Response ID ANON-URZ4-5F98-1

Submitted to Fast-track approval applications
Submitted on 2024-05-03 09:01:24

Submitter details

Is this application for section 2a or 2b?

2A

1 Submitter name

Individual or organisation name:
Westpower Limited

2 Contact person

Contact person name:
Peter Armstrong

3 What is your job title

Job title:
Chief Executive Officer

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:

Westpower Limited, PO Box 375, Greymouth

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:

The location of the Waitaha hydro project is on the Waitaha River, which is 38 km south of Hokitika and extends from the main divide of Southern Alps to Tasman Sea on the West coast and is over 40 km in length. The total catchment area is 223 km2. The project is located within the true right bank of the Waitaha River, between the lower end of Kiwi Flat and Macgregor Creek within Waitaha Valley.

A new electricity line will be installed from the proposed powerhouse substation to a connection with the distribution network adjacent to State Highway 6.

Please also see the attached “Attachment 1” - Waitaha Hydro Project Scheme – Location Maps.

File upload:
Waitaha Fast Track Application - 2 May 2024 Attachment 1.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:
Waitaha Fast Track Application - 2 May 2024 Attachment 2.pdf was uploaded

Who are the registered legal land owner(s)?

Please write your answer here:

The project is predominately located on stewardship land managed by the Department of Conservation (“DOC”). Sections of the access road and transmission route, at or on the north bank of Macgregor Creek are located on land that is privately owned or crown land administered by Land Information New Zealand (“LINZ”). Further details are provided below.

DOC - Legal Description: 177.2400 hectares of Stewardship Land being Section 1 Survey Office Plan 12094 (NZGN 2001 p 1560). Please see Attachment 2A for the applicable Gazette Notice.

Crown Land - Legal Description: Part Reserve 1672, shown on SO 5985, contained in record of title 318036 (Gazette instrument 7088557.1). Please see Attachment 2B for the applicable Title and Gazette Notice.

McLean Company Limited - Legal Description: Lot 2 DP 376096. Please see Attachment 2C.

Land ownership details for the 66 kV transmission line, which will convey power from the Scheme to the distribution connection point, from Macgregor Creek to State Highway 6 are to be determined.

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:

Westpower does have a legal interest in part of the land proposed to be traversed by the project. With respect to Lot 2 DP 376096 privately held by the McLean Company Westpower has negotiated an agreement allowing Westpower to purchase the part of the land required and lease other parts of the land required for the project.

To secure legal interest in the remainder of the land required for the project Westpower will:

- apply through this process for a concession in the form of lease, license and easement to occupy and have access to the site from DOC. The application and proposed concession will provide for both the temporary and permanent structures, works and activities associated with the construction and operation of the project.

- seek written approval from Land Information New Zealand for activities on Pt Rural Section 4149 owned by the Crown.

Access to public land is very important and will need to be secured in order for the project to proceed.

Section 2: Project details

What is the project name?

Please write your answer here:
Waitaha Hydro Project (“Project”)

What is the project summary?

Please write your answer here:

The project is a run-of-river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River, 38 km south of Hokitika in South Westland. The project will provide renewable energy equivalent to providing electricity to approximately 12,000 households and reinforce the security of electricity supply to the West Coast.

What are the project details?

Please write your answer here:

The project is to develop a renewable, hydro-electric power scheme for the benefit of the West Coast community served by Westpower.

The project has been developed in response to a need for improving the reliability and security of the electricity supply within the West Coast, and more specifically within the Westpower distribution area. The focus is on developing renewable power generation to meet the needs of present and future generations. Westpower also has a responsibility to look for investments that will provide sustainable returns for Westpower consumers (the shareholders and also the community). The benefits of these returns will remain on the West Coast and within the Westpower distribution area.

The project will consist of the construction, operation and maintenance of a small weir, which will divert a portion of the Waitaha River into a 1.5 km tunnel which conveys water from the intake to a powerhouse. The diverted water will be returned to the Waitaha River.

The section of the Waitaha River affected by the diverted flow is 2.6 km long including the Morgan Gorge. A minimum flow of 3.5 m3/s is proposed to be retained in the Waitaha River when the project is operational.

An access road is required between the end of Waitaha Road, across Macgregor Creek and along the north bank of the Waitaha River to the powerhouse. This road will be built for the construction of the tunnel, powerhouse and associated structures and then maintained once the project is operational.

There will be 3 staging areas (used during construction only):
1. the primary one that will include offices on McLeans Farm, next to Macgregor Creek;
2. at the powerhouse site; and
3. near the intake, located on a terrace next to the river - this will include a heli pad and a vehicular track from the terrace next to river to the intake.

A 66 kV transmission route, to convey the power from the scheme to the distribution connection point on State Highway 6, will follow the access road to Macgregor Creek within the conservation land. Beyond Macgregor Creek the transmission route to State Highway 6, including a potential crossing of the Waitaha River, is subject to further investigation with a number of factors to be taken into consideration including land ownership, environmental effects, cost and impact on power users during construction. Any other utilities including communications/telephone, coming into and out of the Scheme will be carried on the same set of poles.

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

Please write your answer here:

The overall construction is expected to take some 2-4 years and will comprise four key stages. It should be noted that the works will not be occurring at all sites for this entire length of time, for instance, no major works at the intake and powerhouse sites can be undertaken until the access road to the powerhouse is developed.

The key stages and estimated timeframes are:
1) construction of the access road between Waitaha Road, across Macgregor Creek and along the north bank of the Waitaha River is estimated to take 6 months;
2) construction of the tunnel and subsurface structures is estimated to take 24 months;
3) construction of the intake channel and weir is estimated to take 12-18 months; and
4) construction of powerhouse, switchyard and 66 kV transmission line and installation of the penstock is estimated to take 12 months.

