Application for a project to be referred to an expert consenting panel

(Pursuant to Section 20 of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020)

For office use only:

Project name: Opunake Solar Farm Project
Application number: PJ-0000850
Date received: 23/12/2022

This form must be used by applicants making a request to the responsible Minister(s) for a project to be referred to an expert consenting panel under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020.

All legislative references relate to the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (the Act), unless stated otherwise.

The information requirements for making an application are described in Section 20(3) of the Act. Your application must be made in this approved form and contain all of the required information. If these requirements are not met, the Minister(s) may decline your application due to insufficient information.

Section 20(2)(b) of the Act specifies that the application needs only to provide a general level of detail, sufficient to inform the Minister's decision on the application, as opposed to the level of detail provided to an expert consenting panel deciding applications for resource consents or notices of requirement for designations.

We recommend you discuss your application and the information requirements with the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) before the request is lodged. Please contact the Ministry via email: fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz

The Ministry has also prepared Fast-track guidance to help applicants prepare applications for projects to be referred.

Part I: Applicant

Applicant details

Person or entity making the request: Harmony Energy NZ #4 Limited

Contact person: Pete Grogan

Job title: Director - Harmony Energy NZ #4 Limited

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Postal address:

C/o Campbell Tyson, 1 Wesley Street, Pukekohe 2340

Address for service (if different from above)

Organisation: 4sight Consulting Limited - Part of SLR

Contact person: Christina Walker

Job title: Principal Planning and Policy Consultant

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s 9(2)(a)

Postal address:

PO Box 911 310

Victoria Street West

Auckland 1142

Part II: Project location

The application: does not relate to the coastal marine area

If the application relates to the coastal marine area wholly or in part, references to the Minister in this form should be read as the Minister for the Environment and Minister of Conservation.

Site address / location:

A cadastral map and/or aerial imagery to clearly show the project location will help.

915 Ihaia Road, Ōpunake, Taranaki, 4681, New Zealand

Legal description(s):

A current copy of the relevant Record(s) of Title will help.

Lots 8 and 21 DP 792 and Lot 2 DP 19301

Registered legal land owner(s):

Paul Bernard Duffy, Brenda Anne Duffy and South Taranaki Trustees Limited

Detail the nature of the applicant's legal interest (if any) in the land on which the project will occur, including a statement of how that affects the applicant's ability to undertake the work that is required for the project:

The Applicant has a registered option over the land. It is free to exercise that option and will do so when consents are in place, there are no barriers to doing so. The option is in respect of an Agreement over the land which contains all the land rights needed to construct and operate the solar farm for 34 years.

Part III: Project details

Description

Project name: Opunake Solar Farm Project

Project summary:

Please provide a brief summary (no more than 2-3 lines) of the proposed project.

Establish an approximately 70MW (installed capacity of 94MW) solar farm located at 915 Ihaia Road, Opunake. The activity is a significant scale renewable energy project and would be connected directly to the national electricity grid via the existing Transpower substation on the adjacent property at 909 Ihaia Road, Opunake.

Project details:

Please provide details of the proposed project, its purpose, objectives and the activities it involves, noting that Section 20(2)(b) of the Act specifies that the application needs only to provide a general level of detail.

The project is detailed on the preliminary plans attached. The preliminary overall layout of the solar farm is detailed on the attached Site Design Plan. Note: details may vary slightly following detailed design.

1. The installation of approximately 142,650 monocrystalline solar panels with a total installed capacity of 94.149 MWp. The panels are 2.384m x 1.303m x 35mm. The panels will be mounted on a total of 2,163 full length arrays (being 39.67m long) and 429 half length arrays (being 19.84m long) on pole driven or ground screw mounting structures.
2. Each row of panel arrays will be setback approximately 4m from the back edge of the row in front (i.e. to the north). The panels will be generally mounted approximately 800mm above relative ground level at the lower end and between 2.5m-2.8m above relative ground level at the higher end, with a mounting angle of 20 degrees. Cables will be mounted on the rear of the panels and trenched.
3. The inclusion of ancillary infrastructure to convert electricity generated into a format compatible with Transpower's transmission system including:
    1. Twenty-six MV (medium voltage) power stations measuring approximately 6m (long) x 2.4m (wide) with a height of approximately 3.5m above ground level mounted on compacted soil and flagstone stone.
    2. Two substation buildings that resemble containers mounted on compacted soil and flagstone stone. The substation buildings will have dimensions of approximately 20m (long) x 3.5m (wide) and a height of 3.95m above ground level.
    3. One 150 MVA Transformer (110KV)
    4. 1 container-like structure, being 6m (long) x 2.4m (wide), and 3m above ground level, housing spare parts.
4. Deer-type security fencing with a height of approximately 2.5m around the perimeter of the solar farm and infra-red cameras and satellite dishes mounted on 3m high support poles located around the perimeter of the security fence.
5. An underground connection to the national grid via the existing substation located on the adjacent property at 909 Ihaia Road.
6. Provision for ongoing farming of the land around the solar panels, specifically, sheep grazing.
7. The restoration and planting of riparian areas of the Otahi Stream, enhancement of the high quality wetlands and boundary planting. The exact location and extent of planting will be confirmed as the detailed design of the project progresses.
8. Earthworks to form platforms for the power stations, substations, transformer and spare parts container and construct / upgrade access roads and trenching for underground cables (initial estimates are some 17,000m3 but will need to be confirmed by detailed design). Some minor recontouring of small mounds in certain areas

of the site will be required to allow for installation of the solar panels. The exact extent of this is not yet known but will be confirmed through detailed design. Significant site levelling will not be required as the support poles for the solar panels are driven or screwed into the ground and can be height adjusted.

9. Occasional educational visits to the site from school children/students and community groups to learn about solar energy generation.

Where applicable, describe the staging of the project, including the nature and timing of the staging:

N/A

Consents / approvals required

Relevant local authorities: South Taranaki District Council, Taranaki Regional Council

Resource consent(s) / designation required:

Land-use consent, Water permit, Discharge permit

Relevant zoning, overlays and other features:

Please provide details of the zoning, overlays and other features identified in the relevant plan(s) that relate to the project location.

