

Submission of **Trelissick Park Group**

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Fast-track Approvals Bill

1. **My/our comments**

- 1.1 The Trelissick Park Group **strongly opposes** the Fast-track Approvals Bill in its current form. **Major infrastructure projects must not prioritise economic imperatives over environmental protection.**
- 1.2 **Trelissick Park** - Lies in the valleys between Ngaio/Crofton Downs and Wadestown.
- 1.3 **Trelissick Park Group** - A local Wellington volunteer group but represents a national commitment of hundreds of such groups to restore biodiversity and protect the environment across New Zealand. We belong to the Wellington Catchments Collective and support its submission on this Bill.
- 1.4 **Importance of the Kaiwharawhara and Korimako catchments** From Zealandia and Ōtari Wilton's Bush in the south to Khandallah in the north, the catchments provide important corridors for native birds and fish through Trelissick Park out to the Wellington Harbour estuary. The catchments are rich in biodiversity and are a key tourist attraction for visitors to the city. Any threat to this environment is seen by the Group as a threat to Wellington's image as a showplace for native ecosystem regeneration.
- 1.5 **Examples of environmental degradation** - Trelissick Park serves as an example of what happens when major infrastructure projects go ahead without environmental protection built into a project. The Park has been significantly degraded since early colonial times by major infrastructure projects:
 - The **Main Trunk line** (now the Johnsonville Line) and **Ngaio Gorge Road** were built along the steep sides of the park (ongoing major landslips).
 - Key Wellington City **sewer lines** traverse the park (leakage and interference during maintenance and upgrades).
 - Wellington City's **stormwater system** sends huge volumes of stormwater onto the fragile hillsides of the park and directly

into the Kaiwharawhara and Korimako Streams (banks and bridges washed away; pollution).

- **Electricity pylons** are sited in the park and carry high voltage power lines across the park (interference during maintenance and upgrades).
- **Leachate** from old landfills in the catchment (pollutes the streams).

These early infrastructure projects have left a legacy of degradation and damage that continues to affect the environment into the future.

1.6 **Examples of sensitive environmental protections** - By comparison, in recent years there have been major infrastructure projects that could also have negatively impacted the Park, but because of meaningful community involvement and consultation have incorporated sensitive environmental protections into their planning. Examples include **Ngaio Gorge Rd slip remediation** and the **Interislander iRex project**. Neither project was delayed because of the inclusion of environmental protections, and the iRex project was fast-tracked!

2. **My/our recommendations**

2.1 We agree that in some cases infrastructure projects need to be fast-tracked, for instance following a natural disaster. However, we want to see strong emphasis in the Bill on **community consultation** for all proposed fast-track projects.

2.2 We are distressed and appalled to see the **checks and balances** afforded in the past by the RMA, being stripped away. One of the key checks and balances that we have come to expect in New Zealand is meaningful community consultation at the planning stages of infrastructure projects, especially those projects that will affect the environment.

2.3 It appears that the processes for approving projects under the proposed Fast Track Approvals Bill can **bypass local voices**, and especially the voices of people wanting to speak for Nature and the natural environment.

2.4 We encourage the Select Committee to **include the Ministers of the Environment and Conservation** in any fast-track legislation to ensure the environment is properly considered in the approvals process.

2.5 We want the Purpose of the Fast Track Approvals Bill to **include the requirement for environmental protection** in addition to improving regional or national economies.

The long-term future of New Zealand's economy is very likely going to depend on us protecting our environment now, not destroying its biodiversity and natural environment for short-term economic gain.

We thank the Select Committee for the opportunity to submit on this Bill.

We wish to be heard in support of our submission.