Given the nature of the works, there will be some overlap between stages particularly stages 2, 3 and 4, with stages 3 and 4 occurring concurrently. Construction timing and the length of time to complete construction will be dependent on a range of factors including availability of contractors, supply and delivery of machinery, favourable river conditions for construction of the intake and weir and rock conditions encountered during tunnelling.

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

Please write your answer here:

Conservation Act 1987
A part of the project is located on land administered and managed by DOC. A concession to construct and operate the project is required under the Conservation Act 1987, section 17O. The application for concession was lodged in 2014, that was declined in 2019.
On 31st May 2022, Westpower applied to DOC to reconsider the application decision under section 17ZJ of the Conservation Act 1987. The re-consideration application has been placed on hold pending the outcome of this application.

Wildlife Act 1953
A permit to catch, and/or hold wildlife under the Wildlife Act 1953 will be required for the works prior to construction. Westpower undertook assessment of lizard fauna for the Concession application. The findings from the Lizard Fauna assessment concluded the suitable habitat for skinks was very limited and the extent to which this habitat will be affected by the construction works was unknown. Thus, as a precautionary measure to obtain better information on lizard species population within the project footprint an appropriate Wildlife permit for collection of lizards prior to construction under the Wildlife Act 1953 is required.
Wildlife permits are also sought to provide for a situation where wildlife are accidentally and unintentionally disturbed or killed during construction.

Resource Management Act 1991
Resource consents are required from relevant local authorities: Westland District Council ('WDC') and West Coast Regional Council ('WCRC') for the following Land Use Consents, Water Permits and Discharge Permits:

Westland District Council
- Land use consents for construction activities including earthworks, land disturbance and vegetation clearance, construction noise, lighting and traffic.

- Land use consent for physical structures including the substation, power house, weirs and tunnels, including the operation and maintenance of those structures.
It should be noted that consents required from the WDC will be prescribed in both the Westland District Plan and the proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan (West Coast District Plan), which is a combined District Plan for the Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils.

West Coast Regional Council
- Land use consent for the disturbance of land and the riverbed during construction.
- Water permits for the take, use, damming and diversion of water, use for hydro electricity generation purposes.
- Discharge permits for the discharge of water and contaminants.
It should be noted that consents required from the West Coast Regional Council will be prescribed in the relevant regional plans.

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014
There are no known historic features in the proposed works area, nor has any anecdotal information been provided about archaeological sites within the area, or registered by the West Coast Department of Conservation, WDC or Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. Given the above, no archaeological authority is being applied for as the works are not expected to encounter any specific archaeological or heritage matters. If during construction of the project new discoveries are made, then the accidental discovery protocols in the proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan will be complied with.

Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983
Approvals under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 may be required to ensure that the Project complies with requirements relating to fish passage during construction, for example.

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

Please write your answer here:

Westland District Council and West Coast Regional Council.

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

Please write your answer here:

No application under the Resource Management Act 1991 has been made to date, this is because Westpower considered that permission of the landowner of the conservation estate is critical to the project and should be obtained first.

As noted above, a Concession to undertake the Project on part of DOC land was lodged in 2014, which was later declined. An application for reconsideration of the concession decision was lodged with DOC on 31 May 2022. The re-consideration application has been placed on hold pending the outcome of this application.

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

No

Please explain your answer here:

Other than landowner access being required to be secured for “public land”, the applicant requires no other approvals.

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

Please write your answer here:

Assuming we achieve consent quickly through the fast-track process, and no other unforeseen project issues arise, we anticipate the following:

Detailed design: June 2024-March 2025
Approvals Issued: April 2025 (assumed)
Procurement (Tender Rounds): April – July 2025
Financial Close: July 2025
Project Kick-off: August 2025
Site commencement: July 2026
Completion: December 2029

Section 3: Consultation

Who are the persons affected by the project?

Please write your answer here:

Most of West Coast region lies within rohe of iwi Ngāi Tahu and under the rohe of hapū Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio. Both hapū have shared interest in the area between north bank of the Poerua River and south bank of the Hokitika River, including Waitaha Valley. Both hapū are partners in the project, with Westpower.

Importantly, via a letter dated 30 April 2024, both Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio have, via their respective Chairs, confirmed their support for the project being listed in Schedule 2A of the Fast Track legislation. This is attached as Attachment 3.

The McLean Company Limited, who own Lot 2 DP 376096, DOC and Land Information New Zealand, who manage the Crown land traversed by the project, are likely to be affected by the project.

Other persons potentially affected by the project include WDC and WCRC as the relevant local authorities.

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:

Throughout the development of the Waitaha scheme, Westpower has consulted widely with a large group of stakeholders including, but not limited to:

• The local communities - information evenings were held at a number of sites including Ross, Hokitika and Harihari, where members of the public and interested parties were welcome to come along and view the posters that were prepared and engage with experts to have their questions answered.

• Targeted consultation also included meetings with specific interest groups such as Forest and Bird and Whitewater New Zealand, which included taking their representatives on a site visit to the Waitaha Valley and the Amethyst Hydro scheme to get an appreciation for the type of structures that would be involved.

• In addition, specific engagement (including meetings) took place with
o West Coast Conservation Board
o Department of Conservation
o Adjacent landowners
o Federated Mountain Clubs
o Federated Farmers
o The Jet Boating Association
o Ministers of Parliament
o New Zealand Alpine Club
o Permolat
o Local authorities including the West Coast Regional Council and Westland District Council
o Members of the public and local community through an engagement portal on our project website
o Local Iwi - Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio
o Westland Milk Products (as a major user looking for more renewable electricity to support their decarbonisation strategies)
o The Governor General

• In recent months, a major social media campaign has taken place on social media platforms such as Facebook and TikTok resulting in more than 2 million hits. The associated website can be found at this pathway: https://waitahahydro.co.nz/

• A publicly accessible website has been set up to provide full information on the project. It invites viewers to share their ideas or request further information. This is accessible on this website: https://www.electronetgroup.com/waitaha

• Westpower is actively engaging with Whitewater New Zealand at present to ensure that the final design of the weir will maintain safe access for kayakers to the Morgan Gorge.