Legal description(s)	Relevant plan	Zone	Overlays	Other features
Lot 8 DP 792 and Lot 2 DP 19301	South Taranaki District Plan	Rural Zone	N/A	N/A

Rule(s) consent is required under and activity status:

Please provide details of all rules consent is required under. Please note that Section 18(3)(a) of the Act details that the project **must not include** an activity that is described as a prohibited activity in the Resource Management Act 1991, regulations made under that Act (including a national environmental standard), or a plan or proposed plan.

Relevant plan / standard	Relevant rule / regulation	Reason for consent	Activity status	Location of proposed activity
Taranaki Regional Freshwater Plan	Rule 27 - Discharge of stormwater and sediment into surface water (excluding those wetlands listed in Appendix II), or onto or into land in circumstances where sediment from soil disturbance may enter water, from soil disturbance activities that do not come within or comply with the conditions of Rules 25 or 26	The proposal involves soil disturbance over an area greater than 8ha that will temporarily discharge sediment into land and surface water. A site erosion and sediment control management plan will be submitted to the Taranaki Regional Council	Controlled	Entire site
Taranaki Regional Freshwater Plan	Rule 43 - Discharge of contaminants or water into surface water (excluding the wetlands listed in Appendix II) which is	The proposal may involve the temporary discharge of contaminants into surface water from the	Discretionary	Entire site

	not provided for in Rules 21-42 or which is provided for but does not meet the standards, terms or conditions	disturbance of contaminated land		
Taranaki Regional Freshwater Plan	Rule 44 - Discharge of contaminants onto or into land restricted by s15(1)(b) (where contaminants may reach water) and s15(1)(d) (where the discharge is from industrial or trade premises) of the Act which is not expressly provided for in Rules 21-42 or which is provided for but does not meet the standards, terms or conditions and any other discharge of contaminants to land which is provided for in Rules 21-42 but which does not meet the standards, terms or conditions of those rules (irrespective of whether the discharges are from industrial or trade premises or are likely to reach water).	The proposal may involve temporarily discharging contaminants to land (where contaminants may enter water) associated with the proposed soil disturbance activities which is not expressly provided for in Rules 21-42	Discretionary	Entire site
Taranaki Regional Freshwater Plan	Rule 54 - Maintenance, repair, alteration, reconstruction or minor upgrading of an existing structure, in, on, under, or over the bed of a river or lake, that does not meet the conditions of Rule 53	The proposal may involve upgrading the existing bridge situated across the Otahi stream that may not comply with the permitted activity standards	Controlled	Existing bridged located across Otahi stream
South Taranaki District Plan	Rule 3.1.4(n) - Any activity that is not listed as a permitted, controlled, restricted discretionary, non-complying or prohibited activity	The proposal involves the establishment of a large scale renewable electricity generation activity which is an activity not listed in this chapter. The proposal also involves occasional educational trips to the facility which is also an activity not listed in this chapter, The proposed activities may not comply with standards	Discretionary	Entire site

		listed under 3.2.2-3.2.12		
South Taranaki District Plan	Rule 10.1.3(a) - (a) Unless listed elsewhere in the District Plan, any activity which does not comply with one or more of the performance standards in Sections 10.2- 10.7.	The proposal may involve upgrading existing crossings that do not comply with the permitted activity standards	Restricted Discretionary	Existing vehicle crossings on Ihaia Road and Opua Road
South Taranaki District Plan	Rule 13.1.4(a)(iii) - Large-scale renewable electricity generation activities that is not located in an area of Outstanding Natural Character listed in Schedule 8B or Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes listed in Schedule 8A.	The proposal involves the establishment of a large-scale renewable electricity generation activity that is not located any visual overlay.	Discretionary	Entire site
South Taranaki District Plan	Rule 14.1.3 (a) - The development or upgrading of electricity lines and associated support structures including towers, masts and poles that convey electricity above 110kV	The proposal will involve the establishment of electricity lines and support structures that convey electricity above 110kV	Restricted Discretionary	Entire site
South Taranaki District Plan	14.1.3(c) - Unless listed elsewhere in the District Plan, any permitted activity listed in Section 14.1.1 which does not meet one or more of the performance standards in Section 14.2	The proposal involves the establishment of electricity lines and supporting structures that may not comply with the performance standards in Section 14.2	Restricted Discretionary	Entire site
South Taranaki District Plan	17.1.4(e) - Any clearance, modification, damage or destruction of indigenous vegetation not identified as a Significant Natural Area in Schedule 2 regardless of ownership, or unless the activity is provided for under Rule 17.1.1(d) or Rule 17.1.3	The proposal may involve the removal of indigenous vegetation that does not meet the specific criteria under rule 17.1.1(d).	Discretionary	Specific areas in site
South Taranaki District Plan	19.1.3 (a) - Any sign listed as a permitted activity which does not	The proposal involves the establishment of signage that may not	Restricted Discretionary	Near site entrance and potentially throughout the site

	comply with one or more of the performance standards in Section 19.2	comply with the performance standards in Section 19.2		
National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011	10(2)	The PSI indicates HAIL activities have occurred on the site in specific locations with the land in these areas likely containing contaminants. It is uncertain if these HAIL activities have occurred elsewhere on the site where the proposed solar panels and associated soil disturbance is proposed. For the avoidance of doubt, consent is sought for soil disturbance on a piece of land where a DSI will exist and may show soil contamination exceeds the applicable standard in regulation 7. The consent authority will be given a copy of the DSI.	Restricted Discretionary	Entire site
National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020	45(1), (2) and (4)	The proposal involves vegetation clearance and earthworks within 10m of natural wetlands that is for the purpose of constructing specified infrastructure. The proposed earthworks will also result in a temporary discharge within 100m of natural wetlands	Discretionary	Within 10m and 100m of identified natural wetlands
South Taranaki District Plan	Rule 3.1.3 (k) Within the National Grid Yard, any earthworks and/or aggregate/soil extraction that does not comply with performance standards in Rule 3.2.13.1.	The proposal may involve earthworks greater than 300mm in depth within 12m of a National Grid support structure foundartion	Restricted Discretionary	Near existing Transpower substation
South Taranaki District Plan	Rule 3.1.3(l) - Any building within 20m of the secured yard of a National Grid substation.	The proposal may involve new buildings within 20m of the secured yard of a National Grid Substation	Restricted Discretionary	Near existing Transpower substation

Resource consent applications already made, or notices of requirement already lodged, on the same or a similar project:

Please provide details of the applications and notices, and any decisions made on them. Schedule 6 clause 28(3) of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 details that a person who has lodged an application for a resource consent or a notice of requirement under the Resource Management Act 1991, in relation to a listed project or a referred project, must withdraw that application or notice of requirement before lodging a consent application or notice of requirement with an expert consenting panel under this Act for the same, or substantially the same, activity.

