



POUARUA WATER STORAGE SCHEME
(PWSS)

WI PERE TRUST

Fast Track Referral Application Form

15 May 2026

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REPORT INFORMATION

Report Status	Final
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1. APPLICANT DETAILS

1.1 APPLICATION INFORMATION – REFERRAL

1.1.1 Referral Application Unique Reference Number

Unknown until time of lodgement.

1.1.2 Project Name

Pouarua Water Storage Scheme (“**PWSS**” or “**the Scheme**” or “**the Project**”).

1.1.3 Project Description - Summary

Wi Pere Trust (“**WPT**”) seeks Fast Track approval to construct and operate a regionally significant new water storage scheme located at and adjacent to its Tangihanga Station in Tairāwhiti, Gisborne. The scheme, known as the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme, would meet irrigation and other water demands across the Poverty Bay flats (refer to **Attachments 2, 3 and 6**).

The Scheme would involve the construction of a dam to form a new large-capacity reservoir on the Pouarua Stream. The reservoir would store water collected from both naturally occurring runoff from the local catchment, and from water sourced by pumping of water that is currently available for allocation from the nearby Waipaoa River during high river flow periods. Stored water would then be released when demand is high or during dry-year water restrictions to a downstream water reticulation system for a range of potential uses.

Initial supply and demand modelling has shown that the Scheme could meet multiple water demands, including irrigation for new high-value land use and balancing shortfalls in existing water allocations potentially up to 11,000 hectares of land, and to improve supply security for Gisborne District Council’s potable water requirements. This Scheme therefore has the scale and the potential to provide significant economic growth across the Tairāwhiti Region.

1.2 APPLICANT DETAILS

Organisation: Wi Pere Trust
[NZBN 9429051274122]

Key Contact:

Name: Tim Rhodes
Phone: s 9(2)(a)

Email: s 9(2)(a)

1.3 AGENT ACTING ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT

Organisation: Mitchell Daysh Limited

Key Contact: Susan Jones

Phone: s 9(2)(a)

Email: s 9(2)(a)

1.4 FINANCE

Organisation: Wi Pere Trust

[NZBN 9429051274122]

Key Contact:

Name: Tim Rhodes

Phone: s 9(2)(a)

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Please direct all correspondence relating to this application (including correspondence from MfE) to the Agent for the Applicant.

1.5 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

Have there been any compliance or enforcement actions taken against the applicant (or if the referral application is lodged by more than one person, any of those persons) under a specified Act definition for either 'compliance' or 'enforcement'?

No. The Applicant is not aware of any compliance or enforcement actions taken.

2. REFERRAL APPLICATION SUMMARY

2.1 PROJECT NAME

Pouarua Water Storage Scheme (“**PWSS**” or “**the Scheme**” or “**the Project**”).

2.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

2.2.1 Project Background

Wi Pere Trust (“**WPT**”) seeks resource consent to construct and operate a regionally significant new water storage scheme at and adjacent to the WPT-owned Tangihanga Station in Tairāwhiti, Gisborne. The scheme, known as the Pouarua Water Storage Scheme (“**PWSS**”) would meet irrigation and other water demands across the Poverty Bay flats.

The Ministry of Works and Development had assessed a range of dam options in the mid-1980’s (MWD et al, 1985) and favoured the Pouarua dam site. A period of restructuring former government entities into State Owned Enterprises in the later 1980’s contributed to a range of circumstances that prevented the project from being further developed at the time and up to the present day. A recently released Proof of Concept Scoping Study prepared by Mitchell Daysh, Damwatch and Aqualinc in 2025 (refer **Attachment 12**) has reconfirmed the technical and economic merit of a scheme in this location.

2.2.2 Project Overview and Location

The PWSS would involve the construction of a dam and reservoir on the Pouarua Stream to store water collected from two main sources:

- 1) naturally occurring runoff from the local catchment; and
- 2) water harvested from high-flow allocation by pumping from the nearby Waipaoa River.

Stored water would then be released when demand is high and / or existing supplies are restricted to a downstream water reticulation system for a range of potential uses, including new high-value land-use irrigation, balancing shortfalls in existing water allocations. There is also an opportunity to improve supply security for Gisborne District Council’s potable water supply, which is a current issue.

The scheme is located in Tairāwhiti, Gisborne at Tangihanga Station which is owned and operated by WPT. The location and indicative arrangement of the PWSS scheme and its various features are shown on the plans included in **Attachment 2 to 6**.

2.2.3 Project Arrangement

The preferred dam configuration consists of a zoned earth embankment structure with height ranging from 34 to 39 metres and crest length between 190 to 230 metres. The projected Normal Top Water Level (“NWTL”) ranges from 60 to 65 metres above sea level (masl), creating a reservoir storage capacity between 25.1 and 38.6 million cubic metres respectively. For perspective, this could be compared to the recently completed Waimea Dam in Nelson/Tasman which has a live reservoir volume of about 12 million cubic metres. The Pouarua Reservoir would extend up to 5.0 kilometres upstream from the dam site, covering a surface area of between 240 to 300 hectares depending on the selected NTWL (refer to **Attachment 3**).

