

Meridian Energy Limited

Fast-track Consenting Application – Waiinu Energy Park

Submitter details

1. Is this application for section 2a or 2b?
Meridian Energy Limited ('Meridian') is applying for the listing of Waiinu Energy Park in Schedule 2A.

Section 1: Project location

2. Site address or location
The project site is near Waiinu Beach and Waitootara, South Taranaki and 42km north-west of Whanganui – refer **Figure 1** below:

s 9(2)(a)



s 9(2)(a)

The address of the subject sites are shown in **Appendix 1**.

s 9(2)(a)

- s 9(2)(a)
 - Wind turbines (up to approximately 350MW, 50 turbines)
 - Solar array (maximum 400MW across Site A and B)
 - Internal substation
 - Internal transmission
 - BESS
 - Supporting infrastructure, including access roads, services building and construction facilities.
- s 9(2)(a)
 - Solar array (maximum 400MW across Site A and B)
 - Internal transmission
 - Terminal substation
 - BESS

- Supporting infrastructure, including access roads, services building and construction facilities.

s 9(2)(b)(ii)



s 9(2)(a)

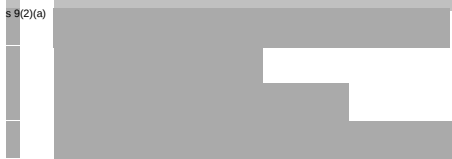


3. Do you have a current copy of the relevant Record(s) of Title?
Please refer to **Appendix 2**.
4. Who are the registered legal land owner(s)?

s 9(2)(a)



s 9(2)(a)



Spreadsheet with all information as per the table in **Appendix 1**.

5. Detail the nature of the applicant's legal interest (if any) in the land on which the project will occur?
Meridian has successfully secured executed Agreements with all eleven landowners mentioned above and pertaining to the land parcels constituting the Project. These

Agreements enable Meridian to undertake all elements of the Project including any access, construction and ongoing operation.

Section 2: Project details

6. What is the project name?

Waiinu Energy Park.

7. What is the project summary?

Waiinu Energy Park is a proposed renewable energy park which includes wind turbines, solar array, battery energy storage system (BESS), transmission and grid connection, access roads and associated supporting project infrastructure.

8. What are the project details?

Please provide details of the proposed project, its purpose, objectives and the activities it involves, noting that Clause 14(2)(b) of the Bill specifies that the application requires only a general level of detail.

The project is one of the largest economic renewable energy development opportunities in New Zealand that Meridian is aware of. The project location is an excellent use of the natural resources in the region and is located near to a part of the national electricity grid with capacity to export the planned generation. Waiinu Energy Park will supply renewable energy to the National Grid for the benefit of New Zealand homes and businesses.

The project site includes two areas of 4,700 ha and 600 ha, to be connected by a transmission corridor. The site will consist of wind turbines, solar arrays, battery energy storage system (BESS), permanent meteorological mast, internal substation, underground cable reticulation, overhead transmission lines, terminal substation, access roads, and supporting site infrastructure including service building and site office. The transmission corridor between Site A and Site B will be approximately 3km to 5km in length and easements will be required for an estimated corridor width of 50m.

Temporary construction infrastructure will include portacom buildings, construction compound and laydown area, water storage, and concrete batching plant.

Construction will involve earthworks for recontouring and trenching of cable trays, wind turbine foundations, solar array mounting structures, BESS, transmission support structures, site infrastructure including a site operations and maintenance building, the widening of access tracks, and associated on-site wastewater treatment system.

The Project is expected to bring significant economic benefits at a local, regional, and national level. It is one of the largest economic renewable energy development opportunities in New Zealand that Meridian is aware of with the capital investment to construct the project being around s 9(2)(b)(ii), based on the maximum generation capacity of the site. Further, due to the scale of the project, significant investment will be required during operations with estimated annual operational costs of s 9(2)(b)(ii) for the lifetime of the project.

The Project will create a substantial number of additional jobs during the construction period, with an estimated 450 to 550 direct full-time equivalent jobs required. It is estimated the indirect employment benefit to the region would be an additional 60 full-time equivalent jobs. The economic benefit from additional employment in the area will continue during operations with up to 20 direct full-time equivalent jobs for the lifetime of the project.