There are no current or previous resource consents or notices of requirements for this proposal

Resource consent(s) / Designation required for the project by someone other than the applicant, including details on whether these have been obtained:

No designations or resource consents required by other parties

Other legal authorisations (other than contractual) required to begin the project (eg, authorities under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 or concessions under the Conservation Act 1987), including details on whether these have been obtained:

N/A

Construction readiness

If the resource consent(s) are granted, and/or notice of requirement is confirmed, detail when you anticipate construction activities will begin, and be completed:

Please provide a high-level timeline outlining key milestones, e.g. detailed design, procurement, funding, site works commencement and completion.

On issue of consents, funding for the project will be raised and procurement will proceed. Construction will begin within two years of the issue of consent.

Part IV: Consultation

Government ministries and departments

Detail all consultation undertaken with relevant government ministries and departments:

Ministry for the environment (MfE) – A meeting was held with Samantha Maxwell and Max Gander Cooper to provide an overview of the project and to discuss requirements for the MfE referral application and timeframes for lodgement. They advised that ecological and landscape matters should be discussed in detail in the application whereas matters like contamination and archaeology would only need high level comments. The NPS: HPL was discussed, and it was agreed that the project aligns with the specified infrastructure pathway under this document. The Applicant team advised that consultation is underway with a few parties including Transpower and Iwi.

Local authorities

Detail all consultation undertaken with relevant local authorities:

South Taranaki District Council – Initial discussions with Jessica Sorenson (Team Leader), Adam Bridgeman (Consultant Planner) and Scott Wilson (Council's Business Development Manager) on applicability of specific rules including the Rural and Transportation chapters. They also advised to check statutory acknowledgment requirements of Otahi stream, ensure Mt Taranaki is considered in the landscape assessment, and that Iwi may want input into the naming of the solar farm.
Taranaki Regional Council – Preliminary discussions with Jonti Owen (Team Leader) and Kim Giles (Principal Planner) on regional rule triggers and applicability of the NES:FW. It was advised that poles and trenching may be required in

wetlands of low value which can be facilitated by the NES:FW. Discussed the applicability of the NPS: HPL and agreed there was an appropriate pathway given that livestock grazing will still be undertaken on the site.

Other persons/parties

Detail all other persons or parties you consider are likely to be affected by the project:

Transpower – The applicant has had extensive engagement with Transpower regarding connection to the substation. Owners/occupiers of all adjacent properties including:

- 920 Ihaia Road
- 839 Wiremu Road
- 859 Wiremu Road
- 881 Wiremu Road
- 882 Wiremu Road
- 955 Opua Road
- 914 Arawhata Road
- 805 Opua Road
- 849 Ihaia Road

Detail all consultation undertaken with the above persons or parties:

Consultation with the above parties will be undertaken prior to an application to the EPA. Transpower has been consulted with as per above.

Part V: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

For help with identifying relevant iwi authorities, you may wish to refer to Te Kāhui Māngai – Directory of Iwi and Māori Organisations.

Iwi authorities and Treaty settlement entities

Detail all consultation undertaken with Iwi authorities whose area of interest includes the area in which the project will occur:

Iwi authority	Consultation undertaken
Te Kahui o Taranaki	The applicant sought advice from the Taranaki Regional Council regarding the iwi/hapu who have interests in the area. After several discussions with Council, they advised the applicant to contact Te Kāhui o Taranaki who confirmed they have mana whenua over the wider Opunake area and who represent the collective interests of seven marae (Oākura Pā, Puniho Pā, Te Niho o Te Ātiawa, Te Pōtaka Marae, Te Paepae o te Raukura, Toroānui Marae, Orimupiko Marae). An email was sent to Te Kāhui o Taranaki on the 27 September 2022 to introduce the project, invite preliminary feedback and organise a virtual meeting. A virtual meeting was held on 23 November 2022 to discuss the project in greater detail. An on-site meeting was held on the 20 December 2022 with no initial concerns raised by Te Kāhui o Taranaki. It is anticipated that Te Kāhui o Taranaki will provide a Cultural Values Assessment that will be included in the application.

Detail all consultation undertaken with Treaty settlement entities whose area of interest includes the area in which the project will occur:

Treaty settlement entity	Consultation undertaken
Te Kahui o Taranaki	As above

Treaty settlements

Treaty settlements that apply to the geographical location of the project, and a summary of the relevant principles and provisions in those settlements, including any statutory acknowledgement areas:

Section 18(3)(b) of the Act details that the project **must not include** an activity that will occur on land returned under a Treaty settlement where that activity has not been agreed to in writing by the relevant land owner.

Taranaki Iwi Claims Settlement Act 2016

Part VI: Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011

Customary marine title areas

Customary marine title areas under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 that apply to the location of the project:

Section 18(3)(c) of the Act details that the project **must not include** an activity that will occur in a customary marine title area where that activity has not been agreed to in writing by the holder of the relevant customary marine title order.

N/A

Protected customary rights areas

Protected customary rights areas under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 that apply to the location of the project:

Section 18(3)(d) of the Act details that the project **must not include** an activity that will occur in a protected customary rights area and have a more than minor adverse effect on the exercise of the protected customary right, where that activity has not been agreed to in writing by the holder of the relevant protected customary rights recognition order.

N/A

Part VII: Adverse effects

Description of the anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment, including greenhouse gas emissions:

In considering whether a project will help to achieve the purpose of the Act, the Minister may have regard to, under Section 19(e) of the Act, whether there is potential for the project to have significant adverse environmental effects. Please provide details on both the nature and scale of the anticipated and known adverse effects, noting that Section 20(2)(b) of the Act specifies that the application need only provide a general level of detail.