• A stand featuring the Waitaha scheme at recent AgFest festival days in Greymouth resulted in significant interest from members of the public, many of whom live in the locality of where the station will be built.

Most of the feedback was very constructive, and has been taken into account as part of the overall scheme design. Although Whitewater New Zealand and Forest and Bird were not supportive of the project, they acknowledged the high standard of consultation and appreciated the way Westpower went about engaging with them.

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Waitaha Fast Track Application - 2 May 2024 Attachment 3.pdf was uploaded

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:

Nil

Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

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

Please write your answer here:

The Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 applies to the project area.

Under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act, the Crown recognised that Ngāi Tahu holds rangatiratanga within their Takiwā and undertook "to enter a new age of co-operation with Ngāi Tahu".

The decision-making process for the application will need to reflect Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which guarantees rangatiratanga and requires the Crown to uphold the principles of partnership, good faith and protection.

The project is not located in a statutory acknowledgement area and has the support of both local hapū, namely Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae with these hapū having partnered with Westpower on the project. As noted in Section 3 above, both hapū endorse the project being listed in Schedule 2A, as explained in Section 3 above.

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?:

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:

Westpower has engaged a wide range of leading independent expert consultants to prepare the technical assessments that have informed the Concession application.

Those assessments concluded that although the local effects on natural character and landscape and recreation would be more than minor, given that all other environmental effects were minor or less than minor, overall the effects of the project were found to be sufficiently avoided, remedied or mitigated such that they were held to be acceptable.

Those assessments will be augmented, including updates to reflect the most recent data, the current RMA statutory framework, best practice and further field work outside the concession application area where necessary to inform the resource consent process which is currently in train.

As noted above, construction is expected to last for some 2-4 years following which the operational phase will commence.

The general effects of the project as presently understood are as follows.

RIVER DYNAMICS AND NATURAL HAZARDS

The potential effects of the weir on natural patterns and processes related to floods, freshes, bed/channel stability and sediment movement, and fine

sediment losses have been investigated by NIWA. The Waitaha River channel exhibits frequent large floods, high fluxes of bed-material and transient deposition and re-working of sediment. The assessment concluded that the project will not alter natural processes and fluvial features nor their frequencies of occurrence or physical characteristics. The project will also not have a significant effect on the discharge of water and bedload from Kiwi Flat during flood, and as a result it should not affect channel processes, characteristics and bed stability of the Waitaha River.

The project is unlikely to induce fine sedimentation at a level dramatically different than occurs naturally but monitoring will be undertaken. The construction and operational loss of sediment will be managed via a Wastewater, Groundwater, Erosion and Sediment Management Plan that will include measures to minimise sediment losses to the Waitaha River and its tributaries.

Whilst the Alpine Fault runs through the catchment at approximately the confluence of the Waitaha River and Macgregor Creek, the location of the Scheme avoids the Alpine Fault zone and its network of active fault traces. Considering the proximity of the fault lines, risks from an Alpine Fault earthquake during the lifetime of the Scheme is likely. Despite this, there is no risk to the environment. Risks relate to the operation and maintenance of the Scheme, which have been addressed within the design constraints.

As the project does not involve the storage of significant amounts of water the proposed construction of the various project components will not create additional seismic hazards or seismic risks to either the local environment or river users.

NATURAL CHARACTER, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY

Boffa Miskell has assessed the effects of the project on natural character, landscape and visual amenity values of the Waitaha Valley. Subsequently, Isthmus has peer reviewed the Boffa Miskell assessment. The key conclusions from this assessment are summarised as follows:

- The Waitaha River catchment is not considered unique, as approximately 84% of the land in the West Coast region is managed by DOC with numerous other river catchments holding similar features such as gorges, hot springs and glaciers. The effects on natural character, landscape and visual amenity would be more than minor at a local level, mainly due to the industrial intrusion into an otherwise natural environment.

- The Upper Waitaha catchment contains pristine levels of natural character, yet the area is not rated high on ‘naturalness’ due to number of modifications, including pests, evidence of tracks, huts and a swing bridge and for its use for hunting and kayaking.

- The location of the weir, powerhouse and access road is located within the Outstanding Natural Landscape overlay in the proposed regional Te Tai Poutini Plan and the Morgan Gorge as an Outstanding Natural Feature. That said, the effects on the Morgan Gorge will not affect the overall biophysical, associational, and sensory values of the gorge nor reduce its ‘outstandingness’ as an Outstanding Natural Feature within the whole outstanding landscape.

- The river would continue to operate as it does naturally, albeit at reduced river flows, but a moderate level of effects on the perceptual aspects of natural character effects would be experienced through the reach affected by the abstraction.

- The project will have visual effects from a number of close viewpoints, particularly viewpoints overlooking the intake area. The effects reduce to low levels from distant viewpoints.

- Mitigation of the effects are proposed through detail design and landscaping post works.

Although the project will present an industrial appearance, its size and scale of works are very small in the context of the West Coast as a whole. The project is considered to be appropriate with respect to natural character, landscape and visual amenity and the iterative design process has enabled the project to sit well within its landscape and to responds to its setting.

VEGETATION

The effects of the project on vegetation have been assessed by TACCRA. The effects are summarised below:

- The effect of vegetation removal at the project headworks is negligible, and considered minor along with the powerhouse, access road, transmission and protection works.

- The project is not considered to have any long-term detrimental effect on vegetation surrounding the various sites. Natural regeneration should occur across any areas affected by construction (except those areas occupied by structural components).

- Following the construction phase, the activity becomes relatively benign and has a low likelihood of requiring disturbance of vegetation. Thus, no long-term detrimental effects of vegetation surrounding the various sites are expected.

- Whilst the vegetation removal footprint is relatively small in comparison to the wider area, weed incursion is possible. This will be managed by mitigation and monitoring measures on site during construction and after construction is finished.

