

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: Te Rere Hau Wind Farm: Aokautere Extension Project (the Aokautere Extension Project)
Application number: PJ-0000884
Date received: 08/03/2023

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: NZ Windfarms Limited (NZ Windfarms or the Applicant)

Contact person: Adam Radich

Job title: General Manager, Operations

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Postal address:

PO Box 20031

Summerhill

Palmerston North 4448

Address for service (if different from above)

Organisation: Aurecon New Zealand Limited

Contact person: Stephen Gascoigne

Job title: Senior Consultant

s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a)

Email address for service:

Postal address:

PO Box 487

Hamilton 3240

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.

The Project Site is located at Forest Hill Road, on the Tararua Range, approximately 11 kms southeast of Palmerston North, Manawātū-Wanganui, New Zealand. A Site Plan with Aerial Imagery is provided in Appendix A.

Legal description(s):

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

Section 27 Block II Mangahao SD Section 34 Block II Mangahao SD Section 25 Block II Mangahao SD
Section 22 Block II Mangahao SD

A copy of the Record of Titles are in **Appendix B**.

Registered legal land owner(s):

Ernslaw One 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:

NZ Windfarms has partnered with Ernslaw One Limited (Ernslaw) to deliver the Aokautere Extension Project. Ernslaw is the legal landowner of the four land parcels that the Project covers and therefore has control over the current and future development of this land, subject to securing all necessary resource consent approvals for such development. NZ Windfarms and Ernslaw have signed a wind rights agreement (Appendix B), allowing the development of the Project within the land.

For NZ Windfarms, the Project represents an opportunity to work with an adjacent landowner who has indicated a strong interest in wind generation and which would be complimentary extension of its Repowering project (Te Rere Hau Repowering Project is currently being considered by the Environmental Protection Authority). The Aokautere Extension Project site has appropriate topography to host wind generation and benefits from an existing internal road / track network. While not integral to Te Rere Hau Repowering (subject to a separate resource consenting process), the Aokautere Extension Project would be able to connect into and utilize Te Rere Hau's existing and Repowering electrical and roading infrastructure, due to its immediate adjacency as well as further developing the renewable energy resource.

Further detail on the Applicant's ability to undertake the work is detailed in the Funding Statement of the NZ Windfarms Board, included at **Appendix C**.

Part III: Project details

Description

Project name: Te Rere Hau Wind Farm: Aokautere Extension Project (the Aokautere Extension Project)

Project summary:

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

The Aokautere Extension Project is to expand the existing Te Rere Hau Wind Farm, through the installation and development of up to 9 three-bladed turbines to the north. The new turbines will use more modern upgraded technology and be up to 162m tall.

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.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Aokautere Extension Project is to expand Te Rere Hau Wind Farm by installing new turbine technology to enable a more efficient and more productive windfarm. The Aokautere Expansion Project will contribute immediate and ongoing economic benefits and employment to the economy, will contribute towards the decarbonisation of the electricity industry and assist with New Zealand's transition to a low emissions economy. The Project can either be developed as a standalone project, or as complementary to Te Rere Hau Repowering Project which is subject to a separate resource consent process.

Objectives:

- To efficiently leverage the natural wind resource, existing Te Rere Hau infrastructure on site, thereby significantly increasing the supply of renewable energy from the wind farm to the national grid
- To accelerate the start of work, enabling the early realisation of employment and economic benefits and increasing the certainty of ongoing investment within the Palmerston North City, Tararua District and the wider Manawatū area
- To make a substantial contribution to New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change and hasten the transition towards a low emissions economy.

Activities involved in the Project:

The Aokautere Extension Project includes the following:

- works to construct and operate up to 9 new three bladed turbines with a hub height of approximately 102m, a rotor diameter of 126m, and a total height of approximately 162m
- works to widen, upgrade, and establish approximately 10.5 kms of internal access tracks including culverts and the decommissioning of approximately 8 existing Windflow turbines at Te Rere Hau Wind Farm
- external road improvements to facilitate access to the Project Site and haul road;
- works to improve, upgrade, and establish new turbine foundations and pads for each turbine
- works to construct and operate associated infrastructure including hardstanding areas, underground electrical and communication cables, substation and grid connection equipment
- works associated with construction of platform laydown areas for turbine storage, materials, plant and stores, crane erection and the like
- works to install and operate underground electrical and communication cables
- associated works including earthworks and vegetation removal and site planting/rehabilitation.

The Aokautere Extension Project requires the following micro-siting allowances, defined by the following limits:

- 150m flexibility for turbine movements within the defined area (with a reduced perimeter shown in the Turbine Flexibility zone figure in **Appendix A**)
- No overhang of blade tip over any external boundary

The reason that flexibility is required is to allow for final design of the layout based on details that will be determined through on-going investigations, such as the wind resource (exact predominant direction and variations over the site), exact turbine size, ground conditions and construction issues, and various constraints and setbacks that are subject to ongoing discussions with affected parties.

Options In order to ensure that the Aokautere Extension Project is deliverable, there are areas where the project is presenting alternative options. These alternatives relate to two turbine positions and the grid network connections. These options are indicated on the site plan attached in **Appendix A**. These options will only be used in the event that a particular aspect of the preferred layout has an issue that cannot be resolved.

The options presented in this referral form demonstrate that if a certain element of the preferred layout is not able to be constructed, then there are alternative/s that are feasible, which have all been considered by the relevant environmental specialists advising NZ Windfarms.

Turbine layoutThe turbine layout includes alternative turbine locations for 2 turbines (identified as the turbines in 'red' in the proposed site plan in **Appendix A**.

Network connectionsNZ Windfarms is currently exploring four options for grid connection to Transpower New Zealand Limited (Transpower) infrastructure.

Preferred Option 1 No Upgrade Preferred Option 1 No Upgrade - focuses on utilising the existing Te Rere Hau Wind Farm grid connection, which is subject to an arrangement between NZ Windfarms and Mercury Limited. No significant works are associated with this option, other than the decommissioning of some existing turbines within Te Rere Hau Wind Farm, and the upgrade of existing internal cable system and switchgear.

Preferred Option 1 Upgraded Preferred Option 1 Upgraded - utilises the proposed upgraded grid connection associated with Te Rere Hau Repower. Work involved with this option will include increasing the capacity of the existing underground cable link and upgrading the collector substation.

Alternative Smaller Option 2 – No Upgrade This option is a new connection to Transpower's existing double circuit 220 kV Bunnythorpe to Linton line via a hard tee. The connection is anticipated to be a single circuit pole line down the Western slope of the range from the wind farm where a new 220/33 kV substation and transformer will be constructed north of the Te Rere Hau Wind Farm QEII Covenanted Land.

