If you haven't used the portal before, you can request access by emailing ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz. Once you are registered and have accepted the terms and conditions, you will receive a link to view the documents. Existing users will be able to see application documents via the request when logging into the portal. Should you need for your agency to provide any supplementary information, a nominated person can be provided access to the portal, access can be requested by emailing ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz.

To submit your comments on the application, you can either provide a letter or complete the attached template for written comments and return it by replying to this email, infrastructure.portfolio@parliament.govt.nz.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this email or need assistance with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz. Further information is available at <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/>.

Important Information

Please note that all comments received from Ministers invited to comment will be subject to the Official Information Act 1982. Comments received will be proactively released at the time the Minister for

Infrastructure makes a referral decision, unless the Minister providing comments advises the Minister for Infrastructure's office they are to be withheld, at the time they are submitted.

If a Conflict of Interest is identified by the Minister providing comments at any stage of providing comments, please inform my office and the Cabinet Office immediately. The Cabinet Office will provide advice and, if appropriate, initiate a request to the Prime Minister to agree to a transfer of the project/portfolio invite to another Minister (a request to transfer a COI from one Minister to another can take 1-7 days).

Project summary

Project name	Pouarua Water Storage Scheme project
Applicant	Wi Pere Trust
Location	Tangihanga, Gisborne
Project description	The project involves the construction of a dam to form a new large-capacity reservoir, with a footprint that would occupy up to 300 hectares, on the Pouarua Stream. The preferred dam configuration consists of a zoned earth embankment structure with height ranging from 34 to 39 meters and crest length between 190 to 230 meters. The projected normal top water level ranges from 60 to 65 meters above sea level, creating a reservoir storage capacity between 25.1 and 38.6 million cubic meters respectively. The reservoir would store water collected from local catchment runoff and from pumping water currently available for allocation from the Waipaoa River during high river flow periods. Stored water would then be released when demand is high or during dry-year water restrictions to a downstream water reticulation system for a range of potential uses. Additional main elements of the project include: associated hydraulic structures, a control room and equipment building, a pump station and associated building, mechanical and electrical equipment, a sedimentation and storage holding pond (if required), a rising main up to 4.5 kilometres long, power supplies from existing network, a new permanent access road, and a water distribution system.

Kind regards,



Office of Hon Chris Bishop

Attorney-General | Minister of Housing | Minister for Infrastructure | Minister Responsible for RMA Reform | Minister of Transport | Associate Minister of Finance | MP for Hutt South

Office: 04 817 6802 | EW 6.3

Email: c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz Website: [<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/>]www.beehive.govt.nz/

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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Hon Mike Butterick

Minister for Land Information
Associate Minister of Agriculture



Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
By email: infrastructure.portfolio@parliament.govt.nz.

AM26-0674

Dear Minister Bishop,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the FTAA-2605-1237 Pouarua Water Storage Scheme application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024, as part of my responsibilities as Associate Minister of Agriculture. My comments on this application are outlined below.

I am generally supportive of the referral of this project to the Wi Pere Trust. Subject to the applicant providing appropriate evidence through the substantive application process, the project appears to have the potential to deliver significant regional benefits, particularly in relation to water storage, water security, and regional resilience.

Based on the information provided in the application documents, I believe the project will be regionally significant as it will improve the resilience and reliability of water supply for Tairāwhiti, meaning:

- reduced exposure to drought, seasonal variability, or other climate-related pressures;
- more certainty for regionally important primary production, helping growers, farmers and processors plan; and
- maintained productivity during dry periods, helping sustain regionally significant supply chains, on-farm investment, processing activity, and employment across the wider rural economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I look forward to learning about the outcome of this application in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'MB', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Hon Mike Butterick
Associate Minister of Agriculture

Hon Mark Patterson

Minister for Rural Communities
Associate Minister of Agriculture
Associate Minister for Regional Development



15 July 2026

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Pouarua Water Storage Scheme application (FTAA-2605-1237)

Dear Chris,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA 2024).

The FTAA 2024 has been established to provide a regime that makes it easier and quicker for regionally and nationally significant infrastructure projects to gain the approvals needed for development, in support of this Government's economic growth objectives.

I have considered the application and its alignment with the priorities of my Regional Development portfolio. My comments are attached as Annex One.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm.p. Patterson'.