Landscape and Visual Effects:
A preliminary landscape assessment has been undertaken by Rachel Annan, Principal Landscape Planner, 4Sight Consulting. A copy of that assessment can be provided on request. The assessment sets out that a design led approach has been undertaken based on the characteristics of the site and receiving environment and will continue to be undertaken following further discussions with mana whenua. When considering the visual and landscape effects associated with the proposal, the assessment found that:

- The existing landform pattern of knolls and mounds scattered around and through the site will provide a level of containment and mitigation for the proposed solar farm. This landform pattern affords an effective level of landscape capacity by which the proposal will be more readily contained and absorbed in this landscape setting.
- The proposal areas will also be setback at least 25m from roadside boundaries, and behind existing mounds where they are located near road boundaries. This is a design mitigation response to the 'immediacy' of

landscape outlooks in this setting. Where there are views afforded to the solar panel array, particularly while mitigation planting establishes, they will not be as immediately before the viewer from adjacent public and nearby neighbouring viewpoints. This approach reinforces the sense of containment of the development area.

- Place responsive enhancement and mitigation solutions will afford effective landscape integration and the enhancement of ecological values. Landscape containment will be afforded by the pattern of existing landform mounds onsite and will be reinforced by proposed mitigation planting. Proposed indigenous planting through the site will improve the ecological value of high-quality wetland areas.
- The proposed solar array and mitigation planting is not anticipated to interrupt (i.e. obscure or notably detract from) outlooks across the site to Mount Taranaki as an ONL. The panels and planting will sit lower than the lahar mounds through the property and will not further block views than the existing mounds already do for outlooks across the site to the maunga.
- At this stage in the project process, there are not any apparent fatal flaws with regards to landscape outcomes to establish a solar farm in this location. Design mitigation refinement can be undertaken if required to address any specific issues arising, such as in response to further assessment or consultation through subsequent design stages.

The preliminary landscape assessment has concluded that it is considered there will be no significant adverse landscape effects of the proposal in this rural setting.

Ecological and Biodiversity Values and Effects:

The ecological values of the site and ecological effects of the proposal have been assessed by Andrew Briggs, Senior Ecologist, 4Sight Consulting. The report relates to the construction, operation and maintenance of the solar farm and details the findings of an initial ecological assessment undertaken of the vegetation and habitats within the site, including an assessment of the potential adverse effects of the proposal. Preliminary restoration opportunities within the site are still being investigated, the findings of which will be included in final report to submitted in the application.

The site has been predominately under pasture since at least since 1954 and generally has a gently sloping topography with scattered hillocks throughout. Four primary vegetation types were identified onsite, namely, exotic pasture grass cover, hedgerows, riparian vegetation as well as two small patches of native scrub. Low numbers of taru kino (pest plants/weeds) were seen throughout the site.

Wetland habitat comprising primarily facultative wetland (FACW) and obligate (OBL) wetland species were scattered throughout the site, primarily within low points of the landscape and at the footslopes of small hills. Historical imagery of the site indicates that multiple streams and wetland-stream complexes existed within the site boundary prior to the implementation of artificial drainage channels. The perennial Otahi Stream, which bisects the site, is crossed by a single bridge structure, which does not appear to hinder local fish/macroinvertebrate migration. Multiple artificial drains were observed and delineated within the site extent. The drains were primarily V-shaped and well vegetated, with generally low levels of erosion. It is likely that the drains were excavated onsite to divert natural watercourses whilst also effectively reducing the level of saturation within historic wetland areas, allowing for pasture expansion.

In terms of native fauna, only common manu (birds) were seen or heard on site, and it was considered unlikely that any mokomoko (skinks and geckos) are present in high densities due to the limited habitat available. Similarly, the nearest known record of pekapeka long-tailed bats was recorded in excess of 40km northeast of the site and are not anticipated to reside on the site due to the lack of suitable habitat. No active fish sampling was undertaken onsite, however, an assessment of eDNA results indicated the presence of a single 'At Risk' eel species. The assessment of macroinvertebrates at a single locality within the Otahi Stream indicated that the instream habitat condition is fair/excellent. No pest animals or evidence of pest animals, such as scat or tracks, were observed during the site visit. It is likely that pest animals such as rats, possums, mustelids, hedgehogs, and feral cats are present within the general area as pest traps were noted within the site boundary.

Overall, the ecological values on this site were assessed as 'Low' based on the predominate land use of the site, which was pasture for dairy farming. Native forest and scrubs areas onsite covered very small areas whilst wetlands, although a nationally under-represented ecosystem, comprised mainly secondary grassland vegetation.

A number of potential adverse ecological effects can be associated with the proposed solar farm, including construction works (sediment discharges from earthworks), stormwater run-off from impervious surfaces, reflection and glare off solar panels, and lighting and noise associated with on-site infrastructure. Earthworks and associated