New Zealand is confronted with an unprecedented need to develop new renewable generation to electrify the country and the economy. An estimated 1,250GWh of additional renewable energy will need to be generated each year until 2050. This is equivalent to building a new West Wind farm project every five months until 2050. To put this into perspective, over the past 30 years leading up to 2020, an average of 380GWh of new renewable energy was commissioned

annually. This means that New Zealand will need to ramp up its construction efforts by approximately 300% each year until 2050 to meet these ambitious targets.¹

The scale and size of Waiinu Energy Park will significantly contribute to New Zealand meeting these targets. The Project would contribute massively to the electrification of New Zealand and its economy, generating up to 2,000GWh of electricity per year. This is enough electricity to power the equivalent of 290,000 average New Zealand homes. Therefore, the proposed project will provide significant national and regional benefits, through assisting New Zealand to meet government-stated renewable electricity generation targets.

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

The project will be developed as a single project through effects assessments, consenting, detailed design, construction, and operation.

Construction of the project is planned to proceed in two stages. The purpose is to enable efficient and safe construction of the project. The first stage will include the wind turbines, internal substation, terminal substation, transmission line, and supporting infrastructure. Stage 2 will include the solar array. BESS infrastructure could be built during Stage 1 or Stage 2, or in phases during both stages.

Stage 1:

- Civil works including installation of erosion and sediment controls, site access tracks and other supporting infrastructure.
- Installation of electrical infrastructure including internal reticulation cables, internal substation, terminal substation and transmission line.
- Wind turbine installation and commissioning.
- BESS infrastructure

Stage 2:

- Solar array installation and related supporting infrastructure.
- BESS infrastructure.

The intended timing of construction of the project is outlined further in response to question 14.

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

Meridian anticipates seeking an application under Fast-track Approval Bill via listing in Schedule 2A and the following regimes:

- Resource Management Act 1991
 - Resource consent(s)
- Wildlife Act 1953
 - Authority to do anything otherwise prohibited
- Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014
 - Archaeological Authority

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

- South Taranaki District Council
- Whanganui District Council
- Taranaki Regional Council
- Horizons Regional Council

¹ See Concept Consulting Report Renewable generation development implications of decarbonisation through electrification, NBEA Electrification Implications V.05.0 August 2022

12. What applications have you already made for approvals on the same or a similar project?
Meridian gained a Wildlife Permit from The Department of Conservation to handle lizards for surveying purposes in October 2023.

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

No

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

Milestone Dates:

Activity	Milestone Date
Start of detailed design and procurement	April 2025
Fast-track application	June 2025
Fast-track approval	December 2025
Detailed design and procurement	December 2025 - March 2027
Stage 1 Final Investment Decision (FID)	March 2027
Stage 1 Construction start	March 2027
Stage 1 Operational (First Power)	September 2028
Stage 1 Construction Complete and Full Power	December 2029
Stage 2 FID	December 2029
Stage 2 Construction Start	January 2030
Stage 2 Operational (First Power)	October 2030
Stage 2 Construction Complete and Full Power	June 2032

Section 3: Consultation

15. Who are the persons affected by the project?

Refer to Table 1 in answer to question 16. In addition, the project neighbours and residents of Waitootara and Waiinu Beach will be affected during the construction phase and to a lesser degree during the operational phase. Refer to the response to question 25 which outlines the known and potential adverse effects during the construction and operational phases of the project.

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

Table 1: Consultation with persons affected by the project and consultation outcomes

Persons affected by the project	Consultation undertaken to date	Outcomes (to date)
Relevant local authorities: South Taranaki District Council	Meridian met with South Taranaki District Council and Whanganui District Council planning leads at face-to-face meetings on	Meridian has been in discussion with Te Kaahui o Rauru (TKoR, the post settlement governance entity and mandated Iwi organisation for Ngaa Rauru Kiihahi) since well before engaging

