

26 July 2024

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Tēnā koutou parties

**ENV-WLG-2024-001- Meridian Energy Limited (Meridian) – Mt Munro Wind Farm – Further information supplied post-mediation**

This letter contains the further information that Meridian agreed it would provide during court-assisted mediation, held in Palmerston North on 18 and 19 June 2024. This letter provides information that the parties to mediation agreed would be provided prior to expert conferencing, as well as information that has subsequently been requested by the Councils and s 274 parties.

**Construction Traffic**

*Alternative Access Options*

1. Meridian agreed to investigate the feasibility, benefits, and need for routing traffic in via OCR, and out via Coach Road South. Meridian engaged Tonkin + Taylor to undertake a further review of seven alternative access options, including using Coach Road South as suggested. This report is attached as **Appendix A** to this letter, and concludes that the alternative access routes considered are not viable or deliverable from a transport perspective.
  - Option 1: Access from Falkner Road - Falkner Road on the west side of the site is fronted by steep hills sides (in excess of a 50% gradient), which would make provision of access roads extremely difficult to provide. Furthermore, the Makakahi River is located along the whole of the west side of the site and would require a bridge crossing within the steep hill sides. It is considered that provision of access from Falkner Road would be exceptionally challenging, is considered to be fatally flawed and Option 1 is rejected.
  - Options 2 to 7: Access from Coach Road South and Opaki-Kaiparoro Road. These accesses would require all construction vehicles to use the Opaki-Kaiparoro Road bridge over the Makakahi River. There is insufficient width on the bridge to accommodate the turbine transporter and it is likely to be unable to carry the loads required. As such, the bridge would need to be replaced. This is a major constraint and considered a fatal flaw, meaning Options 2 to 7 are rejected. Furthermore, the access routes from Options 2 and 7 to the Windfarm turbine envelope zones all involve gradients of 20% to 23%, which exceeds the maximum feasible grade of 16% for transporting turbine components. This is another fatal flaw for Options 2 to 7.

*Assessment of Delivering Components or Aggregates by Rail*

2. Meridian agreed at mediation to investigate other alternative transport options, such as delivering turbine components and/or aggregate via rail.
3. The feasibility of delivery of construction materials by rail is addressed in Section 4 of the Tonkin + Taylor Alternative Access Option report contained in Appendix A of this letter. As noted in the report, KiwiRail has confirmed that wind turbine components are over-gauge for their network, and could not be transported via rail. Further, transportation of aggregate is unlikely to be feasible since this would involve triple handling of the aggregate relative to road transport (i.e. from source to truck, from truck to rail, and then from rail to truck again). Use of the rail line is therefore not possible.

4. During discussions with the Councils' traffic expert, the suitability of the proposed existing property access (#85151) on SH2 to the transmission line for construction vehicles was raised. Meridian agreed to commission and provide a report on this (provided as **Appendix B** to this letter), and to seek formal feedback from NZTA.
5. Tonkin + Taylor's conclusion, as expressed in the report, is that construction vehicle access to the transmission line from the existing property access on SH2 can be undertaken safely and without impacting the level of service for other road users, and can be supported from a transport perspective.
6. NZTA's views have been sought, and will be communicated back to traffic experts when received.

#### *Pavement Quality and Durability*

7. Meridian and Councils agreed to liaise as to pavement quality, durability and condition post-construction to inform the Council's position on this and on proposed condition CTM2(b). Discussions on this point are ongoing between the experts.

#### **Landscape and visual effects**

8. During the landscape experts' site visit that was arranged following mediation, Mr Girvan agreed he would prepare additional simulations to show the existing meteorological mast. This was in response to concerns raised by Mr Maxwell and Mr Olliver that the mast could not be made out in the simulations already provided, and that it would be useful to use as a reference point for scale. These additional simulations are provided as **Appendix C** to this letter.
9. Mr Girvan has noted that the visibility of the mast has been enhanced in these photographs to ensure that it can be seen in these simulations (i.e. the mast has been 'modelled' into the photographs). Mr Girvan has also provided a single frame 'zoomed in' view to assist in judging the comparative scale of the mast against the modelled turbines.

#### **Shadow Flicker**

10. Meridian agreed to consider the timing of identification of relevant dwellings for the purpose of shadow flicker, including whether it should be earlier than the pre-installment shadow flicker assessment.
11. As per the proffered conditions, Meridian proposes that a pre-installment shadow flicker assessment will be undertaken based on the final turbine layout, and provided to the district councils at least 20 working days prior to construction. This assessment shall consider effects on receivers within 10 rotor diameters which were lawfully in existence as at the date of the grant of the consent. Whether and to what extent yet-to-be constructed dwellings should be included in this assessment is being considered in relation to the district planning rules, and by counsel in relation to the position in caselaw.



Ngā Mihi | Kind regards,

**Ellie Taffs**

Senior Legal Counsel - RMA  
Meridian Energy Limited



#### **Enclosed:**

- Appendix A: Review of Alternative Access Options by Tonkin + Taylor dated 19 July 2024.
- Appendix B: Review of proposed SH2/Transmission line access by Tonkin + Taylor dated 22 July 2024.
- Appendix C: Additional photosimulations including existing meteorological mast, modelled to increase visibility, Boffa Miskell Limited dated 24 July 2024.