

3 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 is limited to the information that the parties to mediation agreed would be provided by 3 July 2024, to assist the s 274 parties in the preparation of evidence.

Draft Construction Traffic Management Plan (Draft CTMP)

1. Meridian agreed to provide a draft CTMP (attached as **Appendix A** to this letter). The Draft CTMP deals with construction activity associated with:
 - The main construction site accessed from SH2/Old Coach Road;
 - The Old Coach Road upgrade;
 - The terminal substation site accessed from SH2/Kaiparoro Road; and
 - The transmission line accessed from SH2/Opaki-Kaiparoro Road (northern intersection), noting heavy and light construction traffic will not be permitted to utilise Opaki-Kaiparoro Road to the south and east, beyond its intersection with Mount Munro Road.
2. We emphasise that this is a draft document, and while prepared on the best information currently available, it will be subject to amendment and refinement through this resource consent process, and the Council certification process, and as a result of stakeholder engagement, detailed design, and contractor and traffic management company requirements.
3. As such, the methodology and management of effects described in the Draft CTMP are **indicative only**.
4. Given the location of the construction vehicle activity, two road controlling authorities (TDC and NZTA) will be consulted in relation to the preparation of the next version of the CTMP, should consent be granted. The Stakeholder Liaison Group appointed through consent conditions will also have the opportunity to provide feedback on the CTMP prior to it being lodged with the Councils for certification.

Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG) matters

5. Meridian's response to each of the matters identified in the 'Other Matters' section is set out below, and we note that this condition will be discussed and refined at the conditions workshop to be held between Meridian's planning consultant, Mr Anderson, and Council planners. It will be open to parties to provide further feedback during the evidence exchange and hearing processes.

Establishment of the SLG

6. Meridian agreed to review the timing of establishment of SLG and opportunities for its input into the various management plans to be submitted to the Councils, including consideration of the functions of the SLG within condition SLG1 onwards.
7. Draft condition SLG1 in the condition set attached to the evidence of Mr Anderson states that the SLG would be established no less than forty (40) working days prior to the commencement of construction works.

8. However, Meridian recommends that the SLG should be formed at least thirty (30) working days prior to the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) being submitted to Councils for certification (which must occur at least 40 working days prior to the commencement of construction). This timing will allow the SLG to provide its views on the CEMP ahead of submission to the Councils, and would align with Condition CM4(e), which invites views from iwi and the Councils on the CEMP twenty (20) working days prior to the CEMP being submitted.
9. It is suggested that Condition SLG2 be amended to include the following sentence: *The specific roles of the Stakeholder Liaison Group must be determined by the Group and must be to the satisfaction of the Resource Consents Manager – Tararua and Masterton District Council. A document stating the Terms of Reference must be produced within three months of the first meeting.*

Duration of SLG

10. Meridian agreed to consider the duration of the SLG, and frequency of meetings as determined by the members of the group, as opposed to automatic dissolution.
11. Draft condition SLG1 provides that, once established, the SLG would be maintained for a period of no less than two (2) years after the completion of construction activities. This condition provides discretion for the SLG to operate beyond two years. Meridian would support an amendment to the condition so that the group exists for three years post construction.
12. SLG3 requires that, as a minimum, the SLG meets on a three monthly basis during the time in which it exists. This condition provides discretion for the SLG to meet on a more frequent basis.
13. SLG3 states that, at the close of the period specified in SLG1, the Consent Holder shall notify all members of the SLG of the dissolution of the SLG. Meridian considers that automatic dissolution following a three-year period post-construction is appropriate. Such a timeframe would allow any initial issues to be discussed and resolved. Any other issues would then become compliance matters to be dealt with as they arise in accordance with best practice. It is also noted that SLG3 requires Meridian to nominate a representative responsible for the ongoing operation of the wind farm, thereby ensuring an ability for ongoing communication between community members and Meridian following the dissolution of the SLG.

SLG Members

14. Meridian agreed to consider the list of potential members of the SLG and provide further specificity, and consider the facilitation aspect (e.g.: whether self-regulated or independently run).
15. Condition SLG6 sets out the list of potential members of the SLG. The list is not exhaustive, and other members, such as residents of Old Coach Road, can also be invited to participate in the SLG. Meridian will work with the community and affected parties to provide further specificity should consent be granted.
16. Meridian proposes that an independent facilitator would chair the SLG, at Meridian's cost.

