

Response ID ANON-URZ4-5FRK-D

Submitted to Fast-track approval applications
Submitted on 2024-05-02 19:13:12

Submitter details

Is this application for section 2a or 2b?

2A

1 Submitter name

Individual or organisation name:
Aquila Clean Energy (APAC) Pte Ltd

2 Contact person

Contact person name:
Ryan McCone

3 What is your job title

Job title:
Renewable Energy Consultant (Jacobs New Zealand - Authorised Agent for Aquila Clean Energy)

4 What is your contact email address?

Email:
s 9(2)(a)

5 What is your phone number?

Phone number:
s 9(2)(a)

6 What is your postal address?

Postal address:

2/47 Hereford Steet,
Christchurch 8013
New Zealand

7 Is your address for service different from your postal address?

No

Organisation:

Contact person:

Phone number:

Email address:

Job title:

Please enter your service address:

Section 1: Project location

Site address or location

Add the address or describe the location:

Please refer to the attached file.

File upload:
Section 1 - Site Address or Location.pdf was uploaded

Upload file here:

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Do you have a current copy of the relevant Record(s) of Title?

Yes

upload file:

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Who are the registered legal land owner(s)?

Please write your answer here:

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Detail the nature of the applicant's legal interest (if any) in the land on which the project will occur

Please write your answer here:

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Section 2: Project details

What is the project name?

Please write your answer here:

1. Ruarangi Wind Farm 2. Ratahiwi Wind Farm 3. Kurow Wind Farm

What is the project summary?

Please write your answer here:

1. Ruarangi Wind Farm – A wind farm in the Whangarei District and Northland Region with a maximum capacity of 120MW s 9(2)(b)(ii)

2. Ratahiwi Wind Farm – A wind farm in the Tararua District and Manawatu Region with a maximum capacity of 90MW s 9(2)(b)(ii)

3. Kurow Wind Farm – A wind farm in the Waitaki District and Canterbury Region with a maximum capacity of 130MW s 9(2)(b)(ii)

What are the project details?

Please write your answer here:

1. Ruarangi Wind Farm – A wind farm in the Whangarei District and Northland Region with a maximum capacity of 120MW s 9(2)(b)(ii) with a purpose to provide renewable energy electricity generation from wind power for the Northland Region. Key activities include the construction and operation of the wind farm, including but not limited to earthworks creating specific access tracks, foundations for the erection and placement of turbines and key electrical and transmission infrastructure for grid connection. The wind farm will be operational for a 35-year period in the Northland region.

2. Ratahiwi Wind Farm – A wind farm in the Tararua District and Manawatu Region with a maximum capacity of 90MW s 9(2)(b)(ii) with a purpose to provide renewable energy electricity generation from wind power for the Manawatu Region. Key activities include the construction and operation of the wind farm, including but not limited to earthworks creating specific access tracks, foundations for the erection and placement of turbines and key electrical and transmission infrastructure for grid connection. The wind farm will be operational for a 35-year period in the Manawatu region.

3. Kurow Wind Farm – A wind farm in the Waitaki District and Canterbury Region with a maximum capacity of 130MW s 9(2)(b)(ii) with a purpose to provide renewable energy electricity generation from wind power for the Canterbury Region. Key activities include the construction and operation of the wind farm, including but not limited to earthworks creating specific access tracks, foundations for the erection and placement of turbines and key electrical and transmission infrastructure for grid connection. The wind farm will be operational for a 35-year period in the Canterbury and Otago regions.

Describe the staging of the project, including the nature and timing of the staging

Please write your answer here:

At this stage it is expected that construction for all three wind farm projects will be completed in one sequence. Each project will follow the same construction timeline and will not be constructed in stages. Further information is provided in the construction sequencing timeline section.

What are the details of the regime under which approval is being sought?

Please write your answer here:

1. Ruarangi Wind Farm

- Resource Consent(s) under the Resource Management Act 1991
- Possible requirement for Wildlife Permit(s) under the Wildlife Act 1953
- Possible requirement for Archaeological Authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

2. Ratahiwi Wind Farm

- Resource Consent(s) under the Resource Management Act 1991
- Possible requirement for Wildlife Permit(s) under the Wildlife Act 1953
- Possible requirement for Archaeological Authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

3. Kurow Wind Farm

- Resource Consent(s) under the Resource Management Act 1991
- Possible requirement for Wildlife Permit(s) under the Wildlife Act 1953
- Possible requirement for Archaeological Authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

If you seeking approval under the Resource Management Act, who are the relevant local authorities?