The project design ensures only a small total area of indigenous vegetation is affected, and overall, the effect of the project on vegetation will be minor. This conclusion is reached based on the small amount of clearance (approximately 4.53 ha) that will occur within the surrounding contiguous area of indigenous forest and shrubland (approximately 396 ha), combined with measures to avoid affecting important habitat components (e.g. large forest trees) and the minimisation of weed incursions.

BIRDS AND BATS

As assessed by Rhys Buckingham, the loss of faunal habitat and potential direct loss of fauna during the construction phase are the main potential effects on birds and bats. Riverine birds may be indirectly affected (positive or adverse) by a change to their food source or breeding caused by river flows or sedimentation. That said, the overall potential effect on terrestrial and riverine birds and bats from the project is considered negligible given the size and footprint of the project and the mitigation proposed.

The project design can largely avoid adverse effect on terrestrial fauna and mitigation measures have been recommended to reduce effects on terrestrial fauna.

LIZARDS

An assessment of the potential effects on lizard habitat was undertaken by Whitaker Consulting. The key conclusions from this assessment are summarised below:

- Potential displacement or loss of Hoplodactylus granulatus s.s. and Naultinus tuberculatus due to the clearance of habitat for construction of roads, access ways and sites for the powerhouse and ancillary structures within the project footprint, however the area of clearance of forest and shrubland habitat is minimal and similar suitable habitat for the species is contiguous with the project area.

- Some loss of riparian habitat for skinks may occur above the intake weir at Kiwi Flat as the river establishes a new gradient but this will affect a very small area in relation to the available habitat in the catchment as a whole.

- Changed flow regimes in the Waitaha River resulting from the project would not affect lizards.

- Whilst there are some unknowns, particularly in regard to skink presence, there are no records of lizards within the project area, and no lizards were found during the field survey. As such no mitigation is considered necessary at this stage. However, to obtain better information on the lizards of the project area during the construction phase, they must be captured and provided to DOC so that their identity can be confirmed by genetic testing. Westpower will obtain the appropriate wildlife permit for collection of lizards prior to construction.

Overall, the project will have no detrimental effect on the broader conservation status of the lizard fauna known from central Westland.

TERRESTRIAL INVERTEBRATES

Entecol Ltd was commissioned to undertake an assessment of effects on terrestrial invertebrates. The summary of the assessment is below:

- There is the potential for minor direct disturbance to terrestrial invertebrates and removal of habitat during road and facility construction. That said, the construction area is small and is surrounded by contiguous suitable habitat to support ongoing survival.

- The effect of forest clearance on invertebrate communities will be relatively minor and short term, with a temporary increase in edge effects that can be mitigated through revegetation along exposed edges where required.

- Effects of changed water flow regime are not expected to have substantial impacts on riparian invertebrates, as these species are generally well adapted to dynamic river systems. No long-term effect from changes to water levels are expected.

- There is an increased risk of new weeds and invasive invertebrates establishing in natural habitats because of vehicles and equipment being brought on site for construction and ongoing maintenance. Mitigation measures are proposed to reduce risks associated with this.

Overall, the project is expected to have a relatively low level of effect on invertebrate communities in the area and the effect of forest clearance on invertebrate communities will be minor and short-term. These effects can be managed via good mitigation practices.

AQUATIC ECOLOGY

EOS Ecology was commissioned to provide baseline information about the Waitaha River and associated tributaries. The effects of the project on the aquatic benthic community of Waitaha Catchment are separated into construction and operational effects. A summary of these effects is provided below:

Construction:

- Stable Tributary on the true right bank of the river in Douglas Creek reach could potentially be impacted by the removal of vegetation within the riparian zone for construction of the access road that will run parallel in some sections and also from input of sediment during construction activities. The construction effects on this sensitive and ecologically significant waterway will be greatly reduced or avoided by keeping the access road and all other activities a sufficient distance away from stream (10 – 20 m).

Operational:

- The overall impact of the residual flow on the benthic aquatic community of the Waitaha River is likely to be less than minor. This is due to short distance (2.6 km) of the reach of the Waitaha River affected by the abstraction, existing low periphyton biomass and low diversity and density of aquatic invertebrates within abstraction reach. All species found within abstraction reach are also found throughout the rest of Waitaha mainstream and tributaries. The overarching dominance of the existing disturbance regime and sediment dynamics on benthic fauna remain unchanged.

- Long term effects of waterway crossings are likely to be negligible (or ‘less than minor’) with mitigation measures being implemented. Removal of riparian vegetation is not considered to have any noticeable effects on the functioning of waterways, due to limited influence that riparian vegetation has

on Waitaha River, and the small amount of vegetation being removed in relation to tributary stream crossings.

Overall, the effects of the proposed construction and operation of the project will be minor or less than minor, subject to the implementation of avoidance measures and recommended mitigation measures.

FISH

A fisheries assessment prepared by EOS Ecology investigated the fish communities of the Waitaha River catchment, potential effects on these communities, and how these effects can be avoided, mitigated or remedied. A summary of assessment of effects is provided below:

- The overall effect of residual flow on the fish communities would most likely be minor, provided that upstream of Morgan Gorge remains free of salmonids and longfin eels.

- There is some uncertainty regarding the long-term effects of the project on the koaro population upstream of Morgan Gorge (especially from koaro passage through the turbines). An integrated, monitoring-based approach is required to confirm the fish population is not adversely affected by the project in the intermediate or long term.

- Fish attraction into tailrace and the flushing of settling basins are difficult to accurately predict prior to project operating; therefore, monitoring is required for these effects to confirm the level of effect is as predicted.

- Long-term effects on fish displacement due to sudden flow changes are likely to have less than minor effects on fish communities. This is due to low diversity and density of fish species within the abstraction reach, and sub-optimal fish habitat.

Overall, most of the construction and operational related effects on fish communities are likely to be minor or less than minor once the planned programme to reduce effects, and the recommended avoidance and mitigation measures, are implemented.