Persons affected by the project	Consultation undertaken to date	Outcomes (to date)
Whanganui District Council Taranaki Regional Council Horizons Regional Council	1st February 2023. The Council planners indicated that a joint council consenting process would likely be led by STDC. Engagement with the local community and mana whenua were discussed as well as the need to address visual, ecology, traffic, noise effects etc. Meridian met with Taranaki and Horizons Regional Councils in April 2024. Regional consenting matters are focused on managing sediment discharges and avoiding wetlands.	with Councils – refer below. Meridian has also commenced detailed ecological assessments and a visual and landscape assessment to inform the placement of turbines, solar arrays and associated infrastructure. As a result of the studies the turbines and solar panels are sited well away from adjoining dwellings, they avoid wetlands and other significant natural areas. Earthworks will also be kept to a minimum with the use of existing farm tracks for construction roads and the placement of structures away from dunes and the coastal environment. Waiinu Energy Park is being designed to avoid natural wetlands and to ensure best practice erosion and sediment controls will be put in place to minimise the discharge of sediment. The expectation is that all regional consenting matters will be able to be addressed without any “show-stoppers” having been identified.
Relevant iwi authorities: Te Kaahui o Rauru (TKoR)	Meridian started engagement with TKoR in relation to the Project in May 2022. Since the initial engagement, there have been several meetings, both online and in person, between Meridian and TKoR on both a project and an executive level.	TKoR have shared their vision and goals for Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi generally and as they relate to renewable energy. Meridian understand TKoR are focused on building capacity and capability within their rangatahi and uri to benefit from opportunities that arise from the development of renewable energy projects within the rohe of Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi. Meridian understands another focus for TKoR is to develop opportunities for skilled jobs in South Taranaki to retain and attract their people back to the area. Many have left to find well paid work in Australia and other parts of New Zealand. TKoR and Meridian are working together to develop a capability building programme. As part of this work a co-design capabilities workshop between TKoR and Meridian is planned for May 2024. Meridian understand TKoR has existing capability in ecology, archaeology, GIS mapping and other areas that are critical to the development of renewable energy projects and Meridian

Persons affected by the project	Consultation undertaken to date	Outcomes (to date)
		are committed to engaging experts within TKoR at the appropriate stage of development. TKoR and Meridian have discussed the proximity of the development to marae and Meridian are committed to continuing engagement through all stages of development with all affected persons. As the engagement and relationship with TKoR progresses, the parties will work toward instatement of a relationship agreement. TKoR reviewed Meridian's Wildlife Permit Application in relation to the Project. The Wildlife Permit was approved in October 2023.
Relevant Treaty settlement entities	N/A	
Protected customary rights groups	N/A	
Customary marine title groups	N/A	
Applicant groups under the Marine and Coastal (Takutai Moana) Act 2011	N/A	
Ngā hapu o Ngāti Porou	N/A	
Any person with a registered interest in land that may need to be acquired under the Public Works Act 1981.	N/A	

17. 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:

No Public Works Act 1981 process has been undertaken - Meridian is not a requiring authority.

Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

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

The wider area that the project site is located within is part of the rohe of Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi. The Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi Claims Settlement Act 2005 and Deed of Settlement with the Crown, do not make references directly applicable to the project site. The wider project setting includes sites and features that are important to Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi including Marae, waterbodies and the coastal environment.

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

No

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

Potentially yes. The NZ Archaeological Association site recording map shows archaeological sites, some of which are wāhi tapu within the project area.² Earthworks and the siting of structures will avoid known wāhi tapu which Meridian will gain knowledge of through engagement with Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi. We will also have Iwi monitors on site during earthworks and will abide by an accidental discovery protocol.

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

No

22. Has the applicant secured the relevant landowners' consent?

N/A refer answer to question 21.

23. 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

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

No

Section 5: Adverse effects

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

The key components of the project are mature and well understood technologies in the New Zealand context. The construction methodologies are well proven. The sites are highly suitable for the proposed activity. Meridian has an excellent track record of successful construction and operation of the types of facilities that are proposed by this project. Accordingly, there is high confidence that the effects will be robustly assessed and managed.

Table 2: Adverse effects arising from the Project

Assessments to support the application	Construction	Operation
Noise	✓	✓
Traffic, transportation and vehicle access	✓	✓

² [NZAA Site Viewer \(eaglegis.co.nz\)](https://eaglegis.co.nz/)

Assessments to support the application	Construction	Operation
Geotechnical	✓	
Earthworks, Erosion and Sediment	✓	
Hazardous Substances storage and use	✓	✓
Contaminated Soil disturbance	✓	
Ecology	✓	✓
Landscape and Visual	✓	✓
Archaeological disturbance	✓	
Glint and Glare		✓
Highly productive land use change	✓	✓
Cultural Impact	✓	✓
Natural hazards - flooding and stormwater	✓	
Radio Interference		✓
Aviation	✓	✓

All the known and anticipated adverse effects of the project are able to be realistically predicted and assessed and effectively managed through design, construction and operation methodologies and consent conditions.

