

1 Invited parties: Minister for the Environment

Table 1.1: Minister for the Environment comment received 22/09/25 summary and applicant response

Response prepared by the Planners and Applicant.

Response No.	Comment summary	Applicant response
1.1.1.	As the Minister for the Environment, I have statutory functions and responsibilities under the Resource Management Act, the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (EEZ), the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 as well as the Environment Act 1986. I consider s6 of the RMA and national direction including the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (NPS-IB) are of relevance to the proposed application. Having reviewed the substantive application, including the record of correspondence between the applicant and the local authorities, you may wish to consider the following: • The proposed conditions included in Part H address the monitoring and annual reporting requirements associated with long-term reporting on planting areas and pest and weed control. None of the proposed conditions associated with long-term monitoring extend beyond 30 years, which is not aligned with the consent timeframe sought of 50-years for the operation of the expanded quarry. Acknowledging the panel is only required to take into account Part 2 of the RMA and national direction such as the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity¹, I request that you consider revising the conditions as proposed by the applicant to align the timeframes for the quarrying activity and the biodiversity offsetting (e.g. 50 years) to better reflect the anticipated duration the adverse effects are expected to occur.	The National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity has an overarching objective of maintaining indigenous biodiversity so that there is at least no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity across New Zealand. The ecological offset package proposed for Sutton Block has been designed to achieve a net gain in biodiversity values within 30 years from commencement of Stage 1 (construction works). This achieves a biodiversity outcome that goes above and beyond the objective of the NPS-IB, which only seeks maintenance of indigenous biodiversity. The timing and implementation of the Sutton Block offset package is designed to achieve net gain within the lifetime of the overall consent, being 30 years. The package is substantial, and includes: • Approximately 57.32 hectares of revegetation; • 108 hectares of enhanced forest management through sustained weed and pest control; • 3,341 metres of stream enhancement; and • 4.04 hectares of wetland restoration. These restored and enhanced areas are to be legally protected in perpetuity by way of conservation covenants (see proposed Conditions 99-100). The conservation covenants will ensure the protection of the offset package beyond the life of the Sutton Block quarry. The active management and monitoring regime has been designed around a 25–30 year period – this is consistent with the timeframe required to establish mature, self-sustaining ecosystems and pest eradication. However, the enduring benefits of the restoration and protection will remain well beyond that initial period of active intervention. The consent conditions have been carefully structured to ensure that biodiversity outcomes are both measurable and enforceable: • Conditions 105–113 require up to 30 years of monitoring and adaptive management for pioneer planting, with scheduled reviews at Years 5, 7, 10, 15, 20, and 30. Contingency measures are explicitly included if performance targets are not met. • Conditions 114–117 address pest and weed control comprehensively, requiring baseline assessment and ongoing works over a period of 25 years, with reporting at key milestones. The permanence of legal protection mechanisms means that ecological gains will endure beyond the active monitoring term, providing ongoing benefits throughout and beyond the 50-year consent period.

¹ Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 Schedule 5 cl.17. Criteria and other matters for assessment of consent application