Please write your answer here:

1. Ruarangi Wind Farm – Whangarei District Council and Northland Regional Council

2. Ratahiwi Wind Farm - Tararua District Council and Horizons Regional Council

3. Kurow Wind Farm – Waitaki District Council and Canterbury Regional Council

What applications have you already made for approvals on the same or a similar project?

Please write your answer here:

Across the three wind farm projects, no resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 or other environmental approvals under various other legislation have been applied for. As a next step, meteorological mast resource consent applications will be made to the territorial projects for each project. s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Is approval required for the project by someone other than the applicant?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

1. Approval is required by the legal landowners for each project s 9(2)(b)(ii)

2. Utility scale renewable energy generation projects connecting to the National Grid are required to enter a formal connection process with Transpower New Zealand to secure a place for their generation and ensure that grid connection infrastructure is appropriately planned and considered. Ruarangi, Ratahiwi and Kurow projects grid connection applications have been submitted and accepted with Transpower. Residual grid connection studies will be completed following this mandatory Transpower process. Timing for each project to reach the front of the queue are as follows:

- 1. Ruarangi – September 2025
- 2. Ratahiwi – September 2025
- 3. Kurow – September 2024

If the approval(s) are granted, when do you anticipate construction activities will begin, and be completed?

Please write your answer here:

Please note all projects will run to the same timeline, if processed through the fast-track route.

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Section 3: Consultation

Who are the persons affected by the project?

Please write your answer here:

Please note that locations of affected parties are commercially sensitive.

- 1. Ruarangi Wind Farm

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

[Redacted text block]

2. Ratahiwi Wind Farm

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

[Redacted text block]

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Detail all consultation undertaken with the persons referred to above. Include a statement explaining how engagement has informed the project.

Please write your answer here:

Aquila will lodge resource consents for the three projects listed under the Fast-track Approvals process in Q2 2025. A critical step will be to agree appropriate proposed mitigation between Aquila and key stakeholders, and to integrate this into the Fast-track approvals resource consent application for each site, particularly through carefully curated draft conditions of consent.

Consultation with the landowners involved in the development to date has been extensive and culminated in undertaking a process to secure land and access rights as described earlier in the submission. Aquila representatives from Australia and Singapore have met with landowners and established a working relationship with the landowners and our New Zealand based development team.

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Aquila is committed to a no surprises approach for our stakeholder engagement. Across our energy projects in Australia and New Zealand, our overarching communication and engagement objectives is to build on our social license to operate, develop strong relationships and trust with local stakeholders and to ultimately be a good neighbour.

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Aquila will engage with local workforce suppliers to understand skill shortages and develop opportunities to provide local employment and training opportunities during project delivery.

Our engagement will primarily seek to provide meaningful avenues for Aquila to involve community stakeholders in the development of key aspects of the project and manage, minimise and mitigate any concerns or impacts where possible. Longer-term, Aquila's goal is to generate community understanding, acceptance, and trust for each project. There will be a focus on incorporating the Aquila stakeholder engagement outcomes into the AEE and identifying whether the engagement will result in modifications to the turbine layout and wind farm development, for each project.

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Describe any processes already undertaken under the Public Works Act 1981 in relation to the land or any part of the land on which the project will occur:

Please write your answer here:

No land acquisition under the Public Works Act 1981 is required for any of the projects submitted.

Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

What treaty settlements apply to the geographical location of the project?

Please write your answer here:

1. Ruarangi

- Based on our assessment of Arc GIS files there are no treaty settlements relevant to the project development area, however, Aquila will seek further clarification with mana whenua to confirm this.

2. Ratahiwi

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

3. Kurow

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Are there any Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 principles or provisions that are relevant to the project?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Are there any identified parcels of Māori land within the project area, marae, and identified wāhi tapu?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Based on desktop research from existing GIS data for all sites, there are no parcels of Māori land within the project area, no marae and no identified wāhi tapu. This will be substantiated via ongoing engagement with mana whenua for each project.

Is the project proposed on any land returned under a Treaty settlement or any identified Māori land described in the ineligibility criteria?

No

Has the applicant has secured the relevant landowners' consent?

No

Is the project proposed in any customary marine title area, protected customary rights area, or aquaculture settlement area declared under s 12 of the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 or identified within an individual iwi settlement?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Has there been an assessment of any effects of the activity on the exercise of a protected customary right?

No

If yes, please explain:

Upload your assessment if necessary:

No file uploaded

Section 5: Adverse effects

What are the anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment?