BLUE DUCK

A blue duck population is present on waterways within and adjoining the project area. A summary of the assessment undertaken by Fred Overmars is as follows:

- The effects of structures and works on blue duck habitat during construction and operations are less than minor.

- The location and design configuration of the chosen option aids in avoidance and minimisation of potential adverse effects on the blue duck.

- Although the final design features of the weir are to be confirmed, the vertical concrete wall of the weir and intake channel could impede upstream duckling access or displacement of nesting sites. These potential effects can be avoided by designing part of downstream face of the weir to provide for upstream access for ducklings.

- The potential for temporary ponding and aggradation behind the weir is considered to have less than minor adverse effects on the blue duck.

- Abstraction and periodic sediment return to Morgan Gorge and below will have minor adverse effects on blue duck habitat quality and population in the abstraction reach, and there may be an improvement in habitat quality.

The duck population in the project area appears to be at risk from adverse natural environmental factors, particularly predation. The risk is likely mitigated by its connectivity and interactions with adjoining populations (in particular, at Amethyst Ravine), and possibly by future possum control operations. A monitoring programme, with specific response triggers for possible monitoring outcomes, is recommended to assure there are no adverse effects on the Blue Duck as a result of the project.

TURF COMMUNITIES

The presence of rare species of turf plant communities along the riparian margin is low as Morgan Gorge is frequented by extreme abrasive flooding. Therefore, effects on turf plant communities are considered to be negligible.

CULTURAL VALUES

Westpower is in consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio (its project partners) to confirm the scope of the proposed cultural impact assessment for the project. That said, at this stage, there no known physical sites or sites of cultural value that would prevent the project from being implemented. Importantly, both hapū support the project being listed in Schedule 2A, as explained in Section 3 above.

HISTORIC AND ARCHAELOGICAL VALUES

There are no known sites or items within the project area which may be affected by the construction and operation of the project.

RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM VALUES

A recreational assessment has been undertaken by Rob Greenaway & Associates. A summary of the assessment is provided below:

- The land based recreational activities in the Waitaha Valley can continue, with only indirect effects caused by the introduction of hydro development

structures in relation to natural character and visual amenity.

- Downriver jet boating and angling will not be affected.

- Kayaking use of Waitaha River will be constrained by residual flow effects in the abstraction reach and construction of a weir at Morgan Gorge. Those kayaking will experience a shift from moderate-range flows below Morgan Gorge to relatively infrequent flow availability (albeit rarely used).

- There will be no direct adverse effects on kayaking options in the river above Kiwi Flat, including Waitaha Gorge. There is potential for inadequate flows in the abstraction reach, which includes Morgan Gorge and the section below the Gorge, for those portaging the Gorge to rely on to complete their journey. This may influence some potential kayakers to not make use of the opportunity above Kiwi Flat. Mitigation measures such as 'real-time' river flow levels, and the potential of no take days can address this.

- The effect on West Coast recreation and tourism is generally local and there are numerous alternatives available for all activities affected by the project. The West Coast will retain its international reputation as a challenging kayaking setting with the project in place.

NOISE LEVELS

A noise assessment has been undertaken by Marshall Day Acoustics, a summary of which is as follows:

- Given the location of the project infrastructure and construction activities, the construction noise source will generally be over four kilometres from the nearest dwelling and majority of construction activities will cause a negligible noise effect. Noise from general construction activities, which are temporary in nature, are not expected to be intrusive to water based recreational activities beyond a distance of 200 – 300 m. Kayakers and other recreational users operating on the river already experience higher levels of background noise and therefore noise from the project will be less noticeable.

- Westpower is proposing to re-route the DOC walking track currently passing close by the project, for health and safety reasons. Construction noise will be clearly inaudible on parts of the walking track at times during construction.

- During concrete pouring activities, there may be intense helicopter activity between the powerhouse and headworks. The proposed flight path for these periods of intense helicopter activity is approximately four km away from the closest dwelling. Noise mitigation from helicopters will be implemented in accordance with noise abatement techniques including the Helicopter Association International's 'I Fly Neighbourly' Programme'.

- The construction traffic noise effects will be acceptable, with most heavy vehicle movements occurring within the project footprint.

- Once construction is complete noise emissions from the operation of the project will be inaudible in comparison to relatively high levels of ambient noise, produced from water flowing down the Waitaha River.

- The only noticeable operation noise effects of the project will be staff vehicle movements on the local road network

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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:

Given the nature and location of the project, the relevant National Policy Standards and National Environmental Standards are as below:

National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation ("NPSREG");
National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity ("NPSIB");
National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management ("NPSFM");
National Environmental Standard for Freshwater ("NESFM").

Although a full assessment on these relevant statutory planning documents is yet to be completed, a general assessment of their relevance to this project is presented below.

NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY GENERATION 2011

The NPSREG seeks to enable sustainable management of renewable energy generation under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Policy A recognises benefits associated with renewable electricity generation activities, with the listed benefits being non-exclusive. The continued operation, use and maintenance of the project would:

- Assist in maintaining New Zealand's electricity generation capacity without resulting in the emission of greenhouse gases;
- Use renewable natural resources rather than finite resources, or imported fuels, for the generation of electricity; and
- Assist with the maintenance of the security of local electricity supply in the West Coast region.

Policy B(c) requires decision makers to have particular regard to the fact that meeting or exceeding the New Zealand Government's national target for the

generation of electricity from renewable resources will require the significant development of renewable electricity generation activities. The project contributes to achieving New Zealand's renewable energy targets.

The practical implication and locational constraints associated with the development of renewable electricity generation is recognised in Policy C1. There are several factors that influence the selection of the site as being suitable for the development of a hydro scheme including, river dynamics and proximity to transmission infrastructure. Whilst a run-of-river hydro scheme will have some residual effects, these can be mitigated with appropriate measures.