Section 6: National policy statements and national environmental standards

26. 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?

Table 3: national policy statements and national environmental standards Assessment of the project

NPS / NES	Assessment
National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management & National Environmental Standard For Freshwater	A river estuary, dune lakes and wetlands with threatened habitat and fauna is adjacent to the project area. While most of the high value habitat lies outside of the site boundary and is actively avoided, some of the habitat extends into the site. The project works to date have been designed to avoid adverse effects on the freshwater environment and on wetlands.
National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land	A small part of the project which may have solar panels installed is on land classified as Highly Productive (Class 2 soils). The site under solar will be grazed with sheep to maintain the production value of the site and to manage grass fire risk.
National Policy Statement For Indigenous Biodiversity	The Project will limit removal of indigenous biodiversity where possible, and if necessary, compensate with additional planting and habitat restoration on site to result in no net loss of significant indigenous biodiversity habitat.
National Policy Statement For Renewable Electricity Generation	Meridian's core business is the generation, marketing, trading and retailing of electricity and the management of associated assets and ancillary structures in New Zealand. In addition to being New Zealand's largest generator of electricity, Meridian is the country's largest generator of renewable electricity and is wholly committed to generating electricity from 100% renewable sources. This

NPS / NES	Assessment
	project will make a significant contribution to increasing renewable electricity production which is consistent with the NPSREG objective and associated policies.
National Policy Statement On Electricity Transmission & National Environmental Standard For Electricity Transmission Activities	The project will connect to the existing Transpower operated transmission grid. This will involve the construction of a terminal substation, transmission lines and support structures. The transmission connection will be designed to effectively manage the adverse environmental effects of the grid connection and the transmission corridor.
National Environmental Standard For Assessing And Managing Contaminants And Soil To Protect Human Health	The current land use of the site is mixed including dairy farming, sheep and beef, quarrying, and forestry. There is no evidence of contamination on site. A Site Investigation will be undertaken to determine this and to design suitable responses, if required.
New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement	The project will be sited outside of the Coastal Environment, therefore the NZCPS provisions will not apply.

Section 7: Eligibility

Your application must be supported by an explanation as to how the project will help achieve the purpose of the Bill, that is to “provide a fast-track decision-making process that facilitates the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits”.

In considering whether the project will help to achieve the purpose of the Bill, the Ministers may have regard to the specific matters referred to below, and any other matter that the Ministers consider relevant.

27. 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, the Project will deliver infrastructure with significant regional and national benefits. Consenting major infrastructure projects requires a balancing of the social, cultural, and economic benefits of a project to be assessed in relation to temporary and permanent environmental effects.

Meridian is currently seeking consents for two other renewable generation developments – a solar farm in Ruakākā (Northland) and a wind farm at Mt Munro (Wairarapa). Applications were submitted in May 2023 (Mt Munro) and September 2023 (Ruakākā) and to date (April 2024), neither project has had a hearing and decisions have not been made on either project. More generally, consenting of renewable generation is taking longer and longer.

Specifically in the case of Waiinu Energy Park there are four relevant councils which means four different sets of plans and consenting frameworks that need to be navigated.

It is anticipated that the Fast-track process will result in quicker decisions which will enable Meridian to more quickly deliver the required pipeline of renewable electricity projects throughout New Zealand to electrify the energy use. This will ensure Meridian is able to provide a continuous supply of construction work to key skilled staff and contractors which will help sustain the New Zealand construction industry.

Considering Meridian’s recent experience of the consenting process for renewable energy projects, it is anticipated that progress through the fast-track process could accelerate consent approval by more than 18 months. This would accelerate the project development timeframe and reduce development expenditure, improving the overall project economics. More timely consent approval would enable the significant investment planned during construction to be brought forward and the national and regional benefits of the project during construction and operation to be realised sooner than otherwise would be achieved.

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

Waiinu Energy Park is consistent with the purpose (section 3) of the Fast-track and will comply with the process outlined (subpart 2). Meridian will ensure that the timeframes set for projects in the Fast Track Bill will be met and will follow the Schedule 2A process therefore supporting efficient operation of the process.

The project uses technologies that are mature and well understood and its actual and potential effects will be accurately assessed and managed. The scheduling of the project will be an exemplar for operation of the fast-track process.