The natural Pouarua Stream catchment provides an estimated mean annual inflow of 8.3 million cubic metres based on currently available hydrology data, representing less than one-third of the proposed reservoir capacity. Records indicate this could be as low as 3 million cubic metres in dry years. To provide for seasonal refilling with the necessary dry year resilience, water harvesting infrastructure from the Waipaoa River B Block allocation becomes essential. This requires pumping capacity utilising the available unallocated B Block (high flow) water from the Waipaoa River of up to 1,255 litres per second over a 4.5-kilometre (approx.) length of rising main connecting the river intake to the reservoir.

A piped water distribution system is proposed and would irrigate a command area of up to some 11,000 ha of the fertile Poverty Bay flats, with approximately 24% of that area being Māori Land (refer to **Attachment 6**).

Initial supply and demand modelling of the concept (refer to **Attachment 12**) demonstrates the scheme’s ability to meet multiple water demands (including added resilience to the Gisborne District Council (GDC) municipal water supply) and provide significant economic growth across the region.

2.2.4 Key Project Components

The PWSS water supply system would comprise the following main elements:

- > A new dam on the Pouarua Stream of 34 to 39 metres in height retaining a new reservoir capable of storing 25.1 to 38.6 million cubic metres (refer following sections for basis of dam height option selection).
- > Associated hydraulic structures near/at the dam comprising a spillway, intake structure and outlet culvert containing an offtake pipework system.
- > A small control room and equipment building at the dam location for facility operation, power supplies and controls.

- > A pump station and associated building, mechanical and electrical equipment located on the right bank of the Waipaoa River to deliver additional water either to the main Pouarua Dam for storage, or potentially direct to the water distribution network. Two location options will be considered during design as shown on the plans in **Attachments 3 and 5**. Both options involve infrastructure located on WPT-owned land and on Crown Land riverbed (managed and administered by LINZ).
- > Depending on the selected intake configuration, a possible new sedimentation and storage holding pond near the Waipaoa River may be required, along with a second pump station delivering water from the holding pond to the Pouarua Reservoir. The intake location option close to the existing Tangihanga Holding Pond would avoid the need for a new sediment settlement pond but is furthest from the dam.
- > A rising main up to 4.5km long for delivering water from the river intake to the Pouarua Reservoir. An alternative shorter route some 3.5km long, but requiring a deeper excavation, will also be considered during design as indicated on the plans in **Attachment 6**. Both alignments would be approximately 1 km longer if the intake location adjacent to the existing Tangihanga Pond is selected.
- > Power supplies from the existing network to the main dam¹ and river intake sites, likely comprising overhead 11kV 3-phase single circuit from the Patutahi Substation (about 10km to the South of the site) but this is to be confirmed during design.
- > A possible radio link tower for an anticipated remote-control facility, the location to be decided during the design stage.
- > A new permanent access road between Tangihanga Road and the main dam site, to be located on WPT-owned land.

In addition, temporary works would be required for construction activities as follows:

- > Temporary diversions and cofferdams to manage stream or river flows through work sites at both the main dam site and the Waipaoa River intake site.
- > Contractor offices and laydown areas.

¹ Power supplies at the dam itself will be relatively minor in comparison to the power demand of the pump system at Waipaoa River. To operate all equipment at the dam location will only require a supply in the order of 10-20 kW (similar to a typical residential house). Equipment and instrumentation at the dam (including flow control valves) can generally be operated from battery-powered DC supplies. Power supply to the dam site would therefore mainly be to maintain battery charge and would be provided by the local service network with emergency backup by diesel generation – as is typical at most large dams in New Zealand.

- > Temporary access roads as required for construction activities, some of which will be converted to permanent access roads on completion.
- > The opening of quarries for suitable construction materials, with managed reinstatement where required.
- > Disposal sites for excavated materials not required for construction, placed and managed to comply with accepted good practice.

The water distribution system would comprise:

- > A pressurised pipe network, installed underground in road reserves and on WPT land.
- > Pipes attached to existing bridges to cross rivers / streams.
- > A connection to the rising main and pump station, allowing water to be delivered from storage under gravity or directly from the river intake with pumping.
- > Depending on the extent and location of irrigated areas, potentially a small number of booster pumping stations, to be determined during design.
- > Turnouts from the pipe network to on-farm irrigation systems, each including flow control valves and flow measurement.
- > Air / vacuum relief (approximately 1 per 1,000 m of pipeline) and pressure relief valves at locations to be determined in detailed pipeline design, with valve chambers finished at ground level with a manhole cover.
- > Isolating valves at locations in the pipe network to be determined in detailed design, and drainage valves at the lower end of gravity-fed pipe branches.

2.2.5 Dam Height and Storage Options Considered

The Proof-of-Concept Scoping Study (“**The 2025 Study**”) (Mitchell Daysh, Damwatch, Aqualinc, 2025) investigated a range of dam height and reservoir storage options from 24m (NTWL 50 masl) to 39m (NTWL 65 masl) with live storage volumes between 6.7 and 38.6 million cubic metres respectively.