Alternative Option 2 – Upgraded Similar to Alternative Smaller Option 2 -this option is a new connection to Transpower's existing double circuit 220 kV Bunnythorpe to Linton line via a hard tee. The connection is proposed to

be a double circuit lattice tower design down the Western slope of the range from the wind farm where a new 220/33 kV substation and transformer will be constructed north of the QEII Covenanted Land.

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

NZ Windfarms is not proposing any formal staging of the Project.

To allow construction access to the Aokautere Extension Project Site, some existing Windflow turbines located within Te Rere Hau Wind Farm (adjacent site to the south) will be decommissioned. Once this has been completed, construction will begin. Further details of the construction approach will be developed in the next (consenting) stage and would ensure compliance with any consent conditions.

As previously mentioned, the Aokautere Extension Project can be undertaken as either a standalone development or as part of the delivery of Te Rere Hau Repowering Project (subject to separate resource consents process). As such, dependant on timings and appropriate approvals, the Aokautere Extension Project could be progressed in advance, follow on from, or be progressed in parallel to Te Rere Hau Repowering. It must be noted that the Aokautere Extension Project is not an integral part of Te Rere Hau Repowering Project.

Consents / approvals required

Relevant local authorities: Horizons Regional Council, Palmerston North City Council

Resource consent(s) / designation required:

Land-use consent, 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
Refer to Part II: Project Location	Horizons Regional Plan (One Plan)	N/A	Hill Country Erosion Management Area	<p>Potentially near a likely Schedule F habitat: wetland (as referred to in the Ecological Assessment provided in Appendix D)</p> <p>The One Plan identifies the entire ridge crest and hilltop sequence of the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges' as an Outstanding Natural Landscape (as referred to in the Landscape and Visual Assessment provide in Appendix E)</p>
Refer to Part II: Project Location	Operative Palmerston North District Plan	Rural Zone	Rural Residential Overlay	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
Horizons One Plan	Rule 13-2 Large scale land disturbance including earthworks	The overall cumulative area of earthworks is estimated to be 12-14 ha. Where these earthworks are located outside of the <div> <div></div> Hill Country Erosion Management Area; <div></div> 5m of a watercourse; or <div></div> 10m of a wetland Consent is required pursuant to Rule 13-2 </div>	Controlled	Site Wide
Horizons One Plan	Rule 13-6 Specified vegetation clearance, land disturbance or cultivation in a Hill Country Erosion Management Area	Parts of the site is located within a Hill Country Erosion Management Area, and the overall cumulative area of earthworks is estimated to be between 12ha to 14ha, and the work to extend the road network will require vegetation removal. As an initial assessment of this rule, we note that the proposal is near a potential Schedule F habitat but, with good earthworks practices, the wetland is unlikely to be affected by the construction of the pads or access roads and the preferred layout is not close enough to impact the setback triggers within the rule, which would move the activity status to Discretionary. There will be the need to also discharge stormwater from site (via erosion and sediment controls), including turbine and transformer sites and	Restricted Discretionary	Site Wide

		<p>other construction facilities. The discharge of stormwater from ESCP controls are controlled under the rules in chapter 13, as they include the ancillary discharge of sediment laden water to water or land).</p> <p>Consent will therefore be sought to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ undertake construction on Hill Country Highly Erodible Land ☐ clear vegetation on Hill Country Highly Erodible Land ☐ clear vegetation, disturb land and discharge contaminants 		
Horizons One Plan	<p>Rule 13-7</p> <p>Vegetation Clearance, land disturbance, cultivation or forestry that does not comply with Rules 13-1 to 13-6</p>	<p>Where land disturbance and vegetation clearance (including associated diversion of water, discharge of sediment and discharge of water) within the Hill Country Erosion Management Area within 10m of a named or unnamed watercourse, but not within an at-risk, rare or threatened habitat (in accordance with Schedule F of the One Plan) consent will be required.</p>	Discretionary	Site Wide
Horizons One Plan	<p>Rule 14-30</p> <p>Discharges of cleanfill not meeting the conditions/standards/terms of Rule 14-21</p>	<p>The proposed works will not comply with the permitted activity standards of Rule 14-21 regarding discharges of cleanfill, specifically the rate of cleanfill material discharge.</p>	Discretionary	Site Wide
Palmerston North District Plan	<p>Rule R6.3.7.1</p> <p>Earthworks that do not comply with the Permitted Activity Performance Standards</p>	<p>The proposed works will not comply with the permitted activity standards of R6.3.6.1. The proposed works will require approximately 12ha -</p>	Discretionary Activity	Site Wide

		<p>14 ha of earthworks. As such, the proposed work will exceed the permitted volume of R6.3.6.1 (a)(i). Consent will be sought to undertake earthworks.</p>		
Palmerston North District Plan	<p>Rule R9.8.6</p> <p>Land use consent for a wind farm</p>	Consent is required to construct a wind farm	Discretionary	Site Wide
Palmerston North District Plan	<p>Rule R9.9.3</p> <p>Wind Farms that do not comply with the Discretionary Activity Performance Standards in R9.8.6</p>	<p>Compliance with the standards will need to be assessed. If these standards cannot be achieved, non-complying consent will be sought.</p> <p>As noted above, the key standard to comply with relates to noise. Early noise assessments have shown compliance with NZS 6808:2010 on the Palmerston North side of the proposal.</p>	Non-Complying Activity (only if required - noting that the early assessments show that this rule would not be triggered)	
National Environmental Standard for Freshwater	Regulation 71 Placement of a culvert in on or under the bed of a river not otherwise provided for	<p>The consent may be required (subject to specific design requirements and environmental assessments). An initial assessment of the new watercourse culverts indicates compliance with the standards.</p> <p>Early ecological assessment indicates that there are no fish habitat in these areas as in upper reaches, waterways are seasonably dry, and they are not within the mentioned overlays. It is noted that the permitted activity standards for both rules in the One Plan and the NES-FM for culverts require the structures to provide for fish passage – this requirement is not removed if there is</p>	Discretionary (only if required)	TBC - Site wide

		<p>limited fish habitat. If the culverts are not proposed to be fish passable, consents would be required, which is where the assessment would consider the upstream fish habitat and effects on fish passage.</p> <p>Confirmation will be provided as part of the next stage. i.e. through the consenting process.</p> <p>There will be some existing cross culverts that may need to be modified – but this is excluded from requiring consents under the legislation.</p>		
National Environmental Standard for Freshwater	Regulation 45 Construction of specified infrastructure	<p>The consent may be required (subject to specific design requirements and environmental assessments).</p> <p>The One Plan recognizes facilities for the generation of more than 1 MW of electricity and its supporting infrastructure where the electricity generated is supplied to the electricity distribution and transmission networks as a physical resource of regional or national importance.</p> <p>Early ecological assessments have provided an early indication of areas that are potential wetlands and which are only wetted gully floors.</p> <p>The preliminary ecological assessment identifies potential wetlands within two proposed turbine locations. However, it is likely that these can likely be avoided through detailed</p>	Discretionary Activity (only if required)	TBC - Site Wide