29. Has the project been identified as a priority project in the following plans or strategies:

The whole electricity system operates under a competitive market model, so there is no centrally planned list of generation projects for the industry. However, it is noted that this project is highly consistent with applicable policies for electricity and climate change. Furthermore, the project is directly consistent with New Zealand's national and international commitments in relation to climate change and supports the achievement of the targets in the Country's Emission Reduction Plan (ERP) and Paris Obligations. The proposed Waiinu Energy Park development is not specifically referred to in any plan or strategy – it is however consistent with Central and Local Government direction as outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Waiinu Energy Park development assessment of Plan or Strategy

Plan or Strategy	Assessment
Central government plan or strategy	NPS-REG – Waiinu Energy Park puts into effect the objective and associated policies of the NPS to develop, operate, maintain renewable electricity generation activities throughout New Zealand.
Local government plan or strategy	Horizons One Plan RPS – includes several objectives and policies that provide for the establishment, operation, maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure and an increase in the use of renewable energy resources in the region. This is in line with the NPS-REG. The Taranaki RPS has similar provisions.
	District Plans – STDC and WDC district plans have a supportive policy framework in providing for new and existing renewable energy generation activities whilst ensuring adverse environmental effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
Sector plan or strategy	New Zealand Energy Strategy – The strategy will support the electrification of New Zealand's economy, and address strategic challenges in the energy sector,. As of November 2023, the <i>"Government's 2050 vision for energy and industry is for Aotearoa New Zealand to have a highly renewable, sustainable, and efficient energy system that is accessible and affordable, secure and reliable, and supports New Zealanders wellbeing. It 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."</i> ³ Waiinu Energy Park is consistent with this Strategy.
Central government	Rautaki Hanganga o Aotearoa New Zealand Infrastructure

³ MIBE (2024) New Zealand Energy Strategy. Retrieved from <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/building-and-energy/energy-and-natural-resources/energy-strategies-for-new-zealand/new-zealand-energy-strategy/>

Plan or Strategy	Assessment
infrastructure priority list	Commission 2022–2052 Strategy ⁴ – One of the matters the Strategy focuses on is electrification, enabling a new-zero carbon emissions Aotearoa. It acknowledges clean electricity is key to that goal, and that over the next 30 years we’ll need to build significantly more low-emissions electricity generation. The proposed Waiinu Energy Park development is consistent with this Strategy.
Emissions Reduction Plan	The Emissions Reduction Plan ⁵ includes targets and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Waiinu Energy Park will directly give effect to many of these including <i>“accelerate development of new renewable electricity generation across the economy”</i>

30. Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

Table 5: Significance Assessment

⁴ New Zealand Infrastructure Commission (2022). Rautaki Hanganga o Aotearoa 2022 - 2052 New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy. Wellington: New Zealand Infrastructure Commission / Te Waihanganga

⁵ [Aotearoa New Zealand's first emissions reduction plan \(environment.govt.nz\)](https://environment.govt.nz/emissions-reduction-plan/)

National significant infrastructure	The project is a large proposal that makes a significant positive contribution to secure, least cost, renewable electricity generation. It strongly aligns with the achievement of nationally significant infrastructure development. Waiinu Energy Park could generate up to 2,000GWh of electricity per year. This is enough electricity to power the equivalent of 290,000 average New Zealand homes - 14% of the private dwellings in New Zealand. Waiinu Energy Park is expected to bring significant economic benefits at a local, regional, and national level. It is one of the largest economic renewable energy development opportunities in New Zealand that Meridian is aware of with the capital investment to construct the project being around s 9(2)(b)(ii), based on the maximum generation capacity of the site. Further, due to the scale of the project, significant investment will be required during operations with an estimated annual operational cost of s 9(2)(b)(ii) for the lifetime of the project.
Regional significant infrastructure	The project will deliver infrastructure which is regionally significant due to the local economic benefits a development of this type and scale will provide during construction and operations. The project will increase diversity and resilience of the national and regional electricity system. Waiinu Energy Park will create a substantial number of additional jobs during the construction period, with an estimated 450 to 550 direct full-time equivalent jobs at the peak of construction activities. It is estimated the indirect employment benefit to the region would be an additional 60 full-time equivalent jobs. The local community will benefit socially and economically during operations as the project will provide jobs to support ongoing operations and maintenance for the estimated 35-year lifetime of the project. Up to 20 direct full-time equivalent jobs will be created for the operational lifetime of the project.