Hon Mark Patterson

Associate Minister for Regional Development

Annex One – Regional Development comments

Project overview

1. The applicant, Wi Pere Trust, has applied for Fast-track approval for its proposed Pouarua Water Storage Scheme project (the Project). The Project would construct a dam on the Pouarua Stream to create a new large-capacity reservoir in the Poverty Bay Flats, around 20 kilometres to the north-west of central Gisborne.
2. The applicant states that the Project meets a clear need for water supply in the area. The reservoir would supply water at periods of high demand or during dry-year water restrictions for a range of potential uses, such as for new high-value and existing land use (totalling approximately 11,000 hectares) and to improve supply security for Gisborne District Council.
3. Economic analysis provided by the applicant states that the project will:
 - a. provide one-off benefits to the region over the expected four-year development period of:
 - i. \$203.8 million total direct expenditure into the region
 - ii. 555 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs
 - b. over a 30-year period at full capacity, generate a net increase in value-added gross domestic product (GDP) of between \$628 million¹ and \$1.25 billion² to the regional economy. This is due to the new irrigated areas and supplementary supply enabled by the proposed development.
4. It is not clear from the application what land-use the reservoir will be displacing – the Wi Pere Trust owns the land to be developed, which currently has the status 'Māori freehold land'. The economic analysis does not appear to quantify any displaced economic benefits or disbenefits from the Project.

Regional Development comments

5. I have visited this site. It is one of the best sites I have seen for any water storage project in New Zealand. A large natural basin directly adjacent to a large area of flat highly fertile productive land.
6. Based on the analysis provided:
 - a. the Project is expected to offer significant regional economic impact and employment opportunity during both the development period and in relation to the ongoing benefits. At an annual average of \$20.9 million to \$41.6 million of GDP impact, this represents approximately 0.7-1.4 per cent of the Tairāwhiti region's GDP (estimated at \$2.93 billion for the year ending March 2025 according to Infometrics).
 - b. The expected wider benefits offered by the Project would also be of strategic significance to the region, including food security, regional investment, opportunities for Māori landowners, and resilience to climate variability through improved water security.
7. The proposed scale of the reservoir may also indicate national significance, as the Project is expected to create water storage capacity of up to three times the size of the Waimea Dam in Nelson/Tasman.

¹ 8 per cent discount rate for commercial projects.

² 2 per cent discount rate for non-commercial projects.

Minister of Conservation
Minister for Māori Crown Relations
Minister for Māori Development
Minister for Whānau Ora
Associate Minister of Housing



By email: infrastructure.portfolio@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Minister,

Invitation to comment on the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the **Pouarua Water Storage Scheme** under section 17 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

I have considered the application and its alignment with my portfolios as Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti and Minister for Māori Development.

I support the application progressing and I encourage the applicant and the panel to have due regard to:

- relevant Treaty settlement legislation and instruments; and
- any feedback received from relevant Māori groups, as set out in the Treaty settlements and other obligations (Section 18) report prepared by the Ministry for the Environment.

Nāku noa nā,

Hon Tama Potaka
Te Minita mō Te Arawhiti me te Te Minita Whanaketanga Māori
Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti and Minister for Māori Development

Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance
Minister for Economic Growth
Minister for Social Investment



20 July 2026

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

REQ-0035054

Dear Chris

Thank you for the opportunity to comment under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) on the following referral applications:

Out of Scope

- Pouarua Water Storage Scheme Project, FTAA-2605-1237

Out of Scope

I am providing comment in my capacity as Minister for Economic Growth, focusing on whether these applications are likely to deliver significant economic benefits under section 22(2)(a)(iv) of the Act, based on the information provided in their referral applications.

Out of Scope

Out of Scope



Pouarua Water Storage Scheme Project, FTAA-2605-1237

This application is for Wi Pere Trust's proposal to construct a dam to form a reservoir occupying 240 to 300 hectares, on Pouarua Stream in Tairāwhiti, Gisborne. Its projected top water level would be around 60 to 65 metres above sea level, with a reservoir storage capacity of 25 to 38 million cubic metres, and will be adjacent to the Trust's farming property, Tangihanga Station. The build would include associated hydraulic structures, a control room and equipment building, a pump station, a new permanent access road, water distribution system and other related infrastructure.