		<p>design and assessment.</p> <p>A more detailed ecological assessment of the potential wetland areas will occur at the next stage and a determination made as to whether the areas meet the definition of a natural wetland. Preliminary advice is that some (if not all) of these areas may fall within an exclusion to that definition.</p>		
National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry	Regulation 35 Earthworks (Regional Council)	<p>Consent may be required (subject to specific design requirements and environmental assessments).</p> <p>Consent may be required if the proposed works do not meet the area, volume and duration specified by the permitted activity regulations.</p>	Controlled (only if required)	TBC - Site Wide
National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry	Regulation 36 Earthworks (Regional Council)	<p>Consent may be required (subject to specific design requirements and environmental assessments).</p> <p>Consent may be required if the proposed works do not meet the area, volume and duration specified by the permitted activity regulations.</p>	Restricted Discretionary	TBC - Site Wide
National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry	Regulation 70 Territorial Authorities	Consent may be required (subject to specific design requirements and environmental assessments).	Controlled (only if required)	TBC - Site Wide

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.

As stated earlier, The Aokautere Extension Project can either be developed as a standalone project, or as complementary development to Te Rere Hau Repowering Project which is subject to a separate resource consent process. Te Rere Hau Repowering Project relates to the wider redevelopment of Te Rere Hau Wind Farm, through the redesign of the existing windfarm layout and the removal and replacement of the existing smaller two-bladed turbines with the construction of up to 30 larger three-bladed turbines, the same form of turbine as proposed for this Project. Please refer to **Appendix I** for further information.

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

NZ Windfarms will be seeking the majority of the resource consents associated with the Aokautere Extension Project. Any authorisations required to connect new turbines and associated infrastructure to the National Grid will be performed under the National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities 2009 by the utility operator.

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:

There are no designations that affect or relate to the Project Site. No authorities under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 or concessions under the Conservation Act 1987 are expected to be required for the Aokautere Extension Project.

Building consents under the Building Act 2004 may be required for ancillary structures (such as new substations) following the granting of resource consents. Wind turbines do not need building consent, provided they are designed by a chartered professional engineer and peer reviewed.

There is an internal notification process for proposals to construct or alter a structure pursuant to Civil Aviation Rules Part 77. This notification form is to be submitted to the Civil Aviation Authority at least 90 days before the proposed commencement date of construction.

There is a potential for other legal authorities under the Wildlife Act 1953 to be required, dependent on the full ecological assessment that will be undertaken in support of the next stage (i.e. post referral and prior to lodgement with the EPA).

Over-dimension permits will be required to transport equipment from the port of arrival to the windfarm from Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

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.

The Aokautere Extension Project will be ready for construction following the granting and commencement of consents (pre-construction planning and site preparation activities). NZ Windfarms has sufficient funding to resource all aspects of the referral, consenting, pre-construction and site preparation phases. Preliminary effects assessments and technical due diligence is already underway and will be utilised to draft and finalise the necessary to inform the resource consent applications.

NZ Windfarms is undertaking a capital raising process to ensure that it has sufficient funds to enable the Aokautere Extension Project to commence promptly once consents have been granted. This process is set out in the Funding Statement from the Board for NZ Windfarms provided at **Appendix C**. This letter describes NZ Windfarms track record in terms of capital raising and details the likely approach and expected timeframe to raise and secure the funding in order to get the substantive/major physical works part of the Project's construction underway.

In terms of the Aokautere Extension Project timeline, detailed design will occur in parallel with the preparation and processing of the resource consent application.

The planning and construction phase is expected to occur from June 2023 through to end of 2026, approximately 3 years. The early months consist of planning and procurement, with construction expected to begin in early 2024 once consents have been granted.

It is expected that by July 2024, the necessary decommissioning of some Windflow turbines to gain construction ready access to the Aokautere Extension Project Site will have been completed and all nine new turbines will be constructed and operational by end of 2026.

Part IV: Consultation

Government ministries and departments

Detail all consultation undertaken with relevant government ministries and departments:

To date NZ Windfarms has carried out several preliminary discussions with the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) fast track application team. MfE advised NZ Windfarms of potential referral timings and information to be included within an application, including requirements for reporting scope and relevant Ministerial matters to be considered.

Local authorities

Detail all consultation undertaken with relevant local authorities:

NZ Windfarms has reached out to relevant regional and local authorities, namely Horizons Regional Council and Palmerston North City Council for preliminary feedback and comments on the Aokautere Extension Project.

Horizons Regional Council

Preliminary phone contact with the Regulatory Team Leader occurred prior to lodgement of this referral (28/02/2023). Communications provided an overview of the Aokautere Extension Project opportunity with the adjacent landowner, however clarified that the extension was not a part of or dependent on the potential repower of the existing Te Rere Hau Wind Farm but would be a new project consisting of between 7 and 9 new turbines of a comparative scale (to the Repower turbines). Horizons have not provided any substantial feedback to the early engagement other than acknowledging the proposed process.

Palmerston North City Council

Preliminary phone contact with the Regulatory Team Leader occurred prior to lodgement of this referral (01/03/2023). Communications provided an overview of the Aokautere Extension Project opportunity with the adjacent landowner, however clarified that the extension was not a part of or dependent on the potential repower of the existing Te Rere Hau Wind Farm but would be a new project consisting of between 7 and 9 new turbines of a comparative scale (to the Repower turbines). Noted that NZ Directors were interested in exploring the referral process under the Covid FTA as a pathway and that a referral application was under development. Noted that the Covid FTA is due to repeal on 8th of July we have been told by MfE we need to get referral applications in swiftly by the end of February. Palmerston North City Council enquired about the engagement process with NZ Windfarms representative acknowledging that proactive engagement would be planned for and undertaken as has previously occurred for the Te Rere Hau Repower.

Other persons/parties

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

- Landowners (Ernslaw Forestry)
- Immediate Neighbours
- Neighbours within 3km radius
- Iwi/Mana Whenua
- Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency
- Airways
- Civil Aviation Authority

- Transpower
- Mercury Energy Limited (Mercury)
- Utilities Companies (PowerCo)

Detail all consultation undertaken with the above persons or parties:

The above parties have been identified based on previous consenting and engagement processes, with the list likely to expand as the Aokautere Extension Project progresses.

In terms of the landowner, as mentioned above, NZ Windfarms has entered into a wind right agreement with Ernslaw which provides it with the rights necessary to consent and develop the Aokautere Extension Project. In regard to the other parties, to date, preliminary engagement has commenced, and will continue to be ongoing and expanded as the Aokautere Extension Project progresses.

