

2020-B-07309

Barbara McKerrow  
Chief Executive  
Wellington City Council  
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Barbara McKerrow

**COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 – Adaptation of the Executive Wing of Parliament – Comments sought**

The Minister for the Environment has received an application to refer the above project to an expert consenting panel for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (the Act). The proposed project is located within the Wellington City area.

The project is described as follows, and a copy of the application is attached:

**Adaptation of the Executive Wing of Parliament**

The project aims to adapt the Executive Wing of Parliament by:

- demolishing/deconstructing the existing Press Gallery (part of an existing heritage building and earthquake prone building)
- constructing a building to accommodate new Ministerial suites.

Under delegated authority from the Minister for the Environment, I invite you to provide written comments on the proposed project pursuant to section 21(2) of the Act (a template is attached for this purpose). Comment is sought on the specific matters outlined in the table on the following page, and any further information you consider relevant to the Minister for the Environment's decision on whether to refer the project to an expert consenting panel. If it is more efficient to discuss this application, please contact me or my team at [fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz) and we will make ourselves available for a discussion with you.

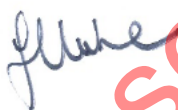
**Specific questions on the application**

1. Are there any reasons that you consider it more appropriate for the project, or part of the project, to proceed through existing Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) consenting processes rather than the processes in the Act?
2. What assessments/consents are typically required for a proposal of this nature?
3. Do you consider that if consent applications for this project were lodged with the Wellington City Council, these would be limited or publicly notified? This information will help the Ministry understand whether the project would be likely to progress faster under the fast-track process compared to the standard RMA process.
4. Does the applicant, or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your city?

Also note that if the Minister for the Environment decides to refer the project to a panel, you will have the opportunity to nominate a local authority representative (who could be a councillor or independent hearings commissioner) to sit on a panel and determine the application. Applicants will provide a detailed assessment of environmental effects and information about cultural impacts at the next stage and you will have the opportunity to provide further comments to a panel. The Ministry for the Environment has prepared guidance on local authority involvement with fast-track consenting projects which you can access on the Ministry for the Environment website.

Please provide your comments via return email within 10 working days so that the Minister for the Environment can take your comments into consideration when deciding on the application.

Yours sincerely



Sara Clarke  
Manager, Fast-Track Consenting Team

Enclosures:

- A. Application to refer the Adaptation of the Executive Wing of Parliament project to an expert consenting panel including supporting information
- B. Response template for written comments

cc: Halley Wiseman, Consents Manager, Wellington City Council,  
s 9(2)(a)