Please describe:

Please refer to attached file.

Upload file:

Section 5 - Adverse Effects.pdf was uploaded

Section 6: National policy statements and national environmental standards

What is the general assessment of the project in relation to any relevant national policy statement (including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement) and national environmental standard?

Please write your answer here:

Please refer to attached file.

File upload:

Section 6 - NES and NPS summary_Optimized.pdf was uploaded

Section 7: Eligibility

Will access to the fast-track process enable the project to be processed in a more timely and cost-efficient way than under normal processes?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The proposed wind farms will unlock renewable energy generation of considerable scale that is both regionally significant and nationally significant. The difficulties of consenting wind developments in New Zealand (under the RMA), particularly over the last decade, are well documented. Unreasonable delays in the processing of consents have taken the best part of a decade, when it only takes a proportion of that time to build. The fast-track process will enable the portfolio to be processed in a consistent, efficient and synchronized manner, creating certainty in the decision-making process for Aquila.

Certainty in timeframes for the decision making for environmental approvals for the portfolio will aid unlocking investment for these three wind farms and provide certainty in the construction timeframes.

What is the impact referring this project will have on the efficient operation of the fast-track process?

Please write your answer here:

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

The option we are presenting for consideration under Schedule 2 Part A of the Fast-track Approvals Bill is submitting the wind portfolio as a package and applying for environmental approvals for all sites concurrently. This will create efficiencies for the fast-track panel and allow 340MW of wind power to be assessed at one time. Tangible benefits for utilising the fast-track process are:

- Presenting sites simultaneously will allow decision makers to gain efficiencies in processing consents while dealing with the development team across multiple sites;
- Enable consistent operational conditions of consent, while bespoke conditions can be curated for the construction of each site and tailoring to the individual environment of each site;
- Aquila can make decisions around procurement and construction timeframes with certainty and gain economies of scale across projects, ensuring faster grid connections.
- Each project application can be assessed separately if a project faces increased uncertainty in the decision-making process.
- Each project remains independently assessed on its merits.

Has the project been identified as a priority project in a:

Central government plan or strategy

Please explain your answer here:

The New Zealand Government has committed to reaching net zero for long-lived gases by 2050, set a target that 50% of total energy consumption will come from renewable sources by 2035, and has an aspirational target of 100% renewable electricity by 2030.

This wind farm portfolio will help achieve all these targets, particularly the aspirational 100% renewable electricity 2030 target. With the portfolio entering the fast-track process it would be set to generate electricity as soon as 2027/2028.

Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

National significant infrastructure

Please explain your answer here:

The installation of 340MW of wind generation power is nationally significant as it will create zero emissions (the lifetime Energy Return on Carbon Emissions (EROc) for New Zealand's wind farms is approximately 56 times better than a combined cycle natural gas power station and 97 times better than a coal fired power station. 340MW of wind power also crucially provides stable electricity generation. The long-term stability of wind generation makes it a good fit with hydroelectric generation, which can experience reduced output during dry periods.

Each project will be creating investment into the Northland, Manawatu-Whanagui and Canterbury/Otago regions, involving a significant contribution to New Zealand's local market in each of the geographies and create substantial local employment and contracting opportunities.

Will the project:

contribute to a well-functioning urban environment

Please explain your answer here:

Over the lifecycle of the wind power projects proposed demand forecasts have identified a pressing need for additional electricity generation to maintain a well-functioning urban environment.

Further growth in electricity seems certain with the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019, and targets implemented to reduce carbon emissions. Growth in demand is expected due to:

- electrification of space heating to displace coal boilers used in school and health care and many other public and private facilities,
- electrification of industrial processes, in particular the processing of milk products,
- uptake of EVs in public and private transport,
- continued population growth due to immigration,
- continued economic growth,
- data centres being constructed due to New Zealand's political stability, internet connectedness, and availability of relatively low-cost renewable generation.

In the long-term, generation growth will be driven by the requirements for decarbonisation driving electrification. Wind power as identified, complements our hydro backbone, and provides a stable electricity generator. Overall, the proposed projects will contribute to a well-functioning urban environment and provide critical supply for the anticipated growth in demand identified.

Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Overall, the direct total economic benefit associated with 340MW of wind capacity will be about 140 FTE's and about \$15.6m in GDP. The key sectors that will benefit from construction phase include contractors, design and consulting, transportation, and logistics, as well as finance and other business services.