The 2025 Study compared this wider range of options on a unit cost (capital cost per m³ of water sold) basis. The comparison was made for both ‘with’ and ‘without’ water harvesting scenarios. The net value of future revenue benefits over an assumed payback period was estimated and brought to a present value, which was directly compared with the unit capital cost of each storage option to provide an initial measure of economic viability. The key findings are summarised as follows:

- > Water storage and supply schemes for dam NTWLs from 60 masl to 65 masl (upper end of the range studied) are indicated as having the most potential economic merit based on current and predicted water pricing, and options between these parameters warrant further investigation.
- > This finding aligns well with the MWD et al (1985) findings and has been further guided by the water demand assessment (refer further commentary below), which found that demand requirements aligned well with the larger storage sizes investigated.
- > Water would need to be harvested for all dam options to achieve annual refill at a sufficiently robust level of dry season resilience. Dam options for this site without water harvesting are unlikely to be economically viable, mainly because of the small local catchment.
- > The economic merits of a scheme with water harvesting are able to be realised due to the significant volume of water available from the Waipaoa River B Block allocation, combined with the relatively low incremental cost of delivering this water to the reservoir compared to the cost of the dam itself. Further discussion on the B Block water take and its effects are given below.

The economic analyses carried out to date remain at a high level subject to further design studies and were intended as a screening tool for defining a narrower range of options to carry forward. The results are considered sufficient to support decisions about proceeding to the next stages of scheme development and for seeking consents.

2.2.6 Dam Type Assessment

The 2025 Study updated the earlier screening of viable dam types and confirms previous findings (MWD et al, 1985) that a zoned earth-fill dam with an impervious clay core remains the most viable option for advancement to subsequent project phases.

The key factors supporting selection of a zoned earth-fill embankment were:

- > Foundation compatibility – most tolerant of the weak Papa foundations identified at the preferred dam site.
- > Material economics – potential utilisation of locally available Papa bedrock as clay core, along with gravel materials currently exposed in small quarries on WPT-owned land (termed the ‘Matokitoki Gravels’ as filter and shoulder materials).
- > Seismic suitability – superior earthquake resistance in what has been identified as a high seismic environment, noting that a potentially active fault has been identified within several hundred metres of the proposed dam site.

- > Constructability/technical risk – the most common dam type with relatively simple, well-established construction methods and performance history indicated.

While the overall assessment aligns with earlier studies the proposed material zoning and design details have now been upgraded to reflect advances in dam design practice. Consistent with previous studies, all proposed construction materials will require investigations and lab testing to confirm their suitability.

2.2.7 Dam Design

Dam design in New Zealand is guided by a set of Dam Safety Guidelines produced by NZSOLD² (**NZDSG**), coupled with internationally recognised best practice and the statutory and regulatory requirements of the Building Act (2004) and Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022. The design requirements are governed by the potential consequences of a hypothetical dam failure which are assessed by a Potential Impact Classification (PIC).

An initial PIC assessment for the scheme indicated that any of the dam heights considered would be classified as **High PIC**. This would put the Pouarua Dam in the highest hazard category under the current (2024) version of the NZDSG, meaning it will require the maximum design levels for earthquake and flood protection under current New Zealand (and international) industry practice.

This will include a requirement that the dam outlet pipework will have sufficient capacity to draw the reservoir down in a timely manner in response to any dam safety emergency (natural or man-made) that may occur. This is especially important in seismically active regions and will be consistent with the latest available earthquake knowledge available, and international best practice.

2.2.8 Waipaoa River Intake

A river intake will be required in order to harvest high-flow water from the Waipaoa River (refer to **Attachment 3**). The options for this include an infiltration gallery or a conventional surface intake. Further investigations and design are required to determine the preferred option.

There is precedent for the successful use of infiltration galleries on the Waipaoa River, with a number of existing smaller water takes from the river using a modular design produced by a local irrigation supplier. Infiltration galleries can be designed to an appropriate scale to abstract the required rates for the high-flow take.

² New Zealand Society on Large Dams

Infiltration galleries consist of slotted screens / permeable pipes installed beneath the river-bed gravels, and as such protect the water supply from sedimentation (a key consideration with water taken from the high-flow allocation) and remove the need for separate fish-screening at the point of take.

Depending on the final design and the exact location chosen, temporary diversion works in the river may be required to enable installation of the screens. Given the Waipaoa River is not highly braided, it is considered unlikely that permanent river-training works would be required to ensure flowing water sufficiently near to a gallery.

Due to the filtration provided by the river-bed gravels, a well-designed infiltration gallery would typically avoid the requirement for sediment removal before pumping to the main reservoir, however a conventional surface intake is expected to require a sediment settling pond from which settled sediments can periodically be removed. A surface intake would require a low-lift pump station at the intake to lift water from the river to a buffer storage / sedimentation pond, with a second pump station to lift water to the reservoir via the rising main. The intake itself would require wedge-wire screens or similar suspended in the water column and appropriately protected from high flows and debris, potentially with the ability to lift the screens out of the water during very high flows.

Regardless of the type of intake used, a buffer storage pond is likely to be a useful component of flow control and distribution. Both of these options, along with the most suitable intake location, will be investigated as part of the design studies.

In all cases, any intermediate storage facilities will be constructed on WPT-owned land and any intake structure will likely extend across WPT-owned land and Crown Land riverbed (managed and administered by LINZ).

2.2.9 Irrigation Command Area

Currently un-irrigated land that is topographically suited for irrigation has been identified based on analysis of existing resource consents, GDC's crop survey data, land slope and current land cover³.

In addition to providing irrigation water to currently un-irrigated land, the dam will potentially supply water to existing irrigators who take water from the Waipaoa River 'A' allocation block when their current water supplies from the Waipaoa River are restricted due to low river flows. This is likely to become more of a consideration in the near future as part of their

³ Based on analysis completed for the Gisborne Regional Water Assessment (Aqualinc, 2023).
https://www.gdc.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/74817/Gisborne-Water-Assessment.pdf



Waipaoa River water planning functions and responsibilities GDC are considering a change to the minimum 'cease-take' flow that applies to existing water users⁴.

The indicative command area for the scheme includes potentially irrigable areas upstream of the proposed water harvesting point of take: around Te Karaka, and extending up the Waikohu and Waihora River valleys. These have been excluded from the preliminary pipe network design completed for the 2025 Scoping Study (refer to **Attachment 12**) on the basis that they would require more pumping and the length of pipe required per hectare of irrigated land serviced would be much greater than for the lower flats. There is potential for the distribution area to be expanded in future beyond the pipe network shown in **Attachment 6**. If that occurs, further consents will be sought at the time to authorise the additional infrastructure.

2.2.10 Distribution Network

A large proportion of this area would be able to be supplied with stored water from the dam under gravity due to the difference in elevation between the reservoir and the irrigable areas, with water delivered under pressure to property boundaries. Supplying water directly from the river (when availability of high-flow water coincides with demand) would require pumping. From a distribution perspective the location and elevation of the storage relative to the majority of the potential irrigated area is particularly advantageous. The ability to utilise the elevation difference to provide pressurised water at property boundaries helps to keep water delivery costs low and reduces the on-farm pumping capacity required.

A concept-level design of a branching pipe distribution network covering the Poverty Bay flats on both sides of the Waipaoa River was prepared as part of the Proof of Concept Scoping Study, 2025 (refer to **Attachment 12**). The indicative distribution network comprises 108 km of pipe, with diameters ranging from 175 mm to 1,800 mm. This pipe network follows road alignments, prioritising access to clusters of potentially irrigable properties to maximise the area serviced by the pipeline.

The indicative alignment for the portion of the network that services the eastern side of the Waipaoa River is shown as crossing the river via the SH2 road bridge, avoiding the need for a pipe crossing beneath the riverbed. An alternative crossing point, via an inverted siphon

⁴ GDC have consulted with an advisory group in 2023 – 2024 to establish direction for water management policy in the Waipaoa Catchment (<https://www.gdc.govt.nz/environment/rivers,-water-and-wetlands/our-rivers/catchment-plans/waipaoa-catchment-plan-review>). This process included commissioning NIWA (now ESNZ) to review flow requirements for the Waipaoa River (https://www.gdc.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0028/74845/Flow-requirements-of-Te-Arai-and-Waipaoa-Rivers.pdf)



opposite the existing WPT pond is shown on the distribution network plans. This alternative would potentially reduce the pumping requirements to supply water to the eastern side of the Waipaoa River (particularly at times when reservoir levels are lower) and may also present an opportunity to reduce the total length of pipeline required if there is limited uptake for water in areas upstream of Ormond. This option would require disturbance of the riverbed and temporary diversion works to construct. These works could potentially be staged to coincide with construction of an infiltration gallery intake at a similar location. Both options will be explored further at in the next stage of design.

The network has been designed for flowrates that maintain flexibility in the land-uses that irrigation water can be supplied for. Pipes will generally be installed below ground, apart from river / stream crossings where they will be attached to existing road bridges. Valve chambers for air / vacuum relief valves will be installed below ground with a manhole cover visible at ground level.

Turnouts at property boundaries would supply water to on-farm irrigation systems, with flow control and flow measurement equipment typically installed above ground at these points.

The proposed distribution network can connect to GDC's existing pipelines and Waipaoa treatment plant to supply municipal water. There is also potential to supply water to the proposed Managed Aquifer Recharge (**MAR**) scheme to augment groundwater levels in the Makauri aquifer, which depends on a water supply with low sediment levels.

Pumping and flow control for water distribution, and details of integration with other existing systems such as GDC's municipal water supply pipelines would be determined in subsequent design stages.

Trenching in the road corridor will be required for pipe installation. For smaller diameter pipes (potentially around 60% of the distribution network) a chain trencher is likely to be used, while for larger diameters excavators would be required.

Existing water users who require additional water from storage to supplement their current supplies might potentially use the Waipaoa River (within the reach indicated on the distribution network plans) as conveyance rather than connecting to the new pipe distribution network. While this option would not deliver water from storage under pressure (as is the case for the piped distribution network), it would potentially reduce the total length of pipeline required per irrigated hectare serviced / volume of water delivered from the scheme. In this case, water would be released from storage when required to meet a

shortfall in existing supplies and discharged to the Waipaoa River at or near the proposed intake location.

The corresponding volume of water would then be re-abstracted further downstream via water users' existing intake arrangements, with relative timing of discharge and abstraction co-ordinated to ensure that minimum flows would not be breached in the reach of river used for conveyance. Details of the discharge arrangements and volumes will be determined during design. Measurement of discharged water volumes and corresponding measurement of the downstream water takes will be an important consideration.

2.3 LAND OWNERSHIP

2.3.1 Wi Pere Trust Land Ownership

WPT Board own the land at Tangihanga Station (off Lavenham Road) where the majority of the Project components will be situated including the rising main, intakes structure, ponds, dam wall and reservoir) as shown in **Figure 1** (and **Attachment 4**). These parcels include:

- > Lot 1 Deposited Plan 2405 and Lot 2 Deposited Plan 2193;
- > Lot 1-6 Deposited Plan 8533;
- > Part Tangihanga 1A Block; and
- > Part Okahuatui 1D2B1 Block.

It is noted that much of the WPT Board owned land (with the exception of Lot 1 Deposited Plan 2405 and Lot 2 Deposited Plan 2193) has the status as 'Māori freehold land' as set out in Schedule 3 of the Māori Purposes (Wi Pere Trust) Act 1991.

The management structure of the land is a Māori Trust, with 589 owners. The Māori Trust is governed by the Māori Purposes (Wi Pere Trust) Act 1991.

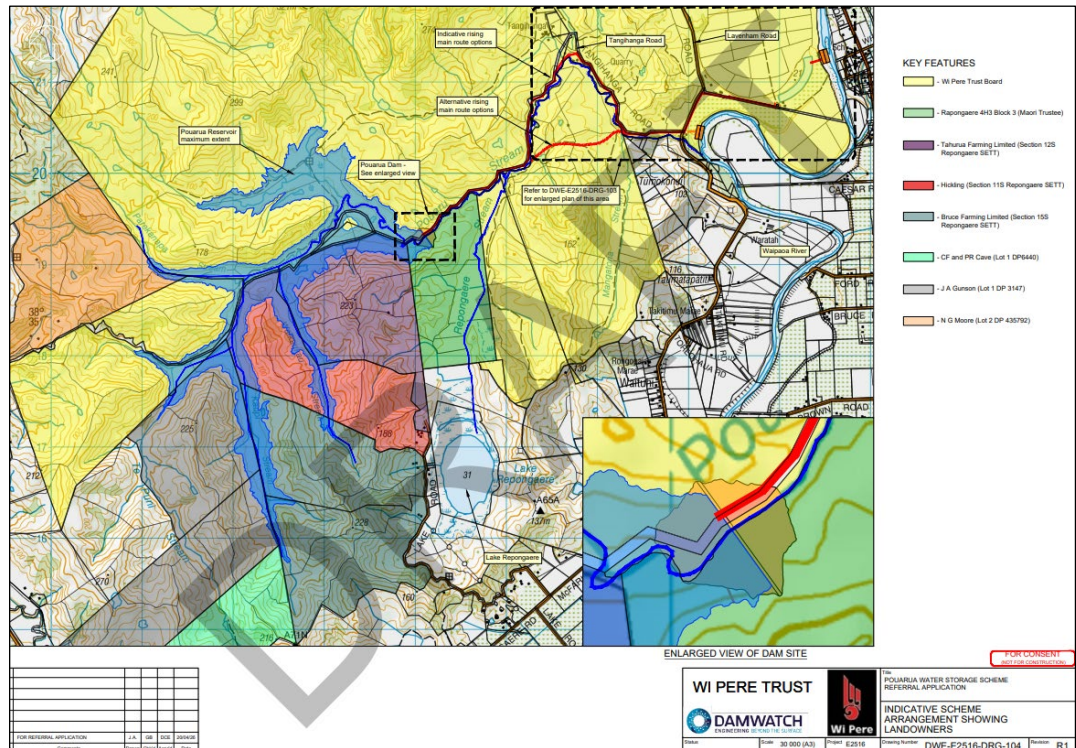


Figure 1: WPT owned and managed land at Tangihanga Station in Yellow (Source: Damwatch)

Records of Title for WPT owned land associated with the scheme are provided in **Attachment 1.H** and further details are tabulated in **Attachments 1.I** (Dam Structure Land) and **Attachment 1.J** (Rising Main and Primary Distribution System Land).

WPT also owns Waipoua riverbed land associated with both intake structures, and in relation to the proposed pipeline beneath the Waipoua River, WPT owns land associated with this corridor through to the river's centre line - all as described in **Attachment 1.K**.

2.3.2 Surrounding Land Ownership

There are a number of directly adjoining land parcels within which parts of the reservoir, scheme infrastructure and associated works need to occupy (refer to **Figure 1** and **Attachment 4**). It is noted that all landowners have been consulted. These parcels are:

- > s 9(2)(a) (Section 12S Repongaere SETT);
- > s 9(2) (Section 11S Repongaere SETT);
- > s 9(2)(a) (Section 15S Repongaere SETT);
- > s 9(2)(a) (Lot 1 DP 3147);
- > s 9(2)(a) (Lot 2 DP 435792);



- > s 9(2)(a) (Lot 1 DP6440);
- > Rapongaere 4H3 Block (Māori Trustee); and
- > Gisborne District Council Legal Roads.

Records of Title for these land parcels are provided in **Attachments 1.A** through to **1.G** with additional land details tabulated in **Attachment 1.I** (dam structures) and **Attachment 1.J** (Rising Main and Primary Distribution System).

Written agreement to the Scheme by Rapongaere 4H3 Block3 (Māori Trustee) is provided in **Attachment 9**.

2.3.3 Distribution Network Land Ownership

The pipe network follows road alignments, including sections of local road (GDC) and State Highway 2 and 35 (NZTA). The option to pipe the network under the Waipaoa River requires crossing of a riverbed which is owned by WPT and the Crown (managed and administered by LINZ) on either side of the river's centre line as described in **Attachment 1.K**.

A table of the land parcels that may be required for the distribution network is provided in **Attachment 1.J** (Rising Main and Primary Distribution System Land).

2.4 INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

In accordance with section 5 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 ("**FTAA**"), the Project does not meet the definition of an 'ineligible activity' for the following reasons:

- > Part of the project infrastructure and works will occur on identified Māori land⁵ (Rapongaere 4H3 Block⁶ is Māori Freehold Land). The Scheme has been agreed to in writing by the owners of the land block as provided in **Attachment 9**.
- > It is also noted that WPT land within Tangihanga Station is also defined as 'Māori Land' given that it is Māori freehold land (refer to section 2.3.1 of this application). The WPT trustees have provided a letter in support of this application (refer to **Attachment 9**).
- > No other Māori freehold land will be utilised for the Scheme;
- > Will not occur in a customary marine title area;
- > Will not occur in a protected customary rights area;

⁵ Māori land means Māori customary land and Māori freehold land under Section 4 of the Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993.

⁶ This land block is identified as having a land status type of Māori freehold land (Source: Pataka Whenua).



- > Will not occur on Māori customary land;
- > Will not occur on land set apart as a Māori reservation as defined in section 4 of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993;
- > Is not an aquaculture activity;
- > Does not require an access arrangement under the Crown Minerals Act 1991;
- > Is not an activity that would be prevented under section 165J, 165M, 165Q, 165ZC or 165ZDB of the Resource Management Act 1991;
- > Will not occur on land that is listed in Schedule 4 of the FTAA;
- > Will not occur on a national reserve held under the Reserves Act 1977;
- > Will not occur on a reserve held under the Reserves Act that is managed by someone other than the Department of Conservation or a local authority;
- > Is not a prohibited activity under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 or regulations made under that Act;
- > Is not an activity that is described in section 15B of the Resource Management Act 1991 or an activity that is prohibited by section 15C of the Resource Management Act 1991;
- > Is not a decommissioning-related activity; and
- > Is not an activity undertaken for the purposes of an offshore renewable energy project.

2.5 EXEMPTIONS FROM REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE AGREEMENT

2.5.1 Mining Activities

Not applicable – the proposal does not relate to prospecting, exploration, mining or mining operations of Crown-owned minerals.

2.5.2 Land Exchange

Not applicable – the proposal does not involve or require a land exchange.

2.6 MINISTERIAL DETERMINATIONS

In making a decision on whether to refer a project to the fast-track process (under section 21 of the FTAA), the Minister may determine that specific linear infrastructure activities on identified Māori land are not ineligible.

Given that the Māori land within which this Scheme will locate has provided written approval, there is no need to exercise ministerial determinations under Section 23 of the

FTAA in relation to the proposed linear infrastructure (i.e. water distribution pipelines and electricity lines).

The Scheme does not include the maintenance, upgrading, or continued operation of existing electricity infrastructure. As such, no ministerial determination under Section 24(2) of the FTAA is necessary.

The Scheme does not involve new electricity lines on Schedule 4 land. As such, no ministerial determination under Section 24(4) of the FTAA is necessary.

2.7 APPROPRIATENESS FOR FAST-TRACK APPROVALS PROCESS

2.7.1 Criteria for Assessing Referral Application

The purpose of the Act is to “*facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits*”.

The Project wholly aligns with this purpose as it will provide regional and national benefits associated with:

- > **Climate change resilience:** The Project will support the region’s adaptation to climatic changes. By providing multiple water sources and stabilising supply, the scheme reduces the economic risks associated with droughts, floods, and climate variability.
- > **Water reliability and security:** Anticipated future increases to minimum flows in the Waipaoa River will put additional pressures on current water users, including irrigators on the Poverty Bay Flats. This Scheme will improve water reliability for existing users, provide water for new water users into the future.
- > **Resilience and social wellbeing:** Gisborne City’s water supply currently relies on a 40km long and sometimes vulnerable pipeline from the Waingake catchment, which was compromised following Cyclone Gabrielle. Developing additional water storage closer to Gisborne township and the surrounding rural settlements will add resilience to the water supply network, particularly in the wake of climate change and recent large flood events. It would provide a reliable backup during emergencies and lessen the risk of further supply disruptions. This could assist in mitigating the risk associated with the existing infrastructure. A more reliable and resilient water supply would strengthen the local community by providing reliable access to essential resources and providing security against future disruptions. This added resilience will improve the overall health and well-being of the local residents.
- > **Economic opportunities and development of the region:** Increased water availability across the Poverty Bay flats will determine the future of agriculture, horticulture and

viticulture across the most fertile and arable areas of the region. Additionally, reliable water access will enable landowners to expand into new industries, including industrial processing. Increased water availability would unlock significant economic potential, creating jobs across various sectors, from infrastructure development to high-tech land management. The economic benefits are elaborated on in Section 2.6.2.6 and within the Economic Assessment provided in **Attachment 7.B**.

