

6 October 2026

Kate Barry-Piceno
Expert Panel Chair

By email: substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Dear Kate

Fast-track Approvals Act substantive application – Ōhoka Residential Subdivision project

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Carter Group Limited's substantive application under the *Fast-track Approvals Act 2024* (FTAA 2024) for the Ōhoka Residential Subdivision project. This application was transferred to me by the Minister for the South Island to avoid any perception of conflicts of interest.

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.

Carter Group Limited has applied with the Environmental Protection Authority for fast-track approval to develop the Ōhoka Residential Subdivision project on 154 hectares of rural-zoned land adjoining the Ōhoka settlement in the Waimakariri District.

The proposal includes the subdivision of land and the development of approximately 850 residential dwellings, a retirement village with 250 units, a commercial or mixed-use centre, and a polo field. It will also vest land for roading, reserves, and utility purposes.

The development aims to increase housing supply, contribute to a well-functioning urban environment, drive regional economic growth, create employment opportunities, and support broader development objectives in the Canterbury Region. This aligns with the Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024 which seeks to unlock access to greenfield land for housing development and to support greater intensification.

Carter Group Limited provided an economic assessment report, prepared by M.E. Consulting, to support its application for the Ōhoka Residential Subdivision project. It noted:

- a. The development of residential dwellings will impact the housing market in the Greater Christchurch Urban Environment, where housing demand is growing rapidly, and work to reduce market friction and moderate house price inflation.
- b. The construction phase is projected to directly contribute \$80 million a year and support approximately 200 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs a year in the construction sector over the 10-year build period.
- c. The Project is expected to deliver \$400 million in regional value added and nearly 3,700 years of employment (when accounting for flow-on effects) over the full development period.

- d. The commercial centre is projected to generate \$65 million in annual turnover once operational, contributing \$24 million in regional value added and supporting employment equivalent to 462 jobs annually.
- e. The project would increase Waimakariri District's medium-term urban residential capacity by approximately 18.7 percent, representing a substantial addition to the district's ability to accommodate growth and address housing needs.
- f. The project would act to ease housing affordability in the district where median house prices have increased by 20 percent between September 2021 and September 2025 (far outpacing the national average increase of 5.8 per cent for the same period).

The Ōhoka Residential Subdivision project is expected to support a sustainable and well-functioning urban environment that enhances local access to convenient goods and services and supports the creation of a more self-sufficient community. The commercial centre is expected to deliver wider benefits, including local employment opportunities and the ability to service a portion of household needs for future residents of the development and nearby existing communities who currently rely on more distant centres.

I have considered the information provided, including the economic assessment report from M.E. Consulting. It is clear from that analysis the project shows alignment with priorities of the South Island portfolio, and will deliver regional economic benefits including job creation, regional investment, and increased housing capacity. From a South Island portfolio perspective, further economic analysis is not required at this stage to demonstrate those potential benefits.

The application has clear implications for regional economic development, and commentary from the Infrastructure and Transport portfolios may also be relevant in assessing the strategic importance of the project.

Yours sincerely



Nic Blakeley
Secretary for Economic Growth and
Chief Executive of the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
Te Tumu Whakarae mō Hīkina Whakatutuki