NZ Windfarms will formalise an engagement and consultation strategy through the resource consent preparation and engage with the above parties. NZ Windfarms has built strong relationships with the above parties and will continue to develop these throughout this Aokautere Extension Project. The NZ Windfarms website is regularly updated with exploratory works, including details of this opportunity.

Details on iwi/mana whenua consultation are set out in the next section.

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
Iwi Authority under RMA: Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Incorporated (Rangitāne o Manawatū) One of three iwi authorities who has interests/authority in the area where the Aokautere Extension Project would be carried out.	<p>The Applicant has been in touch with the environmental representative of Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Incorporated (Alana Nuku) (28/02/2023) to provide an overview of the Aokautere Extension Project. That conversation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ An update on the current TRH repower consent process and that panel has been appointed and is seeking comments which close on the 15th of March. ☐ An overview that: ☐ This new Project is proposed to explore the generation potential of the landowners block and will be a separate consent process and not a variation of the current application. ☐ Due to the fact the Act is due to repeal on the 8th of July NZ Windfarms have been advised by MfE that we need to get referral applications in swiftly. ☐ NZ Windfarms wanted to ensure Iwi were both aware of the Project and the process and that this will be another round of continuous consultation as NZ Windfarms look to partner with Tanenuiārangi once again on this new Project. ☐ Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Incorporated appreciated the call regarding the update and the new Project and looked forward to further consultation in the near future. <p>In addition it is noted that NZ Windfarms has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Incorporated (Rangitāne o Manawatū) for Te Rere Hau Repowering Project. NZ Windfarms intends to continue to engage with Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Incorporated in the manner set out in this MoU through the development of the Aokautere Extension Project.</p>
Iwi Authority under RMA: Rangitāne o Tāmaki Nui a Rua One of three iwi authorities who has interests/authority in the area where the Project would be carried out	<p>The Applicant reached out via phone to Rangitāne o Tāmaki Nui a Rua representatives (Hine Carberry) (28/02/2023) to highlight the opportunity that had arisen with an adjacent landowner to expand the windfarm onto its site. The conversation involved:</p>

	<p>☐ An update on the current TRH repower consent process and that panel has been appointed and is seeking comments which close on the 15th of March.</p> <p>☐ The new project is proposed to explore the generation potential of the landowners block and will be a completely new consent process and will not be seen as a variation of the current application.</p> <p>☐ Noted that NZ Windfarms is interested in using the referral process under the Covid FTA as a pathway and that a referral application was under development. Noted that the Covid FTA is due to repeal on 8th of July and NZ Windfarms has been informed by MfE that any referral applications need to be filed swiftly.</p> <p>☐ NZ Windfarms wanted to ensure Rangitāne were both aware of the project and the process and that this will be another round of continuous consultation as NZ Windfarms look to partner with them once again on this new project.</p> <p>Key feedback / observations provided by Rangitāne o Tāmaki Nui a Rua representative (Hine) is detailed in Appendix I.</p>
Te Rūnanga o Raukawa Incorporated (Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga) One of three iwi authorities who has interests/authority in the area where the Project would be carried out.	The Applicant has previously made multiple attempts to engage with this iwi on previous windfarm developments, with no response.
Te Taiwhenua o Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Trust (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua). While this iwi does not appear to have interest within the Project footprint, the Applicant was advised as part of the Repower project to engage and has sought to do so again	<p>The Applicant's representative (Adam Radich) reached out via phone to Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua representatives (Hayden Hape) (28/02/2023) to highlight an opportunity that had arisen with an adjacent landowner to explore an expansion of Te Rere Hau windfarm on the site.</p> <p>☐ NZ Windfarms provided an update on the current TRH repower consent process and that the panel has been appointed and is seeking comments which close on the 15th of March.</p> <p>☐ Brief discussion occurred around the commissioner appointment process.</p> <p>☐ NZ Windfarms highlighted the purpose of this early engagement was to highlight an opportunity that had arisen with an adjacent landowner to explore generation potential on their site.</p> <p>NZ Windfarms explained that:</p> <p>☐ This will be a completely new consent process and project.</p> <p>☐ Due to the fact the Act is due to repeal on the 8th of July NZ Windfarms has been advised by MfE to get its referral application in swiftly.</p> <p>☐ NZ Windfarms wanted to ensure Ngāti Kahungunu were both aware of the project and the process and that this will be another round of continuous consultation as they look to partner with Ngāti Kahungunu once again on this new Project.</p> <p>☐ Hayden appreciated the call and agreed to catch up in person to discuss the Project in due course.</p>
Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Inc (Ngāti Toa Rangatira) While this iwi doesn't appear from to have interests in the Project footprint, the Applicant acted on advice from the MfE in regards to the Repower to engage with this iwi.	The Applicant has previously made multiple attempts to engage with this iwi on previous windfarm developments, with no response.

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
Rangitāne o Manawatū Settlement Trust One of three iwi authorities who has	Engagement undertaken with Rangitāne to date is set out 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.

In terms of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, it is recognised that the following Treaty settlements provide important context to the Project: [2] Rangitāne o Manawatū Claims Settlement Act 2016; [2] Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Rangitāne Tāmaki nui-ā-Rua Claims Settlement Act; [2] Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki Nui-ā-Rua Claims Settlement Act 2022.

Rangitāne o Manawatū Claims Settlement Act 2016 The Crown and Rangitāne o Manawatū signed a Deed of Settlement on 14 November 2015. The Rangitāne o Manawatū Deed of Settlement settled all historical claims of Rangitāne o Manawatū resulting from acts or omissions by the Crown and is made up of a package that includes: [2] An agreed historical account, Crown acknowledgements and apology; [2] Cultural redress; and [2] Financial and commercial redress. The Rangitāne o Manawatū Claims Settlement Act 2016 includes statutory acknowledgements and further accompanying statements of association in respect of the Manawatū River and tributaries within the area of interest. The area of interest recognised in the Deed of Settlement includes the Project Site. No private land was transferred under the Rangitāne o Manawatū Deed of Settlement. No redress in this Act/Deed is identified which affects natural and physical resources relevant to the Project or Project area. Rangitāne o Manawatū and NZ Windfarms have an established MoU which governs continued engagement and inclusion of RoM in development of the windfarm which will continue to be upheld throughout this Referral and any later resource consent process.

Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā (Wairarapa Tāmaki nui-ā-Rua) Claims Settlement Act 2017 The Crown and Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Rangitāne Tāmaki nui-ā-Rua signed a Deed of Settlement on 6 August 2016. The Rangitāne Deed of Settlement is the final settlement of all historical Te Tiriti claims made by Rangitāne resulting from acts or admissions by the Crown, and is made up of a package that includes: [2] An agreed historical account, Crown acknowledgement and apology; [2] Cultural redress; and [2] Financial and commercial redress. The Settlement includes statutory acknowledgements in respect of the Manawatū River and tributaries within the area of interest. The area of interest recognised in the Deed of Settlement excludes but is in proximity to the area in which the Project is located. No private land was involved in the Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Deed of Settlement. No redress in this Act/Deed is identified which affects natural and physical resources relevant to the Aokautere Extension Project or Project area.