Policy C2 requires that decision makers have regard to offsetting measures or environmental compensation when considering any residual environmental effects associated with the renewable electricity generation activities that cannot be avoided remedied or mitigated. Westpower will assess and provide for any obligations it has here when developing the application.

NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT 2020

The NPS-FM provides direction to local authorities on how freshwater should be managed under the RMA. The objective of the NPS-FM is to ensure that natural and physical resources are managed in a way that prioritises:

- First, the health and wellbeing of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems;
- Second, the health needs of people; and
- Third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing, now and in the future.

In this regard;

- A residual flow regime in the waterbodies associated with the project is proposed to sustain the health and wellbeing of these waterbodies.
- Arguably the use of water for renewable electricity falls within the first priority because without decarbonisation climate change will continue to have a significant impact on all ecosystems including freshwater.
- At the very least however, the use of water for electricity falls within the second priority because it is a fundamental requirement for modern homes and communities without which the public community wellbeing would be compromised. The project is defined as a "lifeline utility" under Part B of Schedule 1 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The electricity generated by this project will connect to the West Coast network.
- The project will enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing, now and in the future.

At the forefront of the NPSFM is the management of freshwater in a way that gives effect to Te Mana o te Wai and active involvement of tangata whenua in freshwater management. Tangata whenua are involved in the decision-making process in their role as active partners in the project.

Also of relevance is the potential for the construction and operation of the project to impact freshwater. There is the potential to discharge contaminants to the surface water bodies (sediment during construction), impacts from construction of an intake weir and reduced flow in the abstraction zone during operation. Whilst the project will be designed to avoid adverse effects on these values as far as reasonably practicable, there is some potential for no more than minor residual effects on the habitats of indigenous freshwater species and fish passage. It is important to note that clause 3.24 of the NPSFM recognises that full avoidance of effect on freshwater features may not be possible and in the context of the functional needs of a hydro scheme, the application of the effects management hierarchy to avoid, remedy mitigate, offset and compensate in so far as is practicable, is appropriate.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS FOR FRESHWATER) REGULATIONS 2020

The NES-FW came into effect on 3 September 2020 and was most recently amended in January 2023.

The various regulations in the NES-FW apply to resource consent applications for the activities associated with farming activities, modification of natural inland wetland, reclamation of rivers and passage of fish affected by structures. The Waitaha is considered to trigger regulations under Freshwater NES as the project is located on a river with a diversion weir. Resource consents will be required for activities including placement of an intake weir, take, use diversion or discharge of water for the construction, operation and maintenance of specified infrastructure, and earthworks if there are any natural inland wetlands within 100 m of the activity.

As such, the following regulations apply to the Waitaha project,
- Subpart 3 of the NES-FW includes provisions that seek to address effects on the passage of fish associated with the placement and use of structures such as weir in the bed of river.
- Regulations 62 and 64 require Westpower to provide the WCRC with information on the design and performance of structures in relation to passage of fish, including the weir.
- Regulation 69(2) requires an assessment of how the weir affects the passage of fish specifies resource consent conditions for monitoring and maintenance.

Westpower will address these requirements as part of the application.

NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY 2023

The NPSIB is not relevant to the consideration of the Waitaha Hydro project, due to the specific exclusion for renewable electricity generation and electricity transmission network assets and activities under Clause 1.3(3). Whist it is not necessary to assess the proposal against the provisions of the NPSIB, it is important to note that this exclusion clearly differentiates renewable electricity generation and electricity transmission activities. The policy recognises that traditional hierarchies for managing the potential effects of most activities will have unintended implications for renewable electricity generation activities.

In any case, Westpower has sought to design the project in a manner that avoids adverse effects on these values as far as reasonably practicable, or otherwise remedy, mitigate, offset and compensate for effects as is required under clause 3.11. Noting that this clause recognises that full avoidance of effect on indigenous biodiversity may not be possible where there is a functional need for projects such as Waitaha to be located within areas of biodiversity. As a consequence the technical consultants have concluded overall that subject to mitigation, the effects on terrestrial flora and fauna are no more than minor.

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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:

Access to the fast-track process will enable the project to be processed in a more timely and cost-efficient way than under conventional processes. The key reason for this is that the project requires approvals under the RMA, the Conservation Act 1987, Wildlife Act 1953 and potentially the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 which are separate approval processes. The omnibus process proposed under the Fast-track Approvals Bill means that all relevant approvals under those pieces of legislation can be processed together. In addition, the processing time frames proposed under the Fast-Track Approvals Bill are more expedient than those that apply under the RMA and Conservation Act 1987. By way of example of the relatively slow speed of the existing approvals process, the original application under the Conservation Act 1987 took five years (2014-2019) to progress to a decision to decline. The reconsideration application is now almost two years old.

The net result of access to the fast-track process will be that the project, and its benefits, will be achieved much earlier.

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

Please write your answer here:

The project has been in development since 2010, so is well advanced. Westpower has previously lodged a comprehensive application for Concessions under the Conservation Act 1987 which included comprehensive and robust effects assessments. This application was declined in 2019. An application for reconsideration of the concession decision was lodged with DOC on 31 May 2022. DOC is yet to make a decision on the application for reconsideration and the reconsideration process has been put on hold pending the outcome of the Fast-Track Approvals Bill process.

A review of the technical information prepared as part of the Concession application has been undertaken to identify where additional information may be needed to support the application for resource consents in accordance with the RMA. The review will shortly be provided to technical experts to advise on the matters to be updated to ensure the relevant requirements of the RMA and other approvals processes are provided for in their assessments, and timeframes within which they need to complete their assessments.

Because of the nature of the work already completed, it is expected that these additional tasks and preparing the Fast-Track application will be completed by the time the Fast-track Approval Bill ascends into law.

The project Fast-Track application, whilst strategically significant does not raise novel effects, nor are assessments required where there is significant uncertainty. On that basis the application is likely to be relatively straightforward to process.