sediment discharges are expected to be limited in extent and appropriately managed through sediment and erosion control measures and appropriate timing of works (i.e. during the earthworks season).
As the solar panels themselves are built on steel frames, stormwater will flow off the panels and still reach the ground. Therefore, impervious surfaces will be restricted to existing access tracks and areas containing ancillary equipment buildings/containers. The remainder of the site remains in pasture suitable for sheep grazing. Assuming adherence to ongoing best practice stormwater management, incorporated via conditions of consent, all effects generated by permanent stormwater discharges will be able to be appropriately managed.
Security lighting is proposed around associated infrastructure on the site. Due to the lack of pekapeka on the site and surrounding area, any adverse effects on native fauna from the proposed lighting are considered negligible.
The solar panels themselves do not generate noise with only the electrical inverters producing a slight hum during daylight hours. The effect of potential noise associated with the solar farm on local fauna is considered to be negligible. Solar panels are designed to absorb light and not to reflect it, therefore they pose little risk of glint or glare. Effects on local manu (birds) and other native fauna are expected to be low/very low.
There are also a range of potential positive ecological effects associated with the proposal. Based on the initial design plans, positive effects would include improved aquatic habitat and water quality from reduced grazing pressure and recommended planting of riparian zones, proposed enhancement of biodiversity values through restoration plantings and enhanced connectivity of natural areas in a landscape context through buffer and corridor plantings. It is likely that if the proposed enhancement opportunities are implemented, the overall ecological impact would result in a 'Net Gain' for the site.
Some of the solar panels will be established in 'low quality' wetlands (i.e. boggy paddocks) identified on the site. As the poles supporting the panels will be driven or screwed into ground, the structures will result in minimal changes to water flows. The associated construction works will be suitably managed to ensure any temporary discharges are appropriately managed. The proposed design approach will therefore minimise any potential for adverse effects on the low quality wetlands.
Overall, based on the initial assessment undertaken, it is considered that there will be no significant adverse effects on the ecological and biodiversity values associated with the site.
Construction Effects:
Construction traffic: Construction involves the transport of the mounting poles, panels and ancillary infrastructure to the site in heavy vehicles. Such heavy vehicles are similar in size to that of dairy tankers and materials will be delivered to site incrementally (i.e. one to two truckloads at a time over a period of approximately 12-18 months). Likewise, some heavy machinery (e.g. post rammer) will delivered to site, but will remain there for the duration of works. All construction traffic will be managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and it is anticipated that all construction traffic effects can be appropriately managed so as not to be significant. The establishment of the facility will take approximately 557,264 labour hours over a timeframe of 12-18 months. It is anticipated that construction staff will commute to the site via car or other light vehicle from the larger population centres including Opunake, New Plymouth and Whanganui, where accommodation is available. The applicant is working with Iwi and the Council to maximise the use of local staff and resources.
Noise and Vibration: During construction, posts may be driven into the ground using a post rammer. Alternatively, ground screws will be used. Once the poles are in situ, the solar panels are screwed in place. Ancillary infrastructure will either be constructed on site or pre-fabricated and transported to the site. Cabling will then be installed, with trenching required. It is anticipated that noise and vibration associated with all construction activities will comply with the relevant District Plan and New Zealand construction noise standards. Further, a condition of consent requiring a construction management plan is proposed to ensure all construction effects are appropriately managed. An acoustic assessment will be provided with the EPA application.
Overall: It is considered that any temporary adverse effects relating to construction, including traffic, noise, vibration, and staff housing, can be acceptably managed. There will not be any significant adverse effects as a result of the construction works.
Glint and Glare:
A Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study will be prepared by SLR, who have extensive experience in solar farm projects. The final assessment will be included in the application. Notwithstanding, the solar farm has been specifically designed and located to minimise potential glint and glare effects on surrounding dwellings and passing motorists, noting that solar panels absorb light rather than reflect it. Additional landscape screening will be provided via on-site

planting to ensure any potential glint and glare effects are sufficiently mitigated from all potential sensitive receivers. In summary, it is considered that adverse effects associated with glint and glare can be managed so as to avoid any significant adverse effects on road users or dwellings within the vicinity of the site.

Effects on Productive Land:

The solar panel mounting structures will be pole driven or screwed into the ground, leaving the pasture underneath in place. Pasture is naturally retained as water runs off the panels and drains into the soil, and sunlight reaching ground level remains available due to the separation of the panels. This ensures that even while the solar panels are in-situ, the site can continue to be utilised for pastoral farming, more specifically, the grazing of sheep. The landowner or a leasee will continue to farm the land for this purpose. At the end of life of the solar panels (approximately 30-40 years), the panels can either be unscrewed and replaced, with the poles remaining in-situ, or the poles can be removed, and the land can be returned solely to farming activities. As such, any adverse effects on the productive potential of the land are considered to be negligible.

Contamination Effects

A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) has been undertaken by James Blackwell, Principal Land & Water Quality Consultant, 4Sight Consulting. A copy of the PSI can be provided on request. The findings of the PSI have indicated that it is highly unlikely that activities or industries listed on the HAIL have been conducted at the bulk of the site where the solar farm development will occur. HAIL activities have occurred in a specific location of the site as a result of historical dairy farming activities. However, these areas will not be subject to the proposed solar farm development. Should the proposed earthworks identify any further contamination, a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner will be engaged to assess the identified contaminants and provide appropriate management measures. As such, it is considered that any actual or potential effects relating to land contamination will be suitably managed, and there will be no significant adverse effects on human health

Archaeological Effects

An Archaeological Risk Evaluation report has been prepared by Ivan Bruce, Archaeological Resource Management and can be provided on request. No archaeological evidence was discovered during field inspection and any potential archaeological finds are assessed as highly unlikely due to several factors, including the predominantly coastal prehistoric settlement pattern demonstrated by the archaeological record; lack of traditional or historic records pertaining to pre 1900 land use within the project area; the position of the project area being well within former bush line in 1881; poor suitability for Māori horticulture; and landscape modification across the project area. Notwithstanding, all works will be taken in accordance with an archaeological discovery protocol in the event any unknown features are discovered. Any adverse effects relating to archaeology are therefore considered to be minimal. There will be no significant adverse effects on historic heritage values.

Operational Effects:

The operational effects of the proposed solar farm are very limited. Maintenance requirements are minimal as equipment can primarily be monitored remotely. It is anticipated that a technician will visit the site approximately once a week to carry out a physical check of the infrastructure. In the initial stages, additional visits to the site will be required for plant maintenance, including weed control, but restoration areas will be designed so that they become self-sustaining. Additional traffic will also be generated because of ongoing pest control, unless this is carried out by the landowner or leasee.

Occasionally a bus load of school children or a community group may visit the site to undertake an educational tour of the facility. Any potential for adverse effects associated with the educational visits will be minimal given the expected frequency of visits and the distance to the adjacent dwellings. The visits can be managed to ensure that any potential for adverse effects are avoided or mitigated through conditions of consent limiting the occurrence and timing of visits. Overall, it is highly unlikely that an average of more than 10 vehicle movements a week will be generated as a result of the solar farm (not including normal farming movements). These movements will be readily absorbed into the surrounding roading network without giving rise to adverse effects.