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki Nui-ā-Rua Claims Settlement Act 2022. The Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki Nui-ā-Rua Deed of Settlement, signed on 29 October 2021 is the final settlement of all historical Treaty Claims of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki Nui-ā-Rua resulting from acts or omissions by the Crown prior to 21 September 1992, and includes: [2] An agreed historical account, Crown acknowledgments and apology; [2] Cultural redress; [2] Statutory Acknowledgements; and [2] Financial and commercial redress. The area of interest recognised in the Deed of Settlement excludes but is in proximity to the area in which the Project is located. No private property was involved in the Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki Nui-ā-Rua Deed of Settlement. No redress in the Deed of Settlement is identified which affects natural and physical resources relevant to the Aokautere Extension Project or Project area.

Ngāti Toa Rangatira Claims Settlement Act 2014

The Ngāti Toa Rangatira Deed of Settlement is the final settlement of all historical Treaty of Waitangi claims of Ngāti Toa Rangatira resulting from acts or omissions by the Crown prior to 21 September 1992, and is made up of a package that includes: [2] An agreed historical account and Crown acknowledgments which form the basis for a Crown apology to Ngāti Toa Rangatira; [2] Cultural redress; and [2] Financial and commercial redress. The area of interest spans the Cook Strait and covers the lower North Island from Rangitikei and the upper South Island, including Nelson, Marlborough Sounds, Wellington and Kāpiti. No private property (other than two City Council Sites (Wellington and Porirua)) are involved in the Settlement – which are outside of the areas to which this application relates. No redress in this Act/Deed is identified which affects natural and physical resources relevant to the Project or Project area.

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.

A number of preliminary technical assessments have been undertaken by NZ Windfarms to inform the referral application, including how the Aokautere Extension Project meets the relevant matters of the Act as well as whether there is the potential for the Project to have significant adverse effects.

The following presents a general description of the anticipated and known effects of the Aokautere Extension Project on people and the environment, in sufficient detail to inform the Minister's decision.

Economics

The economic benefits are the employment and regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contributions to the local economy directly as a result of the Aokautere Extension Project's expenditure activity during the two key Project phases; construction and operation. NZ Windfarms has engaged Jason Leung-Wai from MartinJenkins to complete an economic assessment of the Aokautere Extension Project. The preliminary assessment is contained in **Appendix F**.

The key findings are as follows;

- Total construction cost is expected to be **s 9(2)(b)(ii)**. Of this, **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** is expected to be spent in New Zealand, with about **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** spent in the local area.
- Locally, the Aokautere Extension Project is expected to employ 200 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) during construction (contributing **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** annually) and 24 FTE once operational (contributing **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** annually) through direct, indirect and induced jobs.
- Nationally, the Aokautere Extension Project is expected to employ 271 FE during construction (contributing **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** annually), and 30 FTE once operational **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** annually) through direct, indirect and induced jobs.

Further to the above,

- The Project will significantly increase output from the Manawatū region, further strengthening the region's position in the renewable energy industry.
- The Project will result in significant productivity improvements for Te Rere Hau wind farm.
- The Project supports the government policies around climate change and transition to lower emissions.

Overall, the Project is expected to make a positive economic contribution to New Zealand and meet the purpose of the Act in that regard, bringing forward investment which will in turn support the local economy and provide for employment opportunities.

Landscape and Visual Effects

A preliminary landscape and visual assessment has been undertaken by Stephen Brown (Brown NZ Ltd) to inform the summary of potential effects (**Appendix E**). This assessment includes a series of visual simulations from a range of representative viewpoints on both sides of the Tararua range and from nearby properties.

The assessment highlights that the existing landscape is a mixture of open pasture and various vegetation. The Project site itself is located within a sequence of existing windfarms, with the property itself containing a homogeneous 'carpet' of semi-mature pinus radiata. This swathe of pines is only broken by old skidder / haul pads and forestry tracks within it, together with several stream courses, such as that found immediately north of the top of Forest Hill Road. several farm tracks, sheds, fencing and other buildings. The site remains a highly developed and modified environment.

The One Plan identifies the entire ridge crest and hilltop sequence of the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges' as an Outstanding Natural Landscape. However, the landscape and visual assessment acknowledges that it is far from wholly natural or pristine. It is better described as a working landscape of which the series of wind farms on its upper slopes and main spine is a distinctive and highly influential feature.

The assessment notes that the existing operation and turbine layout of Te Rere Hau appears to have a 'busy' visual character when operating due to the number and speed of the existing two-bladed turbines. Consequently, while the proposed turbines are more visually prominent, they have more aesthetic appeal than the current turbines and there will be fewer of them. The proposed turbines (which are taller three-bladed turbines) will create a stronger sense of integration with other nearby windfarms.

For the majority of the five viewpoints assessed, there will be a low to low-moderate level of effect for the reasons set out above; both from a landscape effects perspective and an amenity effects perspective. However, Viewpoints 2 and 3 (206 Forest Hill Road and 367 Forest Hill Road respectively), due to the location of proposed turbines E01 to E04 and all turbines for the former, there is a higher level of visibility and level of effect ranging from Moderate to Moderate-High. Despite this, the assessment confirms that the nature, scale and cohesion of the proposed turbines will limit the ratings for those residential viewing catchments.

Although the proposed turbines would have an appreciably greater impact on the landscape values of the environment around Forest Hill Road – generally near and above no.206 – this is also part of the Tararua Range that has very limited contact with its skyline, as well as with part of the Range that are more natural, aesthetically appealing and sensitive to change. The working landscape that climbs up to the road's terminus at no.367 and the edge of the Ernslaw Block is dominated by pasture, often on eroding slopes, accompanied by large swathes of production forestry and – further south – gorse merging with native shrubland. It is also closely associated with the current Te Rere Hau Wind Farm.

Consequently, the anticipated changes to the character of this locality would be significant in relation to the scale and visual presence of the new turbines, but much less so in terms of changes to the character and values of the current landscape at the top of Forest Hill Road. In particular, the proposed turbines would have little impact on the perception of the skyline of the Tararua Range, as that remains largely concealed from view, behind both intervening ridges and forestry above and either side of the property at 367 Forest Hill Road. It is this combination of often countervailing factors that have contributed to the Moderate and Moderate-High effect ratings for Viewpoints 2 and 3 on more elevated sections of Forest Hill Road in terms of landscape effects.

