
Attention: Expert Consenting Panel - Ashbourne

CC: Steph Wilson, Fraser McNutt, Caleb Pearson

Date: 18/11/2025

From: Chad Croft

RE: **S53 Response DOC**

1. This memo addresses ecological comments made pursuant to Schedule 32 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 ("FTAA") regarding the Ashbourne Development ("the Project").
2. I have reviewed the comments from Department of Conservation provided to the Panel in respect of the Project, and I am grateful to all those who have taken the time to comment, particularly in light of the timeframes available under the FTAA.
3. I am pleased to be able to respond in a constructive manner to the comments that have been provided and will continue to work with interested parties as the Project progresses.
4. Specifically, the comments provided by DOC relate to amendments to the ecological management plan and associated proposed consent conditions.
5. In general I agree with the Department of Conservations proposed amendments and have updated the Ecological Management Plan (EMP) accordingly (Attachment 1).
6. Changes made to the EMP can be found in the following sections:
 - Bird Management Plan
 - Section 3.3.1 and 3.4
 - Bat Management Plan
 - Section 4.2, and 4.3.2 – 4.3.4
 - Lizard Management Plan
 - Section 5 - Complete replacement with updated LMP consistent with LMP version prepared and submitted for Wildlife Act Authority.
7. There were a few proposed amendments to the EMP which were not incorporated as they were deemed unnecessary. These are identified and explained below.
8. Bird Management Para 4.9 of DOC comments on the Ashbourne Application Document. It was recommended that the setback distance for a located active bird nest be increased from 20m to 50m. I have left this at 20m as the habitat structure available for both arboreal and ground nesting birds is such that there will be high visibility of identified active nests and the setback perimeter markings. In addition, the

species using the open area habitat within this site (active farm) are presumed to be well adapted to nesting with a certain disturbance regime. I think it is important to note that there is no research in NZ that I am aware of that has tested specific setback distances and bird response. 20m is a common setback distance used in resource consenting.

9. Bird Management Para 4.11 of DOC comments. It was recommended a pre-works survey and report be compiled for certification by the Consent Authority. I have happily amended the Bird Management Plan to include the pre-works survey report preparation and submission to Council; however, I don't think certification of this report is necessary. It will be a completion report submitted after the survey and therefore it is not clear to me what is actually being certified that would be of value after the fact.
10. Several recommendations have been made to amend the proposed consent conditions. In my opinion the recommendations seem reasonable and acceptable with the exception of the recommended new condition for bird collision monitoring under the regional consent. Para 4.3 and 4.31 of DOC comments. While DOC acknowledges the risk of bird collision at this site is likely low the recommended survey requirements don't seem to be commensurate with this risk. In my opinion a reasonable monitoring programme for bird collision could include monthly surveys during construction and 3 monthly surveys during the first 2 years of full operation. In my opinion there is not a need for a robust carcass monitoring method requiring a Wildlife Act Authority as time stamped and georeferenced photos of any bird carcasses would seem more practical for documenting species and number of carcasses found. Annual reporting of monitoring outcomes seems reasonable.