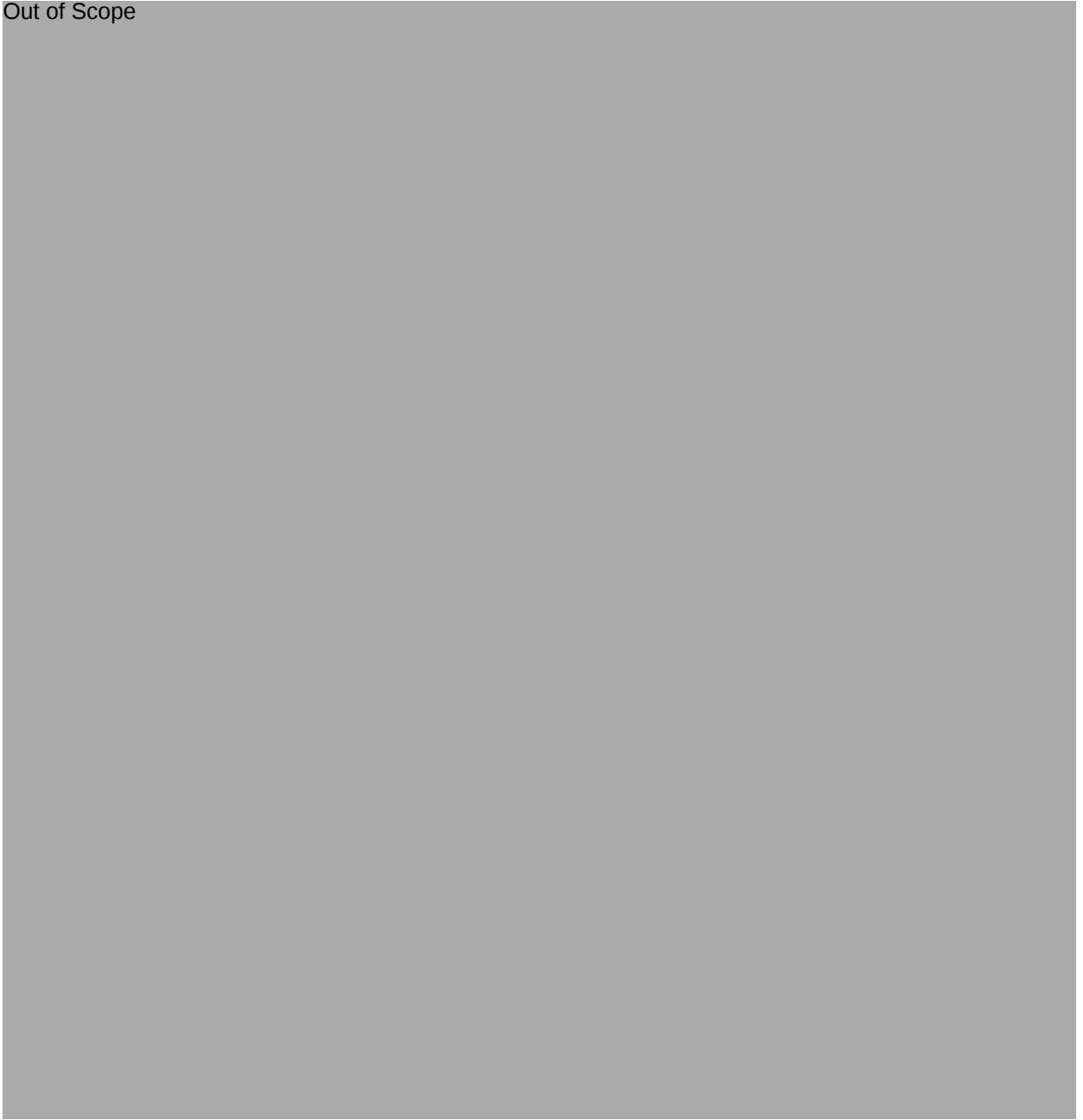
According to the economic impact assessment provided by the applicant, the four-year construction and development of the dam would generate an estimated \$71.8 million GDP to Gisborne's economy, and support around 211 direct FTE jobs, increasing to 271 FTE jobs during its peak development year. Total direct expenditure over this period is estimated at \$203.8 million. Over the longer-term, the new irrigated areas enabled by increased water

supply are estimated to contribute a total net present value of \$628 million to GDP over 30 years.

Wider benefits identified include improved water supply security and increased irrigation capacity in Gisborne's key rural production areas, supporting the agricultural sector and providing reliable water access that could facilitate new industries critical for regional economic growth.

Based on these assessments, the proposal is expected to generate substantial economic benefits in the short to medium term, concentrated in Gisborne during the development phase. While potential longer-term impacts are identified, these have not been fully quantified. Since the proposal involves enabling infrastructure, this could also be considered under section 22(2)(a)(ii) of the Fast-track Approvals Act as the applicant states the project would support existing regionally significant infrastructure.

