

2021-B-07586

14 April 2021

Arnold Maunsell
Secretary
Taiamai ki te Marangai Takiwa
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Arnold Maunsell

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 – Otawere Water Storage Reservoir – Comments sought

In the week commencing 19 January 2021, the Minister for the Environment (the Minister) received an application from Te Tai Tokerau Water Trust to refer the Otawere Water Storage Reservoir Project (the Project) to an expert consenting panel (a panel) for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA).

The Project is described below, and a copy of the application is attached.

The Project is to construct and operate a water storage reservoir and associated dams in the upper catchment of an unnamed tributary of the Waitangi River, Northland. The reservoir will be able to store approximately four million cubic metres of water that will be used for horticultural purposes and municipal water supply.

The Project site is located off Te Ahu Ahu Road, Waimate North, Northland.

The Project will involve activities such as:

- a. vegetation clearance, earthworks (including bulk earthworks) and land disturbance, including within a significant wetland, a significant wetland setback and a Riparian Management Zone
- b. construction of a main dam approximately 16 metres high on an unnamed tributary of the Waitangi River
- c. construction of a saddle dam approximately 10 metres high
- d. construction of reservoir embankment walls
- e. construction of primary and auxiliary spillways
- f. installation of culvert/s, a temporary dam and other structures necessary for the control and diversion of water during construction of permanent dams
- g. reclamation, temporary diversion, disturbance, deposition of material and other associated works, in the beds of an unnamed tributary of the Waitangi River and other stream reaches
- h. drilling of bores, and taking, diversion and discharge of groundwater and stormwater to land, surface water and groundwater

- i. damming, diversion and taking of water from catchment inflows above the dams and storage of this water in a reservoir formed behind the dams
- j. inundation of approximately 56 hectares of land by a reservoir, including approximately 5 hectares of a significant wetland
- k. taking stored water from the reservoir for horticultural use and municipal water supply.

The applicant is seeking consents for land use, water take, damming and diverting rivers, disturbing and depositing material on riverbeds, discharging water and contaminants to land, surface and groundwater, and taking stored water for horticultural and municipal use, under the Far North District Plan, the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland, the Operative Regional Water and Soil Plan for Northland and the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (NES-FW) to be determined for the Project through the fast-track process.

You have been identified as a party who may have an interest in the Project because of your involvement on the Project Advisory Group and Cultural Impact Assessment team. On behalf of the Minister, and pursuant to section 21(3) of the FTCA, I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. A template is attached for this purpose.

Please provide your comments via return email within 10 working days to ensure that the Minister will take your comments into consideration when deciding on the referral application. Note that the Minister is not required to consider any comments provided after this time.

If the Minister decides to refer the Project to a panel, the applicant will provide a detailed assessment of environmental effects with any resource consent applications that they lodge with the panel.

If you would like more information about the fast-track consenting process, or to discuss this application, please contact the FTC team at fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Perrett
Acting Manager, Fast-Track Consenting Team

Enclosures:

- A. Application to refer the Otawere Water Storage Reservoir Project to an expert consenting panel including supporting information
- B. Response template for written comments