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

Other

Please explain your answer here:

Renewable energy solutions are identified as priority projects in the Te Tai Poutini West Coast 2050 Strategy.

The Te Poutini – West Coast Renewable Energy Strategy was developed on behalf of the Te Whanaketanga Energy Action Group in 2022. The strategy identified opportunities to unlock renewable energy investment, and job creation, as a significant component of the pathway away from fossil fuel towards greater levels of renewable energy. Supporting the development of hydro generation by 2025 was identified as a task to enable and encourage the uptake of renewable energy options. The Waitaha Hydro Project is specifically identified in the strategy as a project which is in the pipeline on renewable energy projects.

In addition, infrastructure investment to support growth of West Coast has been identified as a strategic priority in the West Coast Economic Development Strategy (2018-2025) this includes opportunities for cheaper power through development of new energy schemes.

It is also accepted as a general matter of public policy that New Zealand will need to significantly increase further its renewable energy resources portfolio if it is to achieve its international climate-change obligations.

Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

National significant infrastructure

Please explain your answer here:

Clearly yes, noting also that renewable energy generation activities, transmission, distribution and operation are defined in the West Coast Regional Policy Statement as “Regionally Significant infrastructure” and renewable electricity generation facilities that connect with the national grid are identified as nationally significant infrastructure in the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020.

The Scheme will also support New Zealand to:

- achieve the aspirational goal of Central Government to reach 100% renewable electricity generation by 2030;
- achieve net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases (other than biogenic methane) by 2050; and
- achieve the Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement to reduce net GHG emissions to 50 per cent below gross 2005 levels by 2030;
- address the constraints in the New Zealand electricity system, both in capacity (to meet peak power requirements) and energy (the overall amount of power produced);
- maintain energy security by injecting power into national grid at times when solar and wind generation are unavailable;
- utilise run-of-river infrastructure that EECA has confirmed (https://www.eeca.govt.nz/insights/energys-role-in-climate-change/renewable-energy/hydroelectricity/) has the highest energy return on investment out of all renewable energy sources, with a much longer life and lower environmental footprint.

On the regional level, the project will:

- provide the equivalent of almost half of the current electricity demand on the Westpower network on the West Coast of the South Island, greatly improving the resilience of the network, especially during times of natural disaster;
- make additional generation capacity available to the upper South Island, further enabling economic growth throughout Nelson-Marlborough and Canterbury.

Will the project:

contribute to a well-functioning urban environment

Please explain your answer here:

A well-functioning urban environment is one that supports a reduction in greenhouse gases. The Scheme will provide more non-intermittent renewable electricity to the network which will potentially feed into the urban environment. This more non-intermittent renewable electricity potentially provides for increased electrification within the urban environment, leading to decreased greenhouse gas emissions.

Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project will deliver substantial social and economic benefits, including:

- The construction and operation of the project will increase economic activity for the local Westland District and West Coast regional economies;

- In terms of direct economic effects, 70% of the construction cost could be spent in the Westland District and 80% could be spent on the West Coast;

- In addition, there are positive indirect economic effects on the suppliers to the firms directly contracted by the project from within the district and the region and through the supply of goods and services to the employees of firms directly contracted by the project;

- During operation there will be an additional full time equivalent staff member required to undertake regular operations and maintenance duties. There will also be additional expenditure within the Westland District and West Coast regional economies on other goods and services purchased locally;

- The project will provide cost savings to the extent that the costs of generation from the project are less than the generation and transmission costs of alternative new generation capacity elsewhere in New Zealand, which is displaced or delayed.

- In addition, local generation will lead to reduction in transmission losses to the region and place downward pressure on the transmission costs, the benefits will be directly experienced by consumers on the West Coast and encourage greater electrification, industrial and commercial growth within the region; and

- The project will provide practical protection against situations when no or restricted external transmission capacity into the region is available. Being run-of-river, the Scheme can keep generating in situations where no or restricted external transmission capacity into the region is available. This will provide benefits to business in terms of reductions in lost production or through eliminating the requirement to invest in expensive back-up sources of electricity supply.

In addition to the above, there are potential benefits from the project in terms of its contribution to wider economic wellbeing. These relate to:

- Increased economies of scale: Businesses and public sector agencies are able to provide increased amounts of outputs with lower unit costs, hence

increasing profitability or lowering prices;

- Increased competition: Increases in the demand for goods and services allows a greater number of providers of goods and services to enter markets and there are efficiency benefits from increased levels of competition;

- Reduced unemployment and underemployment of resources: To the extent resources (including labour) would be otherwise unemployed or underemployed, increases in economic activity can bring efficiency benefits when there is a reduction in unemployment and underemployment. The extent of such gains is of course a function of the extent of underutilized resources within the local economy at the time and the match of resource requirements of a project and those resources unemployed or underemployed within the local economy; and

- Increased quality of central government provided services: Sometimes the quality of services provided by central government such as education and health care are a function of population levels and the quality of such services in a community can be increased if increased economic activity maintains or enhances population levels.

It is reasonable to assume that the anticipated increases in economic activity (i.e. expenditure, income and employment) as a consequence of the project construction and operation will give rise to one or more of these four welfare enhancing economic benefits at the local district and regional level.

Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The commercial viability of New Zealand Inc is underpinned by having a reliable and efficient supply of electricity, with its long-term sustainability depending on the implementation of new renewables projects. Westland Milk Products plant is by far the largest consumer of energy within the West Coast Region, however, their ability to decarbonise and convert from a coal boiler to renewable energy generation is depended on the ability of the transmission system to support increased peak load. This hydro scheme will support Westland Milk's decarbonisation plans by providing additional supply within the network.

The Scheme will also directly support on-farm primary production as a result of providing a more reliable electricity supply to dairy sheds etc, which are sometimes impacted by power outages.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The Waitaha River in particular, Mogan Gorge provides an abundance of fresh water. The development of Scheme will enable this resource to be utilised to provide for the social and economic wellbeing of the region.

