

Claire Hunter
Mitchell Daysh Limited

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Dear Claire

Request for further information on application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

The Minister for Infrastructure has received your application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the Fast-track approvals process.

Under section 17(1) of the Act, the Minister invited comments on the application from the Minister for the Environment and other relevant portfolio Ministers, relevant administering agencies, relevant local authorities, and relevant Māori groups.

Through considering invited comments and further information requested, the Minister can gain a good understanding of the project to inform his decision-making guided by criteria set out in section 22 of the Act.

Considering comments received, under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 20 of the Act, I am writing to request the following further information:

1. The application proposes new consents to enable the minimum level of Lake Hāwea to be lowered to 333 masl at 4% ERC and 330 masl at 8% ERC during low storage contingency events, to be used solely during emergency or crisis situations regarding electricity supply. Please confirm if accessing this additional contingent storage in such situations (as defined by Transpower) could occur under the current consent conditions including powers available under section 330 of the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA).
2. In your letter to the Ministry for the Environment dated 10 July 2025, it is stated that the project could not be enabled by seeking variations under section 127 of the RMA. Please make clear why Contact Energy is seeking a variation under the Act to remove reference to the minimum lake levels and return period in current consent Condition 9, rather than lodging an application under the Act for a new resource consent to dam Lake Hāwea in its entirety.
3. The intent of the project to operate lower lake levels poses a risk to the functioning of the Hāwea aquifer - the primary source for domestic and town water supply (including the

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supply of clean drinking water), irrigation and for sustaining regionally significant wetlands. Should the project be referred, please confirm how Contact Energy intends to monitor and, if necessary, mitigate these risks.

4. Please provide further information (including metrics) identifying and quantifying economic benefits the project will deliver and over what timeframe, both in the regional and national context.

If you wish to provide the information requested, you must respond within 10 working days of the date of this request by email to: referral@fasttrack.govt.nz. The Minister is not required to consider information provided outside this time frame.

Before the due date, please email any queries about this letter to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the Application Lead – Helen Willis. For assistance with the application portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'I' followed by a horizontal stroke that tapers to the right.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations