

**IN THE ENVIRONMENT COURT
AT WELLINGTON**

**I TE KŌTI TAIAO O AOTEAROA
KI TE WHANGANUI-A-TARA**

IN THE MATTER in relation to a direct referral under s
87G(2) of the Resource Management Act
1991 for resource consents to construct,
operate and maintain a windfarm on Mt
Munro, Eketāhuna

BETWEEN MERIDIAN ENERGY LIMITED

(ENV-2024 -WLG-001)

Applicant

AND TARARUA DISTRICT COUNCIL
MASTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL
MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI
REGIONAL COUNCIL AND
GREATER WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Consent Authorities

AND SECTION 274 PARTIES

**MINUTE OF THE ENVIRONMENT COURT
(1 May 2024)**

[1] A pre-hearing conference for this matter was held on Tuesday 30 April 2024 at the Wellington District Court. The purpose of this Minute is to record the directions discussed at that conference and to clarify details of the timetable towards a hearing.



MERIDIAN ENERGY LIMITED & OTHERS

Mediation

[2] All parties indicated a willingness to attend court-assisted mediation. Four mediation days will be scheduled in the period 11 – 21 June, with a preference for the period 18- 21 June 2024. The parties expressed a preference for a venue in Pahiatua, Masterton or Palmeston North. The Mediation Manager is directed to seek a suitable venue in those locations.

Timetable

[3] The draft timetable appended to the Memorandum of Counsel dated 12 April 2024 was agreed by all parties. As such I direct:

- The Applicant (Meridian) is to file with the court and serve its evidence on all parties by 5pm on Friday 24 May 2024.
- All section 274 parties are to file with the court and serve their evidence on all parties by 5pm on Wednesday 10 July 2024.
- The Councils are to file with the court and serve their evidence on all parties by 5pm on Friday 23 August 2024.
- Any rebuttal evidence on behalf of the Applicant is to be filed with the court and served on all parties by 5pm 6 September 2024.
- The Applicant shall compile the evidence and any common bundle materials into a single bundle document appropriately paginated and tabulated and file an electronic version and 4 hard copy versions of the same with the Court by 5pm on Tuesday 10 September 2024.

Hearing

[4] A strong preference for a hearing in Masterton or Palmerston North was expressed by all s274 parties.



[5] With respect to witnesses, the Applicant indicated that it has some 16 technical report writers and is likely to call all of those as expert witnesses unless matters are

refined at mediation. Similarly the Councils have 17 technical experts and again, expect to call those experts as witnesses if all matters remain at issue.

[6] The majority of s274 parties intend to represent themselves at hearing and will not, at this stage, be calling expert evidence but are likely to have questions of the experts called by the Applicant and the Councils. The exception is the Mt Munro Protection Society Incorporated which intends to be represented by Counsel and to call social impact assessment and landscape evidence.

[7] Having considered the expected number of witnesses I consider that scheduling a two week hearing with a third reserve week would be prudent. The Hearing Manager is to endeavour to accommodate this in Masterton as a first preference with Palmerston North as an alternative. The three weeks commencing 16 September 2024 are tentatively scheduled subject to resolving the question of a suitable venue. A hearing notice will be issued in due course.

Website

[8] Mr Forrest indicated that no documents have been uploaded to the Court's website project page as yet. The Hearing Manager is directed to ascertain the current status of the project page and advise the parties accordingly.

[9] The Court records that the Applicant and the Councils indicated that they have suitable webpages and will endeavour to ensure the relevant documents are uploaded to those pages and kept up to date in the interim.


L J Semple
Environment Judge