The panels themselves do not produce any noise, however there will be an ‘electrical hum’ from inverters during daylight hours. The noise level produced will be well below the permitted noise standards and given the nature of the noise (continuous and low level) it is not anticipated that this will result in any discernible effects for neighbouring property owners/occupiers. In addition, the occasional educational visits may result in a low level of noise, however this is also anticipated to be well below permitted levels and unlikely to result in any adverse effects. It is anticipated that conditions of consent will be used to require all noise to comply with the District Plan standards.

Overall, it is considered that any potential for adverse amenity effects from the operation of the solar farm will be avoided, remedied or mitigated through requirements for industry best operational practices, with there being no significant adverse effects associated with the operation of the solar farm.

Cultural Effects:

As outlined in the summary of iwi consultation, the applicant is having ongoing discussions with Te Kāhui o Taranaki who have mana whenua over the wider Opunake area and who represent the collective interests of seven marae (Oākura Pā, Puniho Pā, Te Niho o Te Ātiawa, Te Pōtaka Marae, Te Paepae o te Raukura, Toroānui Marae, Orimupiko Marae).

It is anticipated that Te Kāhui o Taranaki will provide a Cultural Impact/Values Assessments to support the application and the applicant is committed to continued relationship building and engagement. On that basis, any adverse cultural effects arising from the proposal are considered to be less than minor.

Overall Assessment:

Overall, it is expected that the project will result in a low level or minimal adverse effects on the environment, with any potential for adverse effects able to be avoided, remedied or mitigated through design and / or management approaches. There are no significant adverse effects expected as a result of the project. Conversely, the positive effects arising from the project, including those associated with the proposed ecological restoration of the site, are considered to be significant.

Part VIII: National policy statements and national environmental standards

General assessment of the project in relation to any relevant national policy statement (including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement) and national environmental standard:

National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation

A discussion of the key objectives and policies of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 is included below.

Objective: To recognise the national significance of renewable electricity generation activities by providing for the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing renewable electricity generation activities, such that the proportion of New Zealand's electricity generated from renewable energy sources increases to a level that meets or exceeds the New Zealand Government's national target for renewable electricity generation.

1. Recognizing the benefits of renewable electricity generation activities.

Policy A sets out to ensure decision makers recognise the benefits of renewable electricity generation activities. These benefits generally include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing security of supply, using renewable energy over finite resources, reversibility of adverse effects, and avoiding reliance in imported fuels

Solar is a natural and inexhaustible source of energy that avoids reliance on imported fuels and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. The proposal will contribute to the diversification of electricity generation in New Zealand and increase the security and capacity of supply. Further, at the completion of the life of the solar farm, all components can be removed and recycled, and the land returned to its current state with no lasting impacts. Overall, the proposal is consistent with the direction provided by the above NPS objective and policy.

1. Acknowledging the practical implications of achieving New Zealand's target for electricity generation from renewable resources.

Policy B specifically notes 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 proposal provides for a significant electricity generation activity that will generate enough power to meet the electricity requirements for approximately 15,000 Kiwi homes each year, contributing to the national target for renewable energy (being 90% by 2025). As such, the proposal is consistent with the direction of this policy.

1. Acknowledging the practical constraints associated with the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing renewable electricity generation activities

Policy C1 states decision makers shall have particular regard to specific matters including locating renewable energy generation where it is available, logistical and technical practicalities, location of existing infrastructure and eed to connect to national grid, provide for mitigation opportunities and adaptive management measures.
Policy C2 highlights that when considering any residual environmental effects of renewable electricity generation activities that cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated, decision makers shall have regard to offsetting measures or environmental compensation – including measures or compensation which benefit the local environment and community affected. Through a process of site investigation in various areas of the country, Harmony Energy found that the Opunake site is an ideal site for solar electricity generation due to its proximity to a nearby grid connection, its accommodating topography and annual irradiance (the amount of light energy received). The proposal will result in very low levels of adverse effects, all of which can be adequately managed. Nonetheless, the applicant is proposing significant ecological restoration of the site. As such, the proposal is consistent with the direction of this policy.
Overall Assessment: The proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011.

National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS: HPL)

A discussion of the key objectives and policies of the NPS:HPL is included below:
Objective: Highly productive land is protected for use in land-based primary production, both now and for future generations.
Policy 4: The use of highly productive land for land-based primary production is prioritised and supported.
Policy 8: Highly productive land is protected from inappropriate use and development.
Policy 9: Reverse sensitivity effects are managed so as not to constrain land-based primary production activities on highly productive land.
Implementation: 3.9 Protecting highly productive land from inappropriate use and development
(1) Territorial authorities must avoid the inappropriate use or development of highly productive land that is not land-based primary production.
(2) A use or development of highly productive land is inappropriate except where at least one of the following applies to the use or development, and the measures in subclause (3) are applied:
… (j) it is associated with one of the following, and there is a functional or operational need for the use or development to be on the highly productive land:
(i) the maintenance, operation, upgrade, or expansion of specified infrastructure…
(3) Territorial authorities must take measures to ensure that any use or development on highly productive land:
(a) minimises or mitigates any actual loss or potential cumulative loss of the availability and productive capacity of highly productive land in their district; and
(b) avoids if possible, or otherwise mitigates, any actual or potential reverse sensitivity effects on land-based primary production activities from the use or development.
The site is predominantly LUC 3 land and is therefore classified as highly productive land. The proposed solar farm meets the definition of 'specified infrastructure' as electricity generation activities are recognised as regionally significant infrastructure in the Taranaki Regional Policy Statement (RPS). The NPS: HPL provides a pathway for the maintenance, operation, upgrade, or expansion of specified infrastructure, on the basis clause 3.9(3) is satisfied, and it is understood that 'new' specified infrastructure is also intended to be captured by clause 3.9(2)(j)(i). There is a functional and operational need for the solar farm to be located on the LUC 3 land as it provides the terrain that is useable for the installation of solar panel arrays and the site is adjacent a Transpower sub-station, which is required to connect the solar farm to the national grid.
In terms of clause 3.9(3) and as assessed previously, the solar panel mounting structures will be pole driven or screwed into the ground allowing sufficient space underneath and around the panels to allow the site to continue to be effectively used for sheep farming with minimal reverse sensitivity effects. At the end of life of the solar panels (approximately 25-35 years), the panels and associated infrastructure can be easily removed from the site to allow the land to be returned solely to productive use. As such, it is considered that any loss of land productivity has been minimised and could be fully reinstated if required. The proposal is not therefore contrary to the NPS: HPL.

