



12 October 2022

BRF-2282

Ministers of/for:

Infrastructure; Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti; Energy and Resources, Housing; Education; Arts, Culture, and Heritage; Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations; Local Government; Conservation; Land Information; Defence; Transport; and Climate Change

Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON

Dear Ministers

**COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral applications – Waerenga Solar Farm Project and Rangiriri Solar Farm Project**

I have received two applications to refer projects to an expert consenting panel (panel) for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA). This letter is sent to you pursuant to section 21(2) of the FTCA.

The purpose of the FTCA is to urgently promote employment to support New Zealand's recovery from the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 and to support certainty of investment while continuing to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

The projects are described in Appendix A, and the application documents are in Attachments 1 and 2.

I invite you to provide written comments on the referral applications. If I accept the applications and the projects are referred, the applicants will be able to lodge applications with the Environmental Protection Authority for the approvals needed under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) for the projects, and panels will be appointed to consider and decide them. The applicants must provide more detailed environmental assessments and cultural impact assessments as part of their RMA applications. You will have an opportunity at that stage to provide comments to the panels.

Please provide your comments via return email within 10 working days if you wish me to take them into consideration when deciding whether or not to accept the referral application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Parker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon David Parker  
**Minister for the Environment**

Appendix:

A. Description of proposed projects

Attachments:

1. Application to refer Waerenga Solar Farm Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link in covering email)
2. Application to refer and Rangiriri Solar Farm Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link in covering email)

## Attachment A - Proposed projects

Project	Applicants	Details
Waerenga Solar Farm Project	<p data-bbox="517 304 667 405">Waerenga Solar Farm Limited</p> <p data-bbox="517 450 715 551">Transpower New Zealand Limited</p>	<p data-bbox="724 304 1407 539">The Waerenga Solar Farm project is to construct and operate a solar farm on a 385-hectare site at 3 properties located on Waerenga Road, Keith Road and Awariki Road, Waerenga, Waikato, and to connect to and supply electricity to the national grid. The solar farm will have an approximate peak output of 180 Megawatts.</p> <p data-bbox="724 546 1107 580">The solar farm will comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="724 586 1407 642">a. approximately 290,000 solar panels, occupying approximately 81 hectares</li> <li data-bbox="724 649 1407 705">b. arrays and mounting structures, inverter cabinets, and associated infrastructure</li> <li data-bbox="724 712 1407 768">c. a 220kV substation and transmission line to connect to the national grid</li> <li data-bbox="724 775 1155 808">d. an energy storage facility</li> <li data-bbox="724 815 1219 848">e. underground electricity cables</li> <li data-bbox="724 855 1407 978">f. ancillary buildings, structures and infrastructure (including roads, access, culverts, cabling, fencing, CCTV poles and other infrastructure)</li> <li data-bbox="724 985 1407 1086">g. landscaping including planting, boundary screening and enhancement of streams and waterways</li> </ul>
Rangiriri Solar Farm Project	<p data-bbox="517 1117 667 1218">Rangiriri Solar Farm Project</p> <p data-bbox="517 1263 715 1364">Transpower New Zealand Limited</p>	<p data-bbox="724 1117 1407 1397">The Rangiriri Solar Farm Project is to construct and operate a solar farm on a 275-hectare site comprising 4 properties on Glen Murray Road, Rangiriri West, Waikato (the primary address is 241 Glen Murray Road) and the adjacent road reserve, and to connect to and supply electricity to the national electricity grid. The solar farm will have an approximate peak output of 130 Megawatts.</p> <p data-bbox="724 1426 1107 1460">The solar farm will comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="724 1467 1407 1523">a. approximately 200,000 solar panels, occupying approximately 58 hectares</li> <li data-bbox="724 1529 1407 1585">b. arrays and mounting structures, inverter cabinets, and associated infrastructure</li> <li data-bbox="724 1592 1407 1648">c. a 220kV substation and transmission line to connect to the national grid</li> <li data-bbox="724 1655 1155 1688">d. an energy storage facility</li> <li data-bbox="724 1695 1219 1729">e. underground electricity cables</li> <li data-bbox="724 1736 1407 1859">f. ancillary buildings, structures and infrastructure (including roads, access, culverts, cabling, fencing, CCTV poles and other infrastructure)</li> <li data-bbox="724 1865 1407 1966">g. landscaping including planting, boundary screening and enhancement of streams and waterways</li> </ul>