- > **Direct benefits to whenua Māori:** Approximately 24% of the command area is Māori-owned land. The scheme therefore has the potential to support Māori agribusiness initiatives, enhance economic participation, and foster community development. Beyond individual farm-level benefits, the scheme has the potential to foster broader economic participation by creating pathways for Māori involvement in service provision, such as irrigation management, agritech support, etc. These opportunities can be expected to strengthen Māori-owned enterprises and support regional employment.

2.7.2 Referring the Project to the FTAA process

2.7.2.1 Fast Track Approvals Process Facilitation of the Project

While the proposed activities are considered “consentable” under ordinary approval pathways, the FTAA provides a significantly more timely and cost-effective approach due to:

- > Multiagency authorisations required. The FTAA supports a holistic approach to identifying and addressing ecological and historic/archaeological values under all relevant legislation.
- > Ensuring consenting occurs in a timely fashion that aligns with the Project’s Government funding agreements.
- > Likely public interest and historic opposition to damming projects across the country indicates that the Project to be publicly notified leading to a significantly longer processing timeframes and increased uncertainty.

2.7.2.2 Efficient operation of the Fast-Track approvals process

The PWSS will ensure suitably qualified and experienced technical experts prepare a robust design, a full suite of application documents including effects assessments, conditions and management/monitoring plans.

The PWSS will continue engagement with affected and interested parties to ensure the application is thoroughly prepared to streamline the approvals process and avoid delay.

Legal counsel and experts will be available to meet the timeframes and expectations set out in the Act and as prescribed by the Minister and Panel.

2.7.2.3 Has the Project been identified as a priority project in a central government, local government, or sector plan or strategy (for example, in a general policy statement or spatial strategy), or a central government infrastructure priority list.

Water storage and supply projects are being prioritised at a national and local government level as outlined in the plans and strategies below.

National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (NAP), 2022

New Zealand's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (first released 2022, updated through 2025–26 implementation) is the primary climate strategy that prioritises water storage infrastructure, including dams. Key focus areas of this plan include:

- > Capturing excess water during wet periods
- > Storing water for drought periods
- > Improving long-term water security and resilience

NAP also states that programmes targeted at water security and biosecurity will make the natural environment more resilient and support Māori, food and fibre producers and rural communities (NAP, 2022, pg. 103).

Water Availability and Security in Aotearoa, 2021

This paper identifies water storage as a critical supply-side measure, alongside:

- > Demand management
- > Efficiency improvements
- > Multi-purpose infrastructure delivering environmental, economic, and community benefits

MPI Action Plan 2025-2026

The Government has set an ambitious goal of doubling the values of exports by 2034.⁷

Actions to achieve this include supporting the Primary Sector, including by:

- > Driving actions in partnership with the food and fibre sector to increase farmgate returns;
- > Co-investing in opportunities to support sector and economic growth; and

⁷ [Ministry of Primary Industries Action Plan 2025-2026.](#)



- > Unlocking options for land use optimisation and flexibility, including water availability and security.

Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit Funding

Central Government (through Kānoa - Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit at MPI) continue to identify water storage and resilience as a priority through funding decisions.

Local Government Strategies

GDCs Te Rautaki Hanganga Infrastructure Strategy (2024-2027)

An Infrastructure Strategy is prepared every three years by GDC to inform the Long-Term Plan (“LTP”). The key points of relevance from the Infrastructure Strategy (2024-2027) are as follows:

- > Gisborne has limited water storage, and if impacted by an event, this could have significant consequences.
- > Council plan to renew critical assets with a short remaining useful life over the next 10 years and undertake condition assessments on critical assets with a longer estimated remaining life. Renewal programmes can be brought forward (or pushed out) depending on the result of the condition assessments.
- > Water service activities (including water supply, wastewater and stormwater) could be provided by a larger water provider outside of Council. This depends on the outcome of the next steps in the Government’s Three Waters reform programme. This creates an added level of complexity for Council, where the future of this asset is uncertain.
- > A water supply resilience review has been included in the LTP Operational Expenditure. Water supply research and modelling will inform where future investment should be, taking into account security of water from adverse weather events but also understanding any climate change impacts of lower rainfall areas.

Future Development Strategy (2024 – 2054) and Implementation Plan

GDC’s Future Development Strategy (“FDS”) is a 30-year vision planning tool that outlines areas of the region where there’s potential for future housing growth. It identifies areas capable of supporting more homes in the future and shows the key infrastructure required to support this growth. Page 8 of the FDS Implementation Plan identifies that new water reservoirs to increase resilience will be needed in the long term.