National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management (NPS: FM)

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPSFM) sets a national policy framework for managing freshwater quality and quantity. It seeks to prioritise the well-being of water bodies and freshwater systems, health and needs of people, and the well-being of communities now and in the future. The policies, relevant

to this proposal, seek to ensure there is no further loss of extent of natural inland wetlands, their values are protected, and their restoration is promoted, habitats of indigenous freshwater species and freshwater values are improved.
In this case, some of the proposed solar panels and associated installation works will be undertaken in natural inland wetlands. These wetlands have been assessed as 'low quality' as they are predominantly boggy paddocks. It is noted that these identified wetlands may be excluded from the definition of 'natural inland wetland' (from 5 January 2023). Notwithstanding, the panels will be mounted on poles that will result in minimal damming and diversion of water flows and which will be pile driven or screwed with minimal earthworks required. Any temporary effects associated with required earthworks, predominantly trenching for cabling, can be suitably managed through appropriate erosion and sediment control measures. In addition, restoration planting in riparian areas will provide additional habitats for indigenous species and will improve freshwater values of the surrounding catchment. For these reasons, the proposal is not contrary to the NPS: FM.
National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health (NES: CS) and National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES:F)
The relevant provisions of these statutory documents have been considered as part of this proposal and, with regard to the conclusions reached in the adverse effects sections, it is considered that any adverse effects relating to human health and freshwater can be suitably managed to the extent they will not be significant. As such, the proposal is considered to be consistent with these statutory documents.

Part IX: Purpose of the Act

Your application must be supported by an explanation how the project will help achieve the purpose of the Act, that is to "urgently promote employment to support New Zealand's recovery from the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 and to support the certainty of ongoing investment across New Zealand, while continuing to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources".

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

Project's economic benefits and costs for people or industries affected by COVID-19:

Details of the proposal's job creation are set out in the 'Opunake Farm Solar Project Work Phases and Job Creation' report prepared by GreenEnco Limited which is attached. A summary of the details of this report are outlined below.
Phase 1: Engineering, procurement, and construction: This phase is estimated to take between 12-18 months and will result in the labour hours outlined below.

- System design and engineering- 2,280 labour hours
- Construction project personnel – 25,688 labour hours
- Installation - 528,000 labour hours
- Testing, commissioning and technical – 1,296 labour hours

Phase 2: Operation, Maintenance and Asset Management: This phase will last the lifetime of the project (34 years) and will result in the labour hours outlined below.

- Operation, maintenance and asset management - 10,728 labour hours per year for 34 years (excluding sheep farming)

The operations, maintenance and asset management phase relates to preventative, predictive and corrective maintenance works for asset optimisation for the life of the Project, which is estimated to be approximately 34 years.

Project's effects on the social and cultural wellbeing of current and future generations:

The economic benefits of the employment opportunities outlined above will contribute to the overall wellbeing of the wider area, assisting in reducing the rates of poverty.
Currently New Zealand is experiencing increased electricity scarcity and costs, which disproportionately impacts lower socio-economic communities. The project will assist in addressing this issue through an increase in both electricity supply and security.

In regard to cultural wellbeing, the applicant has been actively engaging with iwi (and will continue to do so) to ensure their values and aspirations are reflected in the proposal. It is understood that the proposed ecological restoration of the site will have positive cultural effects as it restores mana to the whenua.
Lastly, there are ancillary social benefits that will arise by opening the site to schools and community groups for educational purposes.

Whether the project would be likely to progress faster by using the processes provided by the Act than would otherwise be the case:

The proposal represents a large solar farm project in the current New Zealand context. For this reason, there is the potential for the doubling of timeframes due to scale and complexity and public notification of the proposal under 'special circumstances', which would result in delays to the project. In addition, given the relative 'newness' of large scale solar technology in New Zealand there is a risk that a lack of expertise and experience both within local government and the community could result in unnecessary delays through the traditional consenting pathways. Under a traditional consenting process, the requirement for doubling of timeframes, public notification and a hearing could result in a processing time of some 200 days (excluding any delays due to further information requests). This time could be at least doubled in the event of an appeal.
Consequently, it is considered likely that the project will progress faster under the Fast Track process than the traditional RMA consenting pathway.

Whether the project may result in a 'public benefit':

Examples of a public benefit as included in Section 19(d) of the Act are included below as prompts only.

Employment/job creation:

As noted above, GreenEnco considers that the total duration for engineering, procurement and construction will be in the range of 12 – 18 months. The labour hours listed for the operation, maintenance and asset management are long term (rather than construction jobs) and are required for the design life of the Project (34 years).

Housing supply:

The proposal will have no direct impact on the supply of housing in the area. However, the positive economic impact is considered likely to stimulate additional housing development in the wider area.

Contributing to well-functioning urban environments:

Currently, New Zealand has an energy shortage and is importing coal to generate energy. A stable and secure supply of energy is necessary for well-functioning urban environments and to support commerce.
Urban environments rely on successful commercial ecosystems that create a demand for housing and consumer products.
As noted elsewhere, the proposal will provide the following benefits:

- Increase economic activity
- Diversify the productive potential of the area
- Increase the electricity security for the area.

As such, the proposal is considered to have both direct and indirect benefits on the wellbeing and function of the nearby urban environments.

Providing infrastructure to improve economic, employment, and environmental outcomes, and increase productivity:

A secure supply of electricity sufficient to meet the demands of the population is essential to ensuring economic success and productivity. New Zealand's energy demand has been growing steadily and growth is forecast to continue. Demand growth is currently outstripping the growth in supply, exacerbating the risk of outages and an increasing reliance on imported coal.

As such, the proposed solar farm (and others like it) is crucial to the efficient delivery of clean energy over the next 30 years. Further, the proposal will contribute to the strategic target that 90 per cent of electricity generated in New Zealand should be derived from renewable energy sources by 2025 and 100% by 2030.