SLG Feedback

17. Meridian agreed to consider the wording of SLG conditions, including a mechanism for how feedback from the SLG will be incorporated into management plans and other matters.
18. Condition SLG2 states that the "functions of the Stakeholder Liaison Group shall also include acting as a forum for the relaying of community concerns about the construction and initial operation of the Project to the Consent Holder and/or representative(s), discussing means of addressing concerns raised, and reviewing the implementation of measures to resolve and manage those concerns." Feedback into management plans has been addressed earlier in relation to timing of establishment of the SLG, the Terms of Reference for the SLG, and specifically in relation to the CTMP.

Effects on Stock

19. Meridian agreed to consider further the effects on stock during construction.

Stock Movements

20. As noted in Mr Shields's evidence, the management of stock movements will be a matter that is addressed in the CTMP.¹ The draft CTMP includes general management strategies for stock movements in the table at page 23.
21. A similar process was followed during the upgrade of Ohariu Valley Road at Mill Creek, and all stock movements occurred without incident, via standard traffic management controls.²

Construction Traffic on Old Coach Road

22. Any potential construction traffic effects on stock will be limited to stock in paddocks adjacent to Old Coach Road. As noted above, heavy and light construction traffic will not be permitted to utilise Opaki-Kaiparoro Road to the south and east, beyond its intersection with Mount Munro Road, and Falkner Road will not be used by construction traffic either.
23. Meridian's experience at its other windfarm sites is that stock adjust to higher volumes of construction traffic. An example of an additional measure implemented at Mill Creek was the installation of temporary screening/fencing (mesh cloth) along a section of property boundary to visually screen construction activities from horses in an adjacent commercial horse-riding facility. This could be included within the CTMP if required here, for instance during lambing or calving. No other provisions were implemented for any other farming operations along the length of Ohariu Valley Road, and no incidents in relation to stock or horses occurred because of the upgrade works.³
24. Mr Shields concludes in his evidence that the additional traffic resulting from the Project will not create any issues in relation to livestock, noting the following:⁴
- ...it is not uncommon in New Zealand for livestock to be grazing adjacent to rural roads and I am not aware of any evidence to demonstrate negative impacts on these animals. I consider that animals will become habituated/acclimatised to traffic noise and hence would not be startled or alarmed by car and truck traffic.
25. Furthermore, the Construction Noise Management Plan will include measures including restricting truck engine braking, forbidding the use of vehicle reversing squawkers, muffling of exhausts and ensuring all plant and equipment is well maintained to minimise any disturbance to local residents and livestock in the adjacent fields. This requirement was implemented for the upgrade of Ohariu Valley Road at Mill Creek.⁵

Dust effects on Stock

26. Mr Van De Munckhof has confirmed that dust effects from construction traffic on Old Coach Road will be significantly reduced by the sealing of the road so that effects will be negligible.
27. Dust during the upgrade of Old Coach Road will be managed via an Air Quality Management Plan, which will include dust suppression measures. As noted in the letter dated 27 June 2024, effects on stock near exposed areas were considered by the Construction Team at Harapaki as 'dust-sensitive' areas. For example, a neighbouring property had stock grazing immediately beside a wind farm access road, separated by a standard wire fence. The Construction Team applied dust suppression on the access road near this fence line and was able to effectively control dust at this location. A similar approach could be taken at Mt Munro.

¹ Statement of Evidence of Colin Shields at [154(c)]

² Statement of Evidence of Chris Jones at [39]

³ Statement of Evidence of Chris Jones at [40]

⁴ Statement of Evidence of Colin Shields at [191]

⁵ Statement of Evidence of Chris Jones at [42]

General Construction Activities

28. Meridian confirms that stock will be excluded from construction areas on the windfarm site during construction.

29. Mr Halstead has noted the following in his evidence:⁶

My experience of observing animals around construction machinery is that they generally have little regard for such [construction] activity, especially when acclimatised by normal farm and road traffic activities. Construction activities are generally more steady-state in their noise production than road traffic noise, and so less surprising and more predictable to animals.

An exception is blasting, where there is potential for significant surprise at high noise levels. I recommend in construction noise management plans where blasting is anticipated that a clear programme of communication and timing is followed, allowing ample time to relocate stock if necessary near blast sites.

Ngā Mihi | Kind regards,

Ellie Taffs

Senior Legal Counsel - RMA
Meridian Energy Limited



Enclosed:

- Appendix A: Draft CTPMP

⁶ Statement of Evidence of Miklin Halstead at [63]