It is acknowledged that the property at 367 Forest Hill Road, in particular, would be affected to a Moderate-High degree by the proposed turbines from an amenity perspective. The effects associated with exposure to four of the Ernslaw Block turbines would be exacerbated by that property's proximity to them, their incursion into the sky plane, and their obvious rotation. Although these factors would be partly offset by the screening associated with still-growing pines on the edge of the Ernslaw Block and the natural orientation of most views from the property towards

the Manawatu Plain, it is considered that (without mitigation) the level of effect derived from exposure to the four proposed turbines would be significant.

As the pines near 367 Forest Hill Road continue to grow, all of the turbines close to it would be increasingly screened. However, at some point, they are also likely to be harvested. Inevitably, this would increase the property's exposure to the proposed turbines.

This may require specific mitigation measures that could potentially include the replacement of some existing plantation forestry with permanent plantings of native canopy species to screen out 'back views' towards the proposed turbines; a measure that can be addressed at a later resource consent stage.

Overall, the Project will not result in adverse landscape and visual effects that are significant.

The landscape and visual assessment summary is included in **Appendix E**.

Ecological Effects

A preliminary ecological assessment has been undertaken to support this referral application by Wildland Consultants Limited and is contained in **Appendix D**.

The assessment concludes that the installation of the installation of nine wind turbines within the Project site are likely to have low ecological effects. All of the proposed works can be undertaken within exotic pine stands, avoiding or limiting potential effects on wetlands and indigenous vegetation in the Project site. The assessment states that any potential adverse effects on indigenous fauna habitat and species can be appropriately managed through the development of an ecological management plan during the resource consenting stage. Furthermore, any adverse effects on wetland, freshwater environments and aquatic fauna stemming from the upgrading of the road network can be appropriately minimised, avoided and mitigated by the implementation of best practise methodologies and controls.

Erosion and Sediment Control

An erosion and sediment control report will be prepared to support a resource consent application. Potential adverse effects include sedimentation and dust arising from earthworks, as well as effects arising from the use of concrete and the laydown/compound area. The earthworks and other construction activities anticipated to be necessary for the Aokautere Extension Project are standard activities and are not of a type or scale that would necessitate bespoke or high-risk management options. The earthworks, as currently anticipated, are of a scale and nature that can be appropriately managed using current best practice erosion and sediment control techniques, as detailed in Auckland Council Guideline Document 2016/005 Erosion and Sediment Control Guideline for Land Disturbing Activities in the Auckland Region (GD05).

It is anticipated that a high level of environmental compliance can be achieved, and that any effects on downstream receiving environments can be limited such that they are minor or negligible. The highest risk effects, such as associated with concrete batching and use, can be avoided.

Noise Effects

The Applicant has engaged Marshall Day Acoustics (Miklin Halstead) to undertake noise assessments associated with the Aokautere Extension Project and to support this referral application. A preliminary noise assessment has been provided in **Appendix G**.

The proposed turbines are located to the north of TRH between the existing TRH layout and the Tararua wind farm. The nearest external properties to these turbines are those on Forest Hill Road. The dwelling at the end of the road, 367 Forest Hill Road, is the most exposed to all turbines, and may be considered the most effected by noise.

The preliminary noise assessment considers that the addition of the proposed extension to the existing TRH wind farm would cause an increase of 1 decibel relative to the existing situation, considering cumulative effects from all wind farms. This increase would be compliant with the relevant noise limits of the relevant plans. In addition, it is noted that 1dB is not considered to be a notable increase in noise level.

At all other properties away from Forest Hill Road the Project would not contribute significant noise.

Transport Effects

The transport effects relate to the impact of additional loads and traffic on the road network to undertake the Project. Transport effects will be temporary and associated with the construction periods when there are additional loads on the network. In particular, due to the size of the turbine blades, transport effects will be more than minor when these are in transit. However, these effects are proposed to be mitigated through:

- An overweight/ over dimension permitting system and the use of pilot vehicles and appropriate trained piloting staff to guide the loads

- Widening/ road improvements that need to be implemented for turbine transport
- Spreading blade transport over 4 to 6 weeks and only moving them at night.

Additionally, it should be noted that the impacts are over a fixed time period and will therefore end once construction of the Project is complete.

Operationally, there will be minimal effect on the transport network. Traffic will be similar to the existing operational Te Rere Hau Windfarm traffic.

Archaeological Effects

Previous archaeological assessments have not identified any recorded archaeological features within the Project site. It is proposed to include accidental discovery protocols within the resource consent application to ensure appropriate response to the possibility of encountering archaeological remains during construction.

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 on Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 (NPS REG)

The NPS REG was formally gazetted in April 2011. It seeks to enable the sustainable management of renewable electricity generation under the RMA and to provide for the development and operation of new and existing renewable electricity generation activities in order to meet the Government's national target for renewable electricity generation. It recognises (in the preamble) that New Zealand's energy demand will continue to grow and that there are two major challenges;

"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".

The NPS REG acknowledges that renewable energy generation developments can have effects at many scales, with a risk of adverse local effects but positive national effects, and that the benefits can also compete with matters of national importance (section 6 of the RMA) and matters to which decision makers are to have particular regard (section 7 of the RMA).

Natural resources from which renewable electricity is generated may coincide with areas or features with significant natural or cultural values, and there may also be effects on the relationship of iwi and hapū with taonga and on their role as kaitiaki. The NPS REG seeks to provide consistency in addressing competing values associated with renewable electricity development and provide greater certainty to anyone involved in the consenting process for renewable electricity proposals.

The primary Objective of the NPS REG is;

"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."

The Aokautere Extension Project is consistent with the policy direction of the NPSREG as it provides for renewable electricity generation, which will be fed into the National Grid. The Aokautere Extension Project will provide an important contribution to meeting the New Zealand Government's national target for the generation of electricity from renewable resources. It is considered that all reasonably anticipated adverse environmental effects are able to be appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated.

National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008 (NPS ET) The NPS ET came into force on 10 April 2008. The NPSET was developed to acknowledge the national significance of the National Grid and guide the balanced consideration of the national benefits and the local effects of electricity transmission.

The objective of the NPS ET is to:

To recognise the national significance of the electricity transmission network by facilitating the operation, maintenance and upgrade of the existing transmission network and the establishment of new transmission resources to meet the needs of present and future generations, while: ② Managing the adverse environmental effects of the network and ③ Managing the adverse effects of other activities on the network.

Policy 1 directs decision makers to recognise and provide for the national, regional and local benefits of sustainable, secure and efficient electricity transmission, including through the facilitation, use and development of new electricity generation and recognising the benefits associated with renewable energy which assists in the management of the effects of climate change. Policy 2 directs decision makers to recognise and provide for the effective operation, upgrading and development of the electricity transmission network.

Further policies direct the management of adverse environmental effects, including the consideration of the imposition of constraints on the technical and operational requirements of the network (Policy 3), how adverse effects have been avoided, remedied or mitigated by route, site and method selection (Policy 4) and the use of upgrades to reduce the existing adverse effects of transmission, particularly on sensitive activities (Policy 6).