31. Will the project:

- Increase the supply of housing
- Addressing housing needs
- Contribute to a well-functioning urban environment

Waiinu Energy Park will increase the supply of renewable energy in New Zealand. Energy is essential to modern households and its role is often irreplaceable to activities and society. In this regard a secure, least cost and renewable electricity supply is vital to a functioning urban environment, housing and essential human needs.

32. Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes. The project will result in a number of local, regional and national benefits. At a national level the project will contribute significantly to New Zealand's need for more electricity to meet forecast demand. The project will generate clean, reliable and cost-effective electricity to support New Zealand and its economy.

Waiinu Energy Park would contribute massively to the electrification of New Zealand's economy, generating up to 2,000GWh of electricity per year. This is enough electricity to power the equivalent of 290,000 average New Zealand homes - 14% of the private dwellings⁶ in New Zealand.

Waiinu Energy Park is expected to bring significant economic benefits at a local, regional, and national level. The project is one of the largest economic renewable energy development opportunities in New Zealand that Meridian is aware of with the capital investment to construct the project being around s 9(2)(b)(ii), based on the maximum generation capacity of the site. Further, due to the scale of the project, significant investment will be required during operations with an estimated annual operational cost of s 9(2)(b)(ii) for the lifetime of the project.

During the construction period, the project will provide significant employment opportunities. Construction experience for this type of project is normally a 7 day a week activity and includes shift work. Accordingly, the project will provide an intense period of economic and employment activity. Labour, materials, plant and machinery will be sourced locally as far as possible. Secondary economic benefits are expected during the construction phase due to the accommodation, food, and fuel requirements of the construction team.

Waiinu Energy Park will create a substantial number of additional jobs during the construction period, with an estimated 450 to 550 direct full-time equivalent jobs at the peak of construction activities. It is estimated the indirect employment benefit to the region would be an additional 60 full-time equivalent jobs.

The local community will benefit socially and economically during operations as the project will provide jobs to support ongoing operations and maintenance for the estimated 35-year lifetime of the project. Up to 20 direct full-time equivalent jobs will be created for the lifetime of the project.

Due to the large over dimension size of components that are required on site, local secondary roading networks are routinely upgraded providing a lasting benefit of improved efficiency and safety.

The proposed project will enable diversification of land-use and income to the nine landowner farms which will be compatible with existing and modified farming activity.

For generation development sites, Meridian operates a community fund (Meridian Power Up Community Fund). Each year, Meridian put their financial support where it is needed with the help of local Power Up panels, made up of community members who together choose which initiatives should receive funding. In the past 16 years, Meridian has undertaken a wide range of local projects, investing more than s 9(2)(b)(ii) into over 1,250 projects. If this proposal proceeds to construction a fund would be established for the local community with appropriate annual committed funding.

The Power Up Fund is an example of Meridian's commitment to contribute to the viability and vitality of the communities in which it operates, and in which its staff live. It is anticipated that over the course of the development of this project, Meridian would be able to similarly engage with the wider Waitootara and Waiinu Beach community to ascertain where best to assist the community to achieve its aspirations.

33. Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

It will enable additional diverse use of existing primary production land.

⁶ StatsNZ estimated number of private dwellings in New Zealand, March 2024

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/dwelling-and-household-estimates-march-2024-quarter/>

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

No

35. Will the project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gases

Yes. The project will make a significant contribution (up to 2,000GWh) to increasing renewable energy generation.

New Zealand faces an unprecedented need to develop new generation to meet its climate change mitigation objectives, while maintaining security of supply at least cost possible. Figures 3 and 4, show actual generation from 1950 through to 2020, as well as projected levels to 2050 to meet Aotearoa New Zealand's climate change mitigation goals. Around 1,250GWh of new renewable generation will be required on average every year until 2050.

For additional context, an average of 380GWh of new renewable generation was commissioned annually in the 30 years to 2020, much of that was from geothermal and thermal sources. As such, New Zealand will need to be constructing around 300% more generation every year until 2050 than it has been over the past 30 years.

