



**TAHEKE 8C**

The Proprietors of Taheke 8C and Adjoining Blocks (Inc)  
Toitu te whenua he oranga whakaturanga



24 November 2022

Ministry for the Environment  
PO Box 10362  
Wellington, 6143

**Attention** Ministry for the Environment

Kia ora koutou

### **Taheke Geothermal Project**

The ROOPU Whakarite Mahi Limited Partnership (the **Partnership**) – a partnership between The Proprietors of Taheke 8C and Adjoining Blocks Incorporation (**Taheke 8C**) and Eastland Generation Limited – is pleased to present an application seeking Ministerial approval to be approved for fast tracking.

It has long been an aspiration of Taheke 8C to develop the geothermal resource under Taheke 8C's land. The first steps on this journey started in 2010 and have gathered momentum in recent years.

Taheke 8C has partnered with Eastland Generation Limited, an Eastland Group subsidiary with a total asset value approaching **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** Eastland Generation has a strong track record in constructing and operating geothermal power stations. This includes the delivery of the 25 MW Te Ahi O Maui geothermal power station in Kawerau, that was also delivered as a new build in partnership with Māori landowners, thus enabling the landowners to realise benefits from the development of the geothermal resource underlying their land.

The applicant for fast tracking (the Partnership) therefore, comprises both the Māori owners and administrators of land overlying the geothermal resource, who assert rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga over the resources of that land, and a generation company with the appropriate technical and financial wherewithal to deliver the Taheke Geothermal Project.

In July 2020, the Partnership successfully obtained \$11.9 million from the central government Infrastructure Reference Group's shovel-ready projects fund to consent and construct an exploratory well. This was an important step, as reflected in the Ministerial announcement, which stated:

*This opens up opportunities for Taheke 8C and its Māori shareholders with ongoing revenue for their own development aspirations with the creation of 190 jobs, while growing Eastland's renewable energy portfolio.*

The Partnership has now completed exploratory drilling and is pleased to confirm that the Taheke Geothermal Project is ready to proceed to the next stage, which is consenting. Both partners' strong desire is to complete consenting as soon as reasonably practicable so that the Partnership's focus can turn to deliver the project. It is anticipated that the fast track process will shorten the time to develop the project by at least 2 – 3 years, and potentially 4 – 5 years if the normal consenting process progressed to an Environment Court hearing.

In that regard, the Partnership requests that the Minister confirm the approval of the Taheke Geothermal Project for fast tracking under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (**FTA**) so without delay the Partnership can proceed with consenting in front of an Expert Consenting Panel.

The Taheke Geothermal Project achieves the FTA purpose on multiple fronts, and we highlight **three** key aspects:

#### **1. Employment**

The project will generate employment by providing approximately 120 direct full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs over a 5-year construction period and 9.9 ongoing direct FTE jobs once construction is complete.

In addition, 135 indirect FTE jobs will be created over the same 5-year construction period giving a total FTE job impact of 250+.

A report from the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research substantiates these figures and related employment benefits, including temporary employment stimulus, especially in the short term during construction.

## 2. Social and cultural well-being for Taheke 8C people

Through the Partnership structure, the Taheke Geothermal Project provides Taheke 8C with a share of the revenues from geothermal electricity sales, from the ground lease for the use of the site and access to the geothermal resource. It provides an income stream for the Māori owners that can fund longer-term economic development for their people through training, skills upgrading, and investment in other job-creating ventures. This project will allow Taheke 8C to fulfil their development aspirations for their land and bring positive effects to current and future generations.

This significant benefit for Taheke 8C's shareholders has been long awaited and is now within reach.

## 3. Renewable energy generation

Geothermal energy generation is a form of renewable energy generation which directly contributes to New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change and transition more quickly to a low-emissions economy. Just as importantly, the primary economic benefit of the Taheke geothermal power station will be harnessing geothermal energy to produce electricity. The combined effects on electricity consumers of building a geothermal power station at the Taheke site would be:

- Suppression of power price increases that could arise with 'alternative futures' without the Taheke development;
- Avoidance of transmission losses that translate into lower transmission charges across the electricity system;
- Reduced probability of supply disruption because the addition of new geothermal capacity near North Island markets increases the diversity of the portfolio of generation plants and reduces reliance on the transmission of power from mainly South Island hydro plant; and
- The cost of the new power station's grid connection and transmission to market will ultimately be borne by consumers. Still, Taheke's North Island location will make that less than some other potential generation sites that are more distant from main market demands.

Collectively, these matters support the purpose of the FTA by:

- Promoting employment to support New Zealand's recovery from COVID-19;
- Providing economic benefits for Taheke 8C and its people – now and into the future;
- Providing investment in infrastructure in New Zealand post COVID-19 – with consequent improvements in economic and employment outcomes and an increase in productivity; and
- Contributing to New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change and transition more quickly to a low-emissions economy.

The Partnership is ready to proceed with consenting so it can move into project delivery. It is no doubt that utilising the fast track process will enable it to achieve this faster than would otherwise be the case. It urges the Minister to approve fast tracking.

Ngā mihi,

Peter Mason  
The Proprietors of Taheke 8C and Adjoining Blocks Incorporation



Stuart McDonnell  
Eastland Generation Limited