It is considered that the Project is consistent with the relevant policy direction of the NPS ET. In terms of Policies 1 and 2, the Project will provide significant national, regional, and local benefits, including the provision of renewable electricity generation. This will enable a more efficient and productive wind farm, increasing the generation capacity and contributing immediate and ongoing economic benefits and employment to the economy. In addition, the Project will contribute towards further decarbonisation of the electricity generation industry and assist with New Zealand's transition to a low emissions economy.

As discussed in Part VII above, it is considered that all reasonably anticipated adverse environmental effects can be appropriately avoided, remedied and mitigated for the Aokautere Extension Project.

Transpower's assets are afforded recognition provided by the NPS ET which effectively permits the growth and upgrade of the National Grid network subject to limited considerations or controls. Consultation with Transpower will be undertaken to ensure that the consideration of a network connection option is undertaken in a manner that does not impact wider Transpower assets. Consequently, it is considered that the Project is consistent with the policy direction of the NPS ET.

National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS FM) The NPS FM came into effect on 3 September 2020 and replaced the NPS for Freshwater Management 2014 (as amended in 2017). The NPS FM provides further national direction for local authorities on how to manage freshwater under the RMA. The NPS FM sets out the objectives and policies for freshwater management, centered by the concept of Te Mana o te Wai. Te Mana o te Wai is a concept that refers to the fundamental importance of water and recognises that protecting the health of freshwater protects the health and wellbeing of the wider environment. Through providing for Te Mana o te Wai, the NPS FM aims to restore and preserve the balance between water, the wider environment, and the community. The Objective of the NPS FM is that natural and physical resources are managed in a way that prioritises first, the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems; second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water) and third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being, now and in the future.

Policy 1 of the NPS FM requires that freshwater be managed in a way that gives effect to Te Mana o te Wai. There are six principles that inform Te Mana o te Wai, being: mana whakahaere; kaitiakitanga; manaakitanga; governance; stewardship; and care and respect. Policy 2 directs that tangata whenua are actively involved in freshwater management and that Māori freshwater values are identified and provided for.

NZ Windfarms will continue the strong existing relationship with iwi and will directly engage with Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Incorporated (Rangitāne o Manawatū), Rangitāne o Tāmaki Nui a Rua and Te Taiwhenua o Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Trust (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua), regarding the Project and associated works, throughout design development and resource consent preparation. Cultural values and kaitiakitanga will be recognised through measures implemented within resource consent preparation and will be provided for.

As discussed in the assessment in Part III above, there is a possibility that some culverts will be required. However, if required these temporary disturbance activities can be undertaken in accordance with best practise methodologies, ensuring that any adverse effects are temporary in nature and less than minor. Overall, the works will have no effect on the ability of the watercourses to provide for the life supporting capacity of freshwater species. Therefore, the proposed culvert and ancillary bed disturbance activities will be consistent with the outcomes directed by Objective 2.1(1) and Policies 2.2(2) and (9) of the NPS-FW.

Overall, the proposed works will be wholly complementary to the strategic direction for the management of freshwater under the NPS FM.

Further National Policy Statements and National Environmental Standards are assessed in Appendix I.

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:

MartinJenkins considers that the Aokautere Extension Project is expected to contribute a considerable level of expenditure in the local area economy during both construction and operation. As noted above:

- Construction is expected to occur over three years and the total construction cost is expected to be s 9(2)(b)(ii). Of this, s 9(2)(b)(ii) is expected to be spent in New Zealand, with about s 9(2)(b)(ii) spent in the local area.
- Locally, the Project is expected to employ 200 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) during construction (contributing s 9(2)(b)(ii) annually) and 24 FTE once operational (contributing s 9(2)(b)(ii)) through direct, indirect and induced jobs.
- Nationally, the Project is expected to employ 271 FE during construction (contributing s 9(2)(b)(ii) annually), and 30 FTE once operational (3.67m annually) through direct, indirect and induced jobs.

Construction expenditure for the local area and New Zealand is allocated to the industry where it is spent. In this case, the direct or primary activity occurs in two industry sectors. The primary industry is heavy and civil engineering construction, the secondary industry is scientific, architectural and engineering. Jobs in these two industries are generally high-value jobs.

Indirect activity will occur across a broader number of industries that provide services to those direct industries. The key industries will be primary or manufacturing industries. Induced activity, which is the expenditure from employees spending wages and owners spending profits, will largely be in industries that service households, such as food and beverage, utilities, residential property operations, banking and finance.

The preliminary Economics Assessment is provided in **Appendix F**.

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

The Aokautere Extension Project is anticipated to have the following effects on the local area’s social and cultural wellbeing:

- *Physical and mental health:* Generating increased and more diversified employment opportunities. People with disposable incomes are able to improve their living standards and pay for health and wellbeing services.
- *Community and society:* With a larger and economically active community, people increase their participation in events. There are generally more resources, services and fundraising opportunities in communities with higher employment. In addition, the climate conscious members of the community will benefit from increased contribution to the growth in renewable energy output.
- *Economic activity:* Increased employment opportunities and the landowners that have a turbine on their property will also benefit from additional revenue. As a whole this will result in increased opportunities and spending during the construction phase, increased resilience for Te Rere Hau Wind Farm thereafter and ongoing work associated with the maintenance of the turbines. Boosts to the local economy are supported through contracts for construction.

- *Education:* Potential for training opportunities targeted at apprenticeships during the design and construction phases. There is the potential to showcase different career opportunities for students, and opening opportunities for local businesses for training and development of their staff.
- *Cultural Wellbeing:* As detailed in Part V above, NZ Windfarms will actively engage with Iwi/Hapū Authorities to ensure their values and aspirations are represented in the Project and ongoing management of Te Rere Hau Wind Farm.

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

The Aokautere Extension Project would likely progress significantly faster through the Fast Track Act Resource Consenting process than under the standard RMA processes. Historically, consented wind farms to date have taken a minimum of 12 to 24 months to consent (excluding subsequent appeal processes) in the standard RMA process. As Te Rere Hau Wind Farm is an existing operation, it has been through three standard RMA publicly notified consent processes. The Fast track process is anticipated to be approximately 6 months, considerably faster than the standard RMA process. It should be noted that NZ Windfarms already has existing relationships with key stakeholders and near neighbours and an existing community liaison group is in place, ensuring that appropriate engagement will continue if this Project is accepted for referral.

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:

MartinJenkins considers that the Aokautere Extension Project is expected to contribute a considerable level of expenditure in the local area. The Aokautere Extension Project will contribute significant direct and indirect employment within the Region as well as nationally, particularly in the heavy and civil engineering, construction, scientific, architectural, and engineering industries, as outlined in the preliminary economics assessment (Appendix F). As discussed above, the following employment opportunities will be created: ☐ 190 FTEs locally during construction, ☐ 24 FTE locally once operational. ☐ 258 FTEs nationally during the construction phase, ☐ 30 FTE nationally once operational.