Out of Scope



Out of Scope



Out of Scope



Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Hon Nicola Willis'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Hon' being more prominent.

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister for Economic Growth

Minister of Climate Change
Minister for Energy
Minister of Local Government
Minister of Revenue



Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
c.bishop@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Chris,

Thank you for the invitation to comment on Wi Pere Trust's Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) referral application, Pouarua Water Scheme (FTAA-2605-1237).

The proposal provides infrastructure to promote improved water supply resilience, supporting both primary production and municipal potable water supplies.

In particular, the Scheme will significantly enhance the resilience of the regional economy. These benefits are enabled by harvesting water during the high flow periods to support more reliable and efficient primary production, particularly horticulture, across the Poverty Bay flats area during low flow and drought periods. These direct benefits are identified at \$628 million to \$1.25 billion across 30 years of operation.

The Scheme will also support increased food security and export growth, improve regional economic resilience, and provide a potential extra option for Gisborne's future municipal water supply network, which was significantly impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my strong support for projects which deliver positive economic and climate outcomes for New Zealand, including the Pouarua Water Scheme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line and a loop.

Hon Simon Watts
Minister of Climate Change

Your written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Project name	Pouarua Water Storage Scheme
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Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

All sections of this form with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name	Department of Conservation		
*First name	Amy		
*Last name	Robinson		
Postal address			
*Contact phone number	s 9(2)(a)	Alternative	
*Email	fast-track@doc.govt.nz s 9(2)(a)		

2. Please provide your comments on this application
See attachment

Note: All comments will be made available to the public and the Applicant when the Ministry for the Environment proactively releases advice provided to the Minister for the Environment.

Director-General of Conservation s17 comments

Project name	Pouarua Water Storage Scheme
Applicant name	Wi Pere Trust
Application number	FTAA-2605-1237
Project summary details	To construct and operate a new water storage scheme located at and adjacent to Tangihanga Station in Tairāwhiti, Gisborne. The purpose of the scheme to meet irrigation and other water demands across the Poverty Bay flats. The application is likely to require wildlife and freshwater fishery approvals.

1. General comment

- 1.1. The Project includes approvals under legislation for which the Department of Conservation (DOC) is the administering agency, being the Wildlife Act 1953 and the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983. As such the application is required to notify DOC of the application in accordance with section 11 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA).
- 1.2. In terms of pre-lodgement engagement, on 17 April 2026 a meeting was held between DOC and the Applicant, who provided an overview of the proposal including a Proof of Concept scoping report. DOC requested additional information on the application which the Applicant provided in part on 22 April 2026. DOC provided a formal pre-lodgement consultation summary to the Applicant on 5 May 2026.
- 1.3. While DOC does not have sufficient information to determine the level of any actual and potential environmental effects, DOC considers that it is likely that with the appropriate design and conditions, adverse effects can be appropriately managed.
- 1.4. DOC is not aware of any reason the Project should not be referred.

2. Minister's decision on referral application

- 2.1. FTAA sections 21 and 22 set out matters to be considered in determining whether a referral application should be accepted.

- 2.2. DOC notes that other agencies are better placed to comment on most matters, including those in section 22. Comments below are therefore targeted to sections where DOC has specific interests or information relevant to the Minister's decision.
- 2.3. For completeness, DOC has considered the criteria for assessing referral applications in section 22 and has not identified anything it considers the Minister should take into account that has not already been acknowledged by the Applicant in its referral application.
- 2.4. Section 21(3) and (4) set out when the Minister may/must decline a referral application. DOC has considered these criteria and comments in the following table:

Section	Criteria	Comments
21(3)(b)	Does the project involve an ineligible activity	The applicant has advised that parts of the subject land is located on Māori land. The owners of the blocks have provided written approval for the scheme. DOC has not identified any other aspect of the Project that would be ineligible.
21(3)(c)	Is there adequate information to inform a decision	DOC considers that there is adequate information to evaluate the Project in terms of a referral decision.
21(4)	Are there any other reasons not specified	DOC has not identified any other reasons why the Project should not be referred.
21(5)(a)	Is the project inconsistent with: • a Treaty settlement; • Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019; • Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011.	Relevant Treaty Settlement Acts are: • Rongowhakaata Claims Settlement Act 2012 • Ngai Tamanuhiri Claims Settlement Act 2012 Both of these Acts are supported by Statutory Acknowledgments. DOC has not identified any inconsistency with any relevant settlement or other obligation.
21(5)(b)	Would it be more appropriate to deal with the proposed approvals under another Act(s)	DOC has not identified any reason why the wildlife approval and freshwater fishery dispensations should not be dealt with under the FTAA.

