

# Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

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## MINUTE 5 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Landscape Expert Conferencing Session  
Southland Wind Farm [FTAA-2508-1095]

21 January 2026

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[1] Having reviewed the applicant's response to the landscape-related comments, the Panel has identified several outstanding matters that they would like the applicant's and Southland District Council's landscape experts to address in a focused online expert conferencing session. The session is to include the following experts:

- a. Braddyn Thomas Coombs
- b. Shannon Bray
- c. Rhys Girvan

[2] The landscape expert conferencing session will be facilitated by Panel members Rob van Voorthuysen and Bridget Gilbert. A preferred date for the conferencing is Wednesday 28 January 2026, as this would provide sufficient time for the conferencing statement to be finalised before Bridget Gilbert is on leave for two weeks (from Friday 30 January).

[3] An alternative date of Monday 26th is suggested, if the required landscape experts are unable to accommodate Wednesday 28 January 2026.

## Matters to be addressed

### [4] Natural Character Values and Effects

- a. A succinct description and evaluation of the existing experiential dimension of natural character values corresponding to the Jedburgh Plateau part of the site.
- b. An assessment of the effects of the development on the identified experiential values of the Jedburgh Plateau.
- c. Confirmation of conclusions on the effects of the development on overall natural character values of the Jedburgh Plateau, taking into consideration the findings of item (b) above.

### [5] Associative Landscape Values

- a. We note Mr Coombs' acknowledgement of the existing landmark qualities of the scarp to the local community at para 95(g) of his evidence in chief. We also note the repeated reference to this aspect of landscape values in the comments received from the West Catlins Preservation Society and some of the local landowners. Such references have been described in terms of the role of Slopedown as a 'scenic landmark' that contributes appreciably to their sense of place, identity and connection to the land.
- b. We understand Te Tangi a te Manu (TTatM) encourages consideration of these sorts of associative landscape values under terminology such as 'shared and recognised values', 'sense of place' and 'sense of identity' (TTatM, paragraphs 4.23 and 4.29).
- c. With these observations in mind, the experts are requested to provide a succinct evaluation of the effects of the development on this dimension of associative landscape values, with clear reasoning for the conclusions reached.

[6] Evaluation of visual amenity effects for private residential audiences

- a. Confirmation of the evidential basis for the consideration of visual amenity effects in relation to private properties, including:
  - (i) which (if any) of the properties were visited by the expert; and
  - (ii) whether the visual modelling prepared by Paul Botha was relied on, and if so, the technical methodology applying to the Botha modelling work.

[7] SDC Proposed Landscape and Natural Character Management Plan condition (LNCMP)

- a. The Panel understands that Messrs Coombs and Bray do not consider that such a condition is required as many of the matters raised in the LNCMP condition are addressed in other proposed management plan conditions.
- b. We also understand that Mr Coombs is of the view that some of the other proposed management plan conditions could be modified to better address some of the matters raised by Mr Girvan.
- c. As a starting point for discussion at the expert conferencing, Messrs Coombs and Bray are to prepare a table setting out the various matters raised in the LNCMP condition and where those matters are addressed in other management plan conditions. Messrs Coombs and Bray are to clearly and succinctly identify any recommended amendments to the other management plan conditions that they consider may be required to better address the matter raised in the LNCMP.

[8] Effects assessment methodology

- a. Mr Girvan is also asked to confirm that he has undertaken his effects assessment in the same manner as he would for a standard RMA assessment.

### Expert Conferencing Preparation

[9] To make most efficient use of the expert conferencing session, the Panel requests that the experts thoroughly prepare for the session and circulate a working draft of their written responses prior to the conferencing session on a without prejudice basis to the session attendees and facilitators only, so the conferencing can focus on points of difference.

### Candidate ONF mapping

[10] The Panel notes that there is a difference in expert opinion, with respect to the extent of the site and immediate area that qualifies as a 'candidate ONF'. We understand this to, at least in part, underpin Mr Girvan's recommendation of a Landscape and Natural Character Landscape Management Plan condition.

[11] For use at the conferencing session, the experts are requested to prepare a single legible graphic on a scaled aerial photograph base with contours, that shows the following:

- a. The site boundary.
- b. The ecological values mapping prepared by Wildlands.
- c. The turbine locations, associated hardstand areas (but not the full construction footprint) and roading layout.
- d. The candidate ONF boundary as preferred by each expert.

[12] The experts are encouraged to consider whether it may be helpful to provide this graphic at two scales, to assist the Panel's understanding of their opinion:

- a. Version 1: Entire site and its margins.
- b. Version 2: Jedburgh Plateau.

[13] If you require any further information about this, please contact the EPA's Application Lead, Keely Paler, at: [info@fasttrack.govt.nz](mailto:info@fasttrack.govt.nz).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Gordon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ian Gordon

Expert Panel Chair of the Southland Wind Farm Panel.