The Scheme will also support the development of other natural resources (e.g. garnet and gold mines) in the region which are currently constrained by a lack of transmission capacity and a reliable supply of electricity.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project will displace thermal electricity generation in New Zealand. The Genesis Energy Huntly plant emits approximately one tonne of CO2 for each MWh of electricity produced.

Assuming the project produces 100 GWh (100,000MWh) per year, this is equivalent to a reduction in CO2 emissions of 100,000 tonnes per annum from electricity production. CO2 emissions will also be reduced in the coal supply chain. By displacing CO2 emissions, the Waitaha Scheme will contribute to maintaining New Zealand's biodiversity.

An increase in available electricity and a more reliable electricity supply will also encourage the uptake of electric vehicles and increase the electrification of industrial process heat applications.

Both of these will lead to a reduction in CO2 emissions.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The West Coast is facing a high probability of a large earthquake on the Alpine Fault, and for disaster planning purposes this is frequently referred to as an AF8 event – a magnitude 8 earthquake. The project has been designed to be resilient against the impacts of such an event.

When (not if) this occurs, it will almost certainly cause an extended period transmission outage between the East and West Coasts of the South Island. There may be multiple locations where damage to the transmission system is sustained along its 550km route into the West Coast.

Current mitigation of this risk is provided by diesel generators. But this will be inadequate due to limited fuel supply in the region. Providing additional fuel storage will not help as these may rupture and spill fuel, contaminating ground and possibly waterways. As roads will likely be closed for an extended period, getting additional fuel into the region will be problematic. While barges or small tankers may provide some relief, the absence of sheltered harbours may make this option difficult especially if weather conditions are inclement for crossing sandbars at the river mouths. Further, transfer of fuel from ship to shore is fraught with risk, without having to operate from severely damaged facilities.

While there can be no guarantees, a well-designed project can make a significant contribution to the provision of a limited power supply in the region, and avoid the need for using diesel generation. This power supply will be essential in meeting the electricity requirement of critical facilities such as hospitals and other medical facilities, police and fire service stations, disaster relief coordination centres, emergency accommodation, and essential infrastructure such as water and wastewater treatment plants.

Will the project address significant environmental issues?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

This project addresses energy security and resilience on the West Coast, and climate change, as significant environmental issues at a national and regional scale in New Zealand and lessens the reliance on non-renewable energy generation. This project is a long-term investment spanning several generations and will continue to provide benefits of reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Renewable energy solutions are identified as priority projects in the Tai Poutini West Coast 2050 Strategy. Energy activities are considered to be critical to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of people and communities.

As identified earlier, the Te Poutini – West Coast Renewable Energy Strategy identified opportunities to unlock renewable energy investment, and job creation, as a significant component of the pathway away from fossil fuel towards greater levels of renewable energy. Supporting the development of hydro generation by 2025 was identified as a task to enable and encourage the uptake of renewable energy options. The Waitaha Hydro Project is specifically identified in the strategy as a project which is in the pipeline on renewable energy projects.

The operative Westland District Plan acknowledges that the economic development of the region is dependent on the District's reliance on local energy supply. The Westland District Plan specifically identifies hydro-electric power generation as a viable option to address the district's future energy demands.

The operative Westland District Plan also identifies that "the level of isolation experienced in many parts of the District emphasises the need for Westland to become less energy dependent on the rest of New Zealand and more energy efficient. In this regard, hydro-electric power generation could represent a viable option in the future provision of the District's energy needs. In addition, independent and small scale generators of energy are likely to be required".

The West Coast Regional Policy Statement provides a supportive objective and policy framework for the use and development of renewable electricity generation activities. Renewable electricity generation infrastructure is provided for as regionally significant infrastructure within the region's policy framework. The policy acknowledges hydro schemes have a functional need to be located where the water resources are and in doing so the positive and negative impacts and limitations must be weighed up. This in turn requires particular regard is to be had to the locational, technical and operational requirements of the infrastructure, including within areas of ONLs and ONFs and areas of significant biodiversity.

Also, the proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan (the proposed new district plan for the districts on the West Coast, which is currently at the Hearing stage) includes objectives and policies to recognise the local and regional benefits of renewable electricity generation activities including development, operation and maintenance to meet the needs of Te Tai o Poutini.

Westpower considers that overall, the project is consistent with Conservation General Policy 2005 as amended in 2007 and 2019 (CGP) and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy 2010-2020 (CMS).

Anything else?

Please write your answer here:

Westpower has a long history of developing and operating hydro generation on the West Coast of the South Island, starting with the first public supply of electricity to the town of Reefton in 1888. Westpower's recent experience in developing and operating the 7.6 MW Amethyst run of river hydro scheme has further showcased our careful stewardship of the environment and ability to work with DOC and the local community in achieving successful outcomes. This won multiple engineering awards in 2014 for the innovative and environmentally sensitive approaches that were incorporated. Moreover, the community ownership of Westpower ensures that any benefits are returned to the local consumers.

Westpower strongly believes that this Scheme can achieve similar outcomes. It will provide considerable social and economic benefits that will accrue for the communities on the West Coast, and the very localised, and well-mitigated, environmental effects.

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:

The effects of, and on, climate change are demonstrably positive, as explained above.

Also, an assessment by consulting hydrologist, Martin Doyle has concluded that climate change influence of more precipitation and enhanced runoff, especially in winter, appear to be a favourable influence for hydroelectric power generation on rivers draining the Southern Alps.

Although there are geological risks from earthquakes in the area, the main impact of future fault rupture and/or large earthquakes in the project area is on the future maintenance and operation of the project itself, and not on the environment. Because there is no proposed significant new water storage structure the construction of the various project components will not create additional seismic hazards or seismic risks for either the local environment or river users.

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:

Westpower has an excellent record of compliance with all its statutory obligations and there have been no enforcement proceeding issued against it.

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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:
Peter Armstrong

Important notes