Housing supply:

N/A

Contributing to well-functioning urban environments:

N/A

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

The Aokautere Extension Project involves the provision of infrastructure that will improve economic, employment and environmental outcomes. The Project will result in significant productivity improvements for the existing Te Rere Hau Wind Farm through the increase in renewable electricity generated from the wind resource.

Economic and employment benefits have been detailed in the sections above. The Aokautere Extension Project will provide additional renewable electricity generation, supporting a transition towards greater renewable generation, improving environmental outcomes for all New Zealanders.

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

Due to the distance from the coast the Aokautere Extension Project will not have any impact on coastal quality. Appropriate best practice construction methodologies will be developed through the resource consenting stage to avoid any adverse impacts on freshwater and air quality and indigenous biodiversity. As discussed above, the Aokautere Extension Project does not present any significant adverse environmental effects.

Minimising waste:

NZ Windfarms will investigate ways to minimise waste through the design, construction and operation of the Aokautere Extension Project. The earthworks methodology outlined in the Preliminary Civils Report (**Appendix H**) seeks to adapt to fit the Project Site topography. Excess cut will be reused on site in engineered fills, landscaped in selected disposal areas, and some material is expected to include weathered greywacke suitable for crushing and use in construction of internal roads, such that import of roading material is minimised.

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 has a framework for the whole of Government which drives climate change policy towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilience. The framework supports NZ's commitments under the Paris Agreement, including reducing emissions by 30% below 2005 gross emissions (or 11% below 1990 emissions) for the period 2021 to 2030. The programme includes emissions budgets, a National Adaptation Plan, an Emissions Reduction Plan, an Emissions Trading Scheme (and the International Carbon Markets Project), reducing emissions from agriculture, offsetting emissions through forestry, adapting to the impacts of climate change, and investing in climate change action.

The key benefits of the Project relating to emissions include:

- The Project will enable the further electrification of sectors and activities that are currently dependent on fossil resource combustion.
- The increase in energy supply from the Project is expected to be enough to power 445 electric cars. Estimates for each of these activities equate to 1,880 tCO₂e and 6,000 tCO₂e saved per year respectively, using grid average figures.
- Given the location of the Project in the Tararua Range, it is especially valuable for New Zealand's decarbonisation goals. This location means that the estimated capacity factor of 45% is higher than long-run national average of 40%.

It is recognized that to construct and establish the proposed turbines within the Project site, some trees within the forestry block will have to be removed. The Project will seek to minimise the amount of trees to be removed, which will likely be less than the amount triggering replanting requirements under the emissions trading scheme. Furthermore, the benefits associated with the development of the Aokautere Extension Project for climate change will be significantly greater from the increase in renewable energy capacity.

Promoting the protection of historic heritage:

As discussed above, there are no recorded archaeological features within the Project Site. Accidental Discovery Protocols will be followed, which is considered to be an appropriate approach in circumstances given the low likelihood of encountering archaeological remains during construction,

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

Wind farms contribute to the overall resilience of the national infrastructure system. Solar, wind and hydro are each reliant on different natural variations. By diversifying electricity production through significantly adding to the existing renewables contributions to the region and country, energy resilience is improved; wind generation can fill gaps in generation when hydro lakes are low, or the sun does not shine.

Potential associated effects of climate change and the reducing supply of fossil fuels may see more stringent policies and pricing for petrol and diesel, with potential shortages or with supplies being uneconomic. Therefore, additional wind generated electricity through projects such as this will help provide additional supply to the national grid. It is estimated that about 6.5% of renewable electricity in NZ is from windfarms, but MBIE suggest that wind would account from between 20% and 55% of new renewable generation.

The additional generation per year provided by the Aokautere Extension Project will contribute towards the additional capacity that New Zealand requires to get to 17-35% by 2035. Climate change is expected to make the weather extremes more common, and increase the prevalence of high winds. The Project aims to deliver the ability for the

upgraded technology to better handle these impacts, with the turbines able to operate up to wind speeds of 108km/hr before cutting out.

Other public benefit:

The key public benefits are described above.

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

Overall, the effects relating to the Aokautere Extension Project are deemed to be at levels that are appropriate and acceptable in the context of the receiving environment. None of the preliminary technical assessments undertaken for this stage of the Project have identified that the activities will result in any significant adverse effects. It is noted that the preliminary Landscape and Visual Assessment (**Appendix E**) identified that one neighbouring property on Forest Hill Road will be subject to potential 'High' visual impacts. However, the preliminary Landscape and Visual Assessment concludes that subject to appropriate mitigation measures being employed, any adverse landscape and visual amenity effects will be acceptable. If the referral is approved, NZ Windfarms will work through these matters with the landowner as part of the next stage of the process. As such, it is considered likely that any actual or potential adverse effects on the surrounding environment will be minor or less than minor. The reasons for this assessment have been provided earlier in this application form under Part VII.

Part X: Climate change and natural hazards

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

One implication of climate change is an increase in the prevalence of high wind events. While this increase in higher wind events can result in an increase in associated natural hazards, one benefit the Aokautere Extension Project will deliver is the ability for technology to utilize these events. The turbines will be able to operate up to wind speeds of 108km/hr before cutting out, increasing the efficiency and production of Te Rere Hau Windfarm. Broadly, the Aokautere Extension Project will leverage the Tararua wind resource and contribute towards New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change.

The Aokautere Extension Project site is not located within an area identified as being prone to natural hazards. The location of the turbine sites and their associated construction will be undertaken in a manner than employs best practice methodologies. In particular, if culverts are required, they will be designed to provide for sufficient flow capacity for storm events.

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
Palmerston North City Council	In October 2010, PNCC applied to the Environment Court for nine declarations in relation to noise. To assist in resolving the issues, NZ Windfarms agreed to undertake further compliance monitoring and worked with PNCC to refine the issues requiring determination by the Court. Following a number of hearings and appeals, two declarations were subsequently confirmed: that PNCC was entitled to conduct a review of the noise conditions of consent and that the noise of the Windflow 500 turbines had special audible characteristics. NZ Windfarms then agreed a review process with PNCC which enabled active participation of the local community. NZ Windfarms worked with PNCC and the community throughout that process to develop a set of improved noise conditions and an operating regime which tangibly reduced noise effects for the windfarm's neighbours. The conditions included new noise and operating limits, additional monitoring, an improved complaints management process, and a community

	liaison group to provide a forum for NZ Windfarms and its neighbours to discuss any issues or developments proposed for the site.
	Since the new conditions took effect very few complaints have been received (none in the last six months) and NZ Windfarms has successfully maintained constructive relationships with PNCC and its local community.

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.

Damien McGahan

02/03/2023

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.