The graphs below are drawn from the report prepared by Concept Consulting to independently assess the extent of new renewable generation required to achieve climate change targets⁷. The general assessments and conclusions are in broad agreement with other similar work that has also been undertaken for the Climate Change Commission, Transpower's predictions and modelling/assessments completed for MBIE.

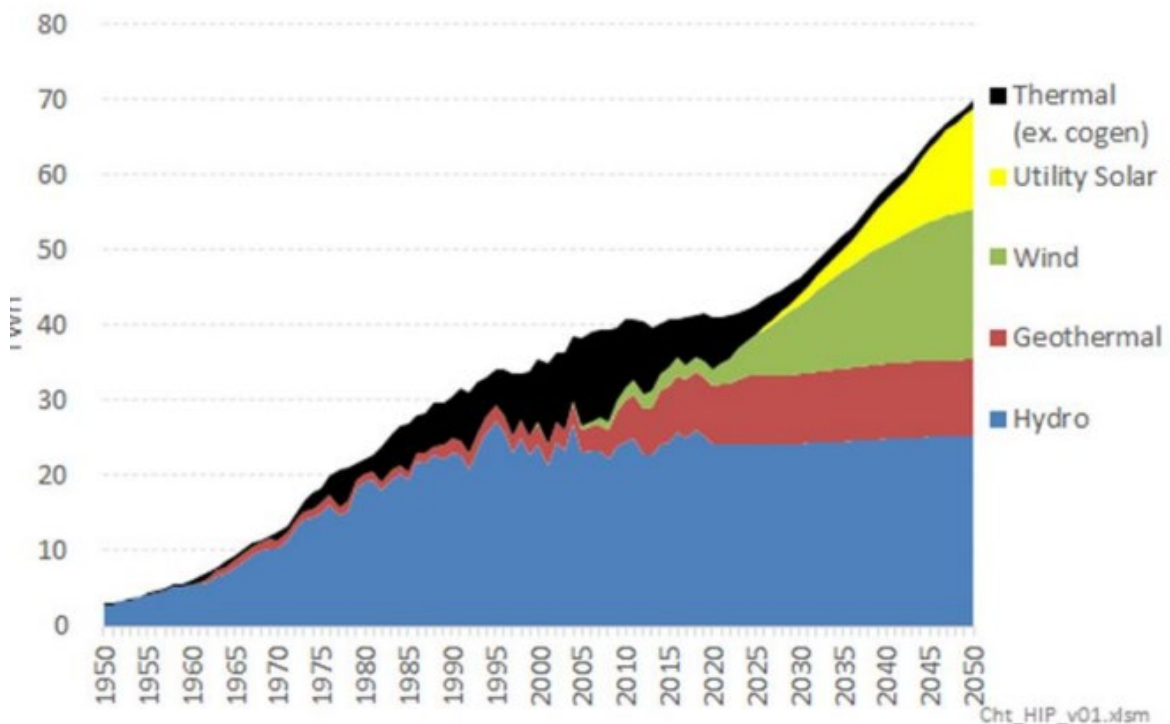


Figure 3: Central projection of generation levels

⁷ See KC Opinion dated 10 June 2022, Appendix 4 – Report by Concept Consulting, pages 2- 3.