Additionally, the indirect economic benefits of the 340MW installed capacity will be just as important for the regions the projects are in, and New Zealand more broadly. 340MW presents a security in electricity supply and it is well known that wind generation complements New Zealand's hydro power backbone. Adding 340MW of wind power presents a stability to power supply that enables industries and urban centres to function on a stable renewable energy generation network, which allows sectors of the economy to function and experience growth with certainty and security of supply of electricity generation.

Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The projects are all occurring on rural land in a primary setting. Importantly, wind power generation projects create renewable electricity by only utilizing ~2% of the existing land, resulting in primary industry activities continuing on the land where wind farm developments are occurring.

Will the project support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Construction phase activities will require a large quantum of primary materials such as quarried materials, aggregate, as well as minerals utilised in concrete production.

Indirectly, the wind farm developments will support the development of natural users for end users of the electricity involved in these industries who rely on a security of supply for their operations.

Will the project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The projects will assist in reducing CO₂ emissions from electricity generation. It has the potential to avoid 882,431 tonnes of CO₂ per year if the equivalent amount of electricity was produced with a coal powered plant or 514,708 tonnes of CO₂ per year if the equivalent amount of electricity was produced with natural gas. The installation of 340MW of wind generation power will support climate change mitigation and assist on the country's journey to 100% renewable energy. 340MW of wind power will support climate change mitigation as it will create zero emissions during operation. The lifetime Energy Return on Carbon Emissions (EROC) for New Zealand's wind farms is approximately 56 times better than a combined cycle natural gas power station and 97 times better than a coal fired power station.

Will the project support adaptation, resilience, and recovery from natural hazards?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Wind power projects when operational do not require any water consumption, nor do they emit CO² during operation. This will have a direct impact on resilience and adaptation by potentially displacing water use and CO² emissions from electricity generation.

Will the project address significant environmental issues?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

These projects directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing a zero emissions renewable source of energy during its operational lifecycle. These projects will also play a pivotal role in mitigating climate change. It will also help decrease other pollution and water consumption that is typically attributed to other energy sources.

Is the project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The operation of the proposed wind farms will promote sustainable management under each of the local and regional planning documents through its contribution to electricity generation capacity from renewable energy generation sources. With appropriately placed turbines the operation of the wind farm will create very few adverse effects. Each of the local and regional planning documents of interest draws on the Central Government strategy to reach 100% renewable energy generation targets and identifies the need for renewable energy resources.

The residual considerations in the local and regional planning documents pertain largely to construction phase activities. Potential adverse effects from the construction phase include noise, traffic and erosion and sediment. Appropriate management and mitigation techniques such as management plans can appropriately manage construction phase impacts.

As such, with appropriately drafted conditions of consent the projects will be consistent with the local and regional planning frameworks, including the policy frameworks contained within.

Anything else?

Please write your answer here:

Given the scale of the projects proposed, and their strong alignment with Central Government Policy and renewable energy generation targets, the fast-track process can be an enabler for these projects. The three projects listed are a strong candidate to be listed under Schedule 2 Part A of the Fast-track Approvals Bill, with resource consents ready to lodge simultaneously in Q2, 2025.

Does the project includes an activity which would make it ineligible?

No

If yes, please explain:

Section 8: Climate change and natural hazards

Will the project be affected by climate change and natural hazards?

Yes

If yes, please explain:

Onshore wind projects in New Zealand are all susceptible to seismic activity. Wind farm developments generally necessitate an elevated topography, which in New Zealand equates with an overlap of seismic activity. Similarly, the elevated topography on which wind farm developments occur can be susceptible to landslides and erosion, both which may increase in frequency with expected climate change.

Appropriate seismic design, Faultline mapping and appropriate seismic risk management all help to appropriately avoid, remedy, and mitigate the risks presented by seismicity.

Furthermore, slope analysis and suitable turbine placement can ensure landslide prone areas are avoided. Detailed design and appropriate geotechnical engineering investigations and mapping can ensure that any residual risks are mitigated.

Section 9: Track record

Please add a summary of all compliance and/or enforcement actions taken against the applicant by any entity with enforcement powers under the Acts referred to in the Bill, and the outcome of those actions.

Please write your answer here:

Aquila Clean Energy APAC have not been subject to any compliance and/or enforcement actions taken against them by any entity with enforcement powers under the Acts referred to in the Bill.

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Declaration

Do you acknowledge your submission will be published on environment.govt.nz if required

Yes

By typing your name in the field below you are electronically signing this application form and certifying the information given in this application is true and correct.

Please write your name here:

Ryan McCone

Important notes