Section	Criteria	Comments
21(5)(c)	Would the project have significant adverse effects on the environment	Based on DOC's knowledge of the existing environment, species expected to occur on the site and our understanding of the project, we consider that the project is unlikely to have significant adverse environmental effects (subject to appropriate conditions).
21(5)(d)	Does the applicant(s) have a poor compliance history under a specified Act	DOC has not identified any issues with the Applicant's compliance history.
21(5)(g)	Would a substantive application have any competing applications	No competing applications have been identified.

2.5. Section 22 sets out the criteria for the Minister for accepting a referral application. DOC has considered these criteria and comments as follows:

Section	Criteria	Comments
2(1A)	Is there a relevant Government Policy Statement	No Government Policy Statements have been issued under s10A.

22(1)(b)(i)	Would referring the project to the fast-track process facilitate the project, including in a way that is more timely and cost-effective than under normal processes?	Given the Project requires number of different approvals from different agencies, DOC anticipates that the fast-track process would be more time efficient option for the Applicant.
22(2)(a)(ix)	Will this project address significant environmental issues?	The Applicant states that the project allows for increased minimum flows in the Waipaoa River, whereby supporting environmental values.
22(2)(a)(x)	Is the project consistent with local or regional planning document, including spatial strategies?	The Applicant states that the project is consistent with the following local and regional planning documents: • Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (being the Unitary Plan for Gisborne) • Te Aitanga a Mahaki Iwi Environmental Inventory • Nga Ariki Kaiputahi Hapu/Iwi Management Plan
22(b)	Any other matters the Minister may consider as relevant?	• The Applicant has determined a wildlife approval is required for the potential disturbance and incidental handling of lizards and, subject to further ecological survey work. Additionally, it identifies that a wildlife approval may be required in relation to birds and bats. • Freshwater fisheries approvals are required for damming and diversion, structure and disturbance, and trapping and transferring fish. • Assessments should be undertaken to confirm fauna presence and mitigation needs, including relocation, in preparing the potential substantive application.

3. Other considerations

- 3.1. Given the lack of specific detail in the referral application, DOC considers it would be highly beneficial for the Applicant to engage further with DOC as it relates to any conservation approvals (as well as conservation matters subject to RMA consideration) prior to making any substantive application. Benefits include ensuring information necessary to support

decision-making with respect to conservation approvals is included; supporting the management of any actual and potential adverse effects on the environment; and early identification and resolution of any issues.

4. Matters for the Minister to specify (s27)

4.1 None identified.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Kirk'.

Linda Kirk

Fast Track Applications Manager

Acting pursuant to delegated authority on behalf of the Director-General of Conservation.

Date: 15 July 2026

Note: A copy of the Instrument of Delegation may be inspected at the Director-General's office at Conservation House Whare Kaupapa Atawhai, 18/32 Manners Street, Wellington 6011



Comments on referral application under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Pouarua Water Storage Scheme, FTAA-2605-1237

Contact Details	
Organisation Name	Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT)
Contact person	HNZPT Fast-track Team
Contact Number	(04) 470 8053
Email	fasttrack@heritage.org.nz

General Comments

1. Wi Pere Trust (Applicant) has lodged an application for referral of the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme project (project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the FTA Act).
2. In accordance with section 17(1)(c) of the FTA Act, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) has been invited to comment on the referral application as the administering agency for the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.
3. HNZPT has been provided application documents that are relevant to the archaeological authority application. These have been assessed and HNZPT comments as follows:

Consultation and Engagement

4. HNZPT had a Teams Meeting with the Applicant's agent (Mitchell Daysh) and applicant's archaeologist (Clough and Associates) on 14 April 2026 to discuss the proposal. We asked that the archaeological assessment include the proposed alignment of the water distribution network.

Archaeological Authority Application

5. The Applicant has provided a desk-based archaeological assessment that identifies the need for a field survey that includes the water distribution network. The desk-based assessment identifies that the proposed works may modify or destroy recorded and unrecorded archaeological sites, but a full survey is required to determine this.
6. HNZPT notes that Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Ngā Ariki Kaipūtahi, Te Whānau a Kai and Rongowhakaata have been consulted with.
7. HNPZT notes that no Cultural Impact Assessment has been provided with this application.

Effects on Archaeological Values

8. There is not enough information to determine the effects on archaeological values. An archaeological assessment is required that includes a field survey by a suitably qualified archaeologist who is familiar with the landscape.