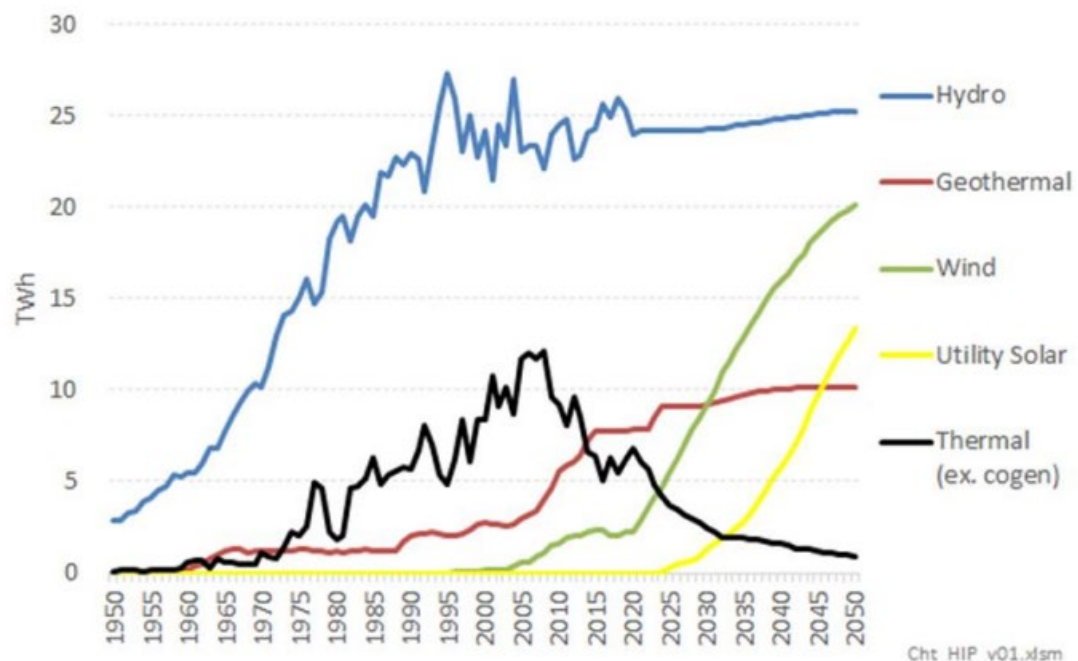


Figure 4: Central projection generation levels (by type)

The need to get new renewable projects up and running will only become more urgent. Adding up to 2,000GWh annual energy generation through the development and operation of the Waiinu Energy Park will add a significant amount of new renewable electricity to the National Grid.

An increasingly renewable electricity and energy system in New Zealand that is secure and delivered at least cost is a competitive advantage for New Zealand export oriented businesses.

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

Yes. The site is not located in an area prone to climate change disruptive events and natural hazards and so should be able to continue to produce power when the site has sufficient wind and/or during daylight. In the event of natural hazards occurring, Meridian anticipates the renewable energy park, consisting of wind turbines, solar arrays, and battery energy storage system, to be part of the solution, continuing to generate and deliver power to the National Grid during a disaster and recovery period. New generation from diverse means and in diverse locations helps to provide resilience to regions and communities when recovery from disaster occurs – this was demonstrated following cyclone Gabrielle.

37. Will the project address significant environmental issues?

Yes. The project is a significant contribution to climate change mitigation and the electrification of New Zealand's economy.

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

Yes – Waiinu Energy Park will achieve the objectives of a number of NPS and NES (refer answer to question 26). Waiinu Energy Park is consistent with the applicable Central (statutory and non-statutory), Regional and Local Government plans and strategies (refer answer to question 29). While the wholesale electricity system is not centrally planned the project is consistent with existing rural zoning and matches the proximity and availability of capacity in the national grid.

39. Anything else?

No

40. Does the project include an activity which would make it ineligible?

No

Section 8: Climate change and natural hazards

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

The site is not anticipated to be affected by climate change nor natural hazards as the turbines and solar panels are set outside of the Coastal Environment and are well back from the Waitootara river flood plain. An assessment of natural hazard and flood risk will be completed as necessary to evaluate and mitigate these risks.

Section 9: Track record

42. 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.

Meridian has operational assets comprising seven hydro stations, six wind farms, and a BESS (under construction) across New Zealand with a market capitalisation reported in the 2023 Integrated Annual Report of **S 9(2)(b)(ii)**. Since the company's inception in 1999, Meridian has never been prosecuted. Meridian has an excellent track record of investing in and responsibly building and operating electricity generation infrastructure. Meridian is a constituent of the 2023 S&P Global Dow Jones Asia Pacific Sustainability Index (announced December 2023).

Declaration

I acknowledge that a summary of this application will be made publicly available on the Ministry for the Environment website and that the full application will be released if requested.

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

Yes. Meridian considers that the names of property landowners is personal information and that it would be appropriate to redact that information in the event that this document is otherwise publicly released.

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.

Important notes

Information presented to the Ministry for the Environment is subject to disclosure under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). Certain information may be withheld in accordance with the grounds for withholding information under the OIA although the grounds for withholding must always be balanced against considerations of public interest that may justify release. Although the Ministry for the Environment does not give any guarantees as to whether information can be withheld under the OIA, it may be helpful to discuss OIA issues with the Ministry for the Environment in advance if information provided with an application is commercially sensitive or release would, for instance, disclose a trade secret or other confidential information. Further information on the OIA is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Appendix One: Subject site addresses and legal descriptions
Appendix Two: Relevant Record(s) of Title