Improving environmental outcomes for coastal or freshwater quality, air quality, or indigenous biodiversity:

Solar farms frequently provide an opportunity to enhance and increase biodiversity across the farm and within the immediate surrounding landscape. By utilising the core design values, an opportunity arises to enhance and increase biodiversity across the farm and within the immediate surrounding landscape. Specifically, the proposal will result in the enhancement and protection of the riparian margins of the Otahi Stream and high quality wetlands. This will improve freshwater quality within the site.
In addition, the conversion of land from cattle dairy farming to sheep grazing will reduce nutrient run off - further improving water quality.

Minimising waste:

N/A

Contributing to New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change and transition more quickly to a low-emissions economy (in terms of reducing New Zealand's net emissions of greenhouse gases):

New Zealand must confront two major energy challenges as it meets growing energy demand. The first is to respond to the risks of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions caused by the production and use of energy. The second is to deliver clean, secure, affordable energy while treating the environment responsibly.
Solar farming has the lowest emissions of CO_2 per kilowatt of energy generated, with only 6 grams of CO_2 produced per kilowatt of energy. By comparison, onshore wind produces 10 grams, hydro power 97 grams, and coal 109 grams (2017. Arvesen, Humpenoder, Pepp et.al). Further, the components used in the manufacture of solar energy (e.g. steel, glass, copper, cobalt) can all be recycled at the end of life.
As such, an increase in solar energy infrastructure and resulting decrease in reliance on coal or new hydro will directly result in the lowering of New Zealand's carbon emissions relative to kilowatts of energy produced.
The proposed solar farm will address this second challenge by contributing to central government strategic target that 90 per cent of electricity generated in New Zealand should be derived from renewable energy sources by 2025 and 100% by 2030.

Promoting the protection of historic heritage:

N/A

Strengthening environmental, economic, and social resilience, in terms of managing the risks from natural hazards and the effects of climate change:

Solar farms are resilient to climate effects as they are less dependent on weather conditions compared to other renewable energy alternatives such as wind and hydro (solar works on cloudy days and the sun comes up every day). Additionally, solar farms can be located away from high-risk areas (such as the coast). With solar panels sitting at approximately 800mm-1m from the ground (on the low edge) and all containers and ancillary equipment being mounted on compacted soil and flagstone, solar are also resilient to flood impacts. Solar farms provide resilience through diversification of land uses, as they allow for dual use of land. Sheep can be grazed, or crops grown without compromising the generation of clean electricity. Additionally, solar farms are not permanent and can be dismantled easily with very little impact on the land, therefore allowing for flexibility in the site for the future.
The project will generate enough power to meet electricity requirements of approximately 15,000 homes each year and creates additional employment opportunities in the local area. It will also provide opportunities for on-site education in relation to solar energy generation and biodiversity.

Other public benefit:

The solar farm project provides the opportunity for educational and school visits to provide the public with information on solar farms, and renewable energy in general, and how they can generate better environmental outcomes.

Whether there is potential for the project to have significant adverse environmental effects:

The proposal is not considered likely to result in any adverse effects that are significant. Rather the proposal will result in positive on-site ecological effects, though both the retirement of the land from intensive cattle dairy farming and the implementation of the extensive ecological restoration. This is discussed in detail in Part VI of this form.

Part X: Climate change and natural hazards

Description of whether and how the project would be affected by climate change and natural hazards:

It is recognised that with climate change, increases in heavy rainfall could be a threat, putting pressure on drainage and stormwater systems and increasing the risk of flooding. However, it is noted that flooding will likely only be a risk to ancillary equipment given that the solar panels sit well above ground level. The risk to ancillary equipment is mitigated through its placement on piles or a concrete footing, to provide clearance from the natural ground level. Further, the entire footprint of the solar panels will cover approximately one third of the site and the land underneath the panels will remain as permeable farmland. It is intended that the solar farm infrastructure will be offset from existing farm drains, which are to be enhanced through riparian planting. Overall, the hydrology of the site will be improved through the retirement of land for restoration planting and the restoration of wetland areas.
Lastly, it is noted that solar power is less susceptible to climate change than some other renewable energy alternatives. This is because it is less weather dependent than wind and hydro (solar works on cloudy days and the sun comes up every day) and can be located away from high risk areas (such as the coast).

Part XI: Track record

A summary of all compliance and/or enforcement actions taken against the applicant by a local authority under the Resource Management Act 1991, and the outcome of those actions:

Local authority	Compliance/Enforcement Action and Outcome
No details	

Part XII: 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.

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.

Christina Walker	23/12/2022
Signature of person or entity making the request	**Date**

Important notes:

- Please note that this application form, including your name and contact details and all supporting documents, submitted to the Minister for the Environment and/or Minister of Conservation and the Ministry for the Environment, will be publicly released. Please clearly highlight any content on this

application form and in supporting documents that is commercially or otherwise sensitive in nature, and to which you specifically object to the release.

- Please ensure all sections, where relevant, of the application form are completed as failure to provide the required details may result in your application being declined.
- Further information may be requested at any time before a decision is made on the application.
- Please note that if the Minister for the Environment and/or Minister of Conservation accepts your application for referral to an expert consenting panel, you will then need to lodge a consent application and/or notice of requirement for a designation (or to alter a designation) in the approved form with the Environmental Protection Authority. The application will need to contain the information set out in Schedule 6, clauses 9-13 of the Act.
- Information presented to the Minister for the Environment and/or Minister of Conservation and shared with other Ministers, local authorities and the Environmental Protection Authority under the Act (including officials at government departments and agencies) is subject to disclosure under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) or the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). Certain information may be withheld in accordance with the grounds for withholding information under the OIA and LGOIMA 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 and LGOIMA is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Checklist

Where relevant to your application, please provide a copy of the following information.

No	Correspondence from the registered legal land owner(s)
No	Correspondence from persons or parties you consider are likely to be affected by the project
No	Written agreement from the relevant landowner where the project includes an activity that will occur on land returned under a Treaty settlement.
No	Written agreement from the holder of the relevant customary marine title order where the project includes an activity that will occur in a customary marine title area.
No	Written agreement from the holder of the relevant protected customary marine rights recognition order where the project includes an activity that will occur in a protected customary rights area.