9. This has been discussed with the Applicant.

Conclusion

10. If the project is referred, HNZPT anticipates further engagement with the Applicant to ensure all relevant documentation is provided with a substantive application, including:

- A fulsome archaeological assessment based on a field survey;
- Appropriate draft archaeological management plan;
- Evidence of on-going consultation with tangata whenua; and
- Appropriate draft conditions.

Invitation to provide written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

You have been invited to provide written comments to the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) on an application to refer under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track process.

Please upload comments directly via the portal by completing this template.

Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Written comments must be received by MfE, on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure, no later than the due date.

Important information

Your personal information will be held by MfE and be used in relation to the project application and process. You have the right to access and correct personal information held by MfE.

A copy of your comments, including all personal information, will be provided to the Minister and the applicant.

If you are a corporate entity making comments on this application, your full contact details will be publicly available.

For individuals, your name will be publicly available, but your contact details (phone number, address, and email) will not be publicly available.

A copy of your comments will also be published on the Fast-track website. If you believe any of the information you have provided is confidential or sensitive and should be withheld from publication, please highlight the information concerned and provide an explanation to support your request for withholding it. Your comment and explanation will be decided by the Ministry on whether to withhold the information from publication.

Please do not use copyright material without the permission of the copyright holder.

All information held by MfE is subject to the Official Information Act 1982.

More information on the fast-track approvals process and providing comments can be found at [Process overview](#) | [Fast-track website](#)

Your written comments on a project under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Project name	Pouarua Water Storage Scheme
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Before the due date, for assistance on how to respond or about this template or with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

All sections of this form with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

1. Contact Details

Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.

Organisation name (if relevant)	NZ Transport Agency		
*First name	Nicola		
*Last name	Foran		
Postal address			
*Contact phone number	s 9(2)(a)	Alternative	
*Email	environmentalplanning@nzta.govt.nz		

2. Please provide your comments on this application

NZTA thanks the Minister for the opportunity to comments on the referral of this application into the Fast-track approvals process.

NZTA has had pre-application engagement with the applicant regarding this project in May 2026. This consisted of a discussion with the applicant's planning consultant and transport consultant, a NZTA representative and the NZTA Regional Asset Manager. Following this engagement, NZTA did not have any significant concerns with the proposal, and it was noted that NZTA would need to see the substantive application to be able to determine the actual impacts on the state highway network and that transport related matters would be dealt with at this stage.

As part of the substantive application, NZTA would expect to see an Integrated Transport Assessment, including, construction traffic volumes, haulage routes, access arrangements, state highway corridor occupation, and temporary traffic management requirements.

Therefore, based on the information provided, NZTA has no concerns with this project, the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme being referred into the Fact-track approvals process. NZTA would welcome the opportunity to provide comments on any substantive application in due course.

Note: All comments will be made available to the public and the applicant when the Ministry for the Environment proactively releases advice provided to the Minister for the Environment.

Managers signoff

Insert Fast-track logo

Date 14 July 2026

07 July 2026

Fast Track Team
Environmental Protection Authority
contact@fasttrack.govt.nz

Tēnā koutou,

Feedback on Pouarua Water Storage Scheme Referral

The Māori Trustee thanks the panel for the invitation to comment on the above application by Wi Pere Trust (**Wi Pere**) for the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTAA**).

The Māori Trustee comments in her capacity as the Responsible Trustee of Repongaere 4H3 a Māori freehold land block within the project area.

Background on the Māori Trustee

The Māori Trustee administers, as trustee or agent, around 78,000 hectares of Māori freehold land on behalf of approximately 100,000 individual Māori landowners. Te Tumu Paeroa is the organisation that supports the Māori Trustee to carry out her functions, roles and responsibilities. Additional information can be found on Te Tumu Paeroa's website, www.tetumupaeroa.co.nz.

Position

As Responsible Trustee of Repongaere 4H3 trust, the Māori Trustee agrees to the Pouarua Water Storage project applying for referral under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024. However, at this stage, the Māori Trustee does not have sufficient information to determine whether it would be in the best interests of the 141 beneficial owners for the project to proceed on Repongaere 4H3. Accordingly, the Māori Trustee looks forward to reviewing the detailed plans, reports and proposed consent conditions with the substantive application in due course.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact us on 0800 WHENUA (0800 943 682), or +64 4 474 4600, or email at resourcemanagement@tetumupaeroa.co.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Charlotte Severne
Māori Trustee