

11 June 2021

Environment Protection Authority
Private Bag 63002
Wellington

Attention: Elliott Thornton / Alexander Erceg

By email: Elliott.Thornton@epa.govt.nz; Alexander.Erceg@epa.govt.nz

Dear Elliott and Alexander

Response to Request for Information #1 dated 3 June 2021 - LP04 Papakura to Pukekōhe Rail Electrification under COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020

Request for Information

The EPA is seeking the following information:

The ecological effects assessment identifies certain mitigation measures to address potential adverse effects on ecology. Section 4.2 item 6 identifies that an ecological offset may need to be considered once the aggregate stream length disturbed / removed or modified is known. Please provide detail of;

- a. any potential stream disturbance/removal or modification (noting that the panel's understanding is that the application does not seek consent, nor anticipate, works within a stream bed);
- b. the range of likely ecological offsets that might be deployed; and
- c. how this factor is addressed in the proposed conditions of consent.

Response

Section 4.2, item 6 of the Ecological Effects Assessment identifies that an ecological off set may need to be considered once the aggregate stream length disturbed / removed or modified is known. This assessment was prepared in the context of the Papakura to Pukekōhe Rail Electrification Project as a whole. KiwiRail subsequently lodged an application with the EPA for the first package of consents required for the project ("**Application 1**"). We confirm the panel's understanding that Application 1 does not seek consent for, nor anticipate, works within a stream bed. Any stream works will be applied for as part of a separate consent application, and the ecologist's comment was noted in anticipation of this later package of culvert works.

Accordingly, Section 4.2, item 6 of the Ecological Effects Assessment is not relevant to Application 1 before the panel. No stream length will be disturbed, removed or modified as part of the works for which consent is being sought as part of Application 1 and therefore no ecological offsets are proposed as part of Application 1 for stream works.



For completeness, we note that Application 1 does seek consent for vegetation removal from the riparian areas of several streams. However, as set out above there are no works proposed within any streams themselves.

The existing vegetation within the margins of the affected streams is of nominal visual value, with the majority of vegetation along the NIMT (including riparian areas/margins) being exotic species, with the most common species tree privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*), Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), pampas (*Cortaderia selloana*), woolly nightshade (*Solanum mauritianum*) and gorse (*Ulex spp.*). KiwiRail has proposed draft conditions for these works including:

- Requiring a 1 m wide strip of riparian vegetation to be retained at the streambank edge to act as a filter for any runoff during works (proposed condition 33).
- Requiring KiwiRail to prepare a Riparian Vegetation Clearance Plan (RVCP) for certification by the Council (proposed conditions 31 and 32), which shall include:
 - Methods to prevent sedimentation into streams and wetlands;
 - Methods to provide interim shading for streams until the Main Works are undertaken;
 - Methods to delineate wetlands / stream buffer extents with fencing / bunting prior to clearance;
 - A list of the methods for clearance, ensuring large machinery is restricted adjacent to streams and wetlands to prevent tracking in soft soils;
 - Details regarding replacement plantings including:
 - the location and densities of plantings that are in accordance with KiwiRail's guidance document "Vegetation Standards for Off Track Zones" (Appendix C);
 - the source of plantings, with preference for eco-sourced/whakapapa plants;
 - The expected period of time between vegetation clearance, site works and remedial planting; and
 - Links to measures set out in the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.

We also note that the volume of potential vegetation clearance assessed in the application is a worst case scenario and the actual volume required will likely be less once the construction methodology has been finalised.

Yours faithfully,



Pam Butler
Senior RMA Advisor
KiwiRail Holdings Limited