Tairāwhiti 2050: Shaping the Future of Our Region

This document is known as the GDC Spatial Plan and sets the vision for the region for the next 30 years. Outcome 2 of this Spatial Plan relates to resilience. It sets out that there is a need for increased resilience in infrastructure, economies and the community. One of the opportunities is to secure and protect long-term water availability for all communities, including the use of surface water storage. Outcome 5 of this Spatial Plan relates to sustainability. It outlines that there is a need to explore more efficient commercial and domestic water use, transitioning to more dry cropping and surface water storage opportunities.

2.7.2.4 Will the Project deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure or enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure

Yes. The PWSS will comprise nationally and regionally significant infrastructure due to the significant role water storage will play in providing added water security, climate change resilience and economic development.

2.7.2.5 Will the Project increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of Policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020)

PWSS is expected to contribute to well-functioning urban environments, in particularly their resilience to the current and future effects of climate change. A water storage project of this nature and scale would play a key role in supporting and enhancing the resilience of water supply to support land production and industry located in the Gisborne region. Secure water supply will enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and to improve their health, safety and overall well-being.

The Project would be in alignment and in support of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (“**NPSUD**”), in particular Policy 1(f), which states:

Policy 1: Planning decisions contribute to well-functioning urban environments, which are urban environments that, as a minimum:

- (a) have or enable a variety of homes that:*
 - (i) meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households; and*
 - (ii) enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms; and*
- (b) have or enable a variety of sites that are suitable for different business sectors in terms of location and site size; and*
- (c) have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or*



active transport; and

- (d) support, and limit as much as possible adverse impacts on, the competitive operation of land and development markets; and*
- (e) support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and*
- (f) are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.*

2.7.2.6 Will the Project deliver significant economic benefits

Yes. The economic benefits of the Project are described in detail within the Economic Assessment provided by Property Economics in **Attachment 7.B**. A summary of that assessment is provided below.

In Property Economics' view, the Project can be expected to generate significant flow-on / additional benefits for the primary sector, the wider economy, and the community, which are considered significant within a regional economic context.

Based on the Property Economics' assessment, the new irrigated areas and supplementary supply enabled by the proposed development (i.e. totalling approximately 11,000ha) are estimated to generate a net increase of about \$628m in value-added GDP (NPV) to the regional economy over a 30-year period at full capacity applying an 8% discount rate. At a 2% discount rate, this net contribution increases to approximately \$1.25 billion.

A snapshot of the economic benefits from construction of the Project are set out in the table below:

Estimated Quantitative Economic Impacts on the Gisborne Regional Economy:

Total direct expenditure over a 4-year development period (excluding land)	\$203.8m
Total NPV at 8% over a 4-year development period	\$71.8m
Total NPV at 2% over a 4-year development period	\$82.6m
FTE years during the peak development year	271 FTE years
Total FTE years over the 4-year development period	555 FTE years
Total direct employment over the development period	211 FTE years
Total indirect and induced employment over development period	344 FTE years

The key economic benefits are considered to include (with further detail provided on each of these points in **Attachment 7.B**):

- > Contribution to primary production and economy;



- > Expanded irrigated areas (improved land use efficiency);
- > Improved irrigation reliability on existing irrigated areas;
- > Accommodating existing irrigation demand;
- > Job creation across sectors as a result of expanded irrigation and intensive production;
- > Increased municipal supply;
- > Food security and potential export growth;
- > Regional investment and economic growth stimulation;
- > Opportunities for Māori landowners and community development; and
- > Regional economic resilience against climate variability and extreme events.

In light of the above economic benefits, the Project would deliver flow-on wider economic benefits to the economy and community that are considered significant in a regional economic context.

2.7.2.7 Will the Project support primary industries, including aquaculture

Yes, there is a clear need for water storage and supply in this area. The demands for the water supply offered by this project are likely to intensify as a result of these upcoming changes to minimum flows in Waipaoa A Block (which is currently overallocated) and potentially the Waipaoa B Block also. The project will support primary industries, particularly horticulture across the Poverty Bay Flats. The economic benefits of this are described above in section 2.7.2.6.

2.7.2.8 Will the Project support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum

No.

2.7.2.9 Will the Project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions

As discussed further below, a key benefit of the Project is supporting climate change mitigation and resilience through the provision of water supply to support society and the economy in times of drought.

The large areas of gravity fed water (which does not require pumping) will be positive in terms of minimising greenhouse gas emission from a project of this scale.



2.7.2.10 Will the Project support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards

The project would support recovery from events caused by natural hazards. With high flow water harvesting, the PWSS can supply land with water for irrigation and provide additional resilience to the Gisborne community potable water supply. Water supply resilience has been identified as a priority for GDC, especially given the impact Cyclone Gabrielle had on the existing network.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects that drought and flood risks and societal damages are projected to increase with every degree of global warming. In addition, demand for domestic, industrial and agricultural uses is projected to increase by 20% to 30% by 2050 depending on the socio-economic scenario.⁸ The Project will allow freshwater to be stored during periods of higher river flows (i.e. during winter and rainfall events) to be used during periods of lower river flows (i.e. during drier summer months).

2.7.2.11 Will the Project address significant environmental issues

Yes.

As part of the TRMP review, the Waipaoa Catchment Planning Advisory Group (“WCPAG”) have been actively working on this issue to determine appropriate new minimum flows for the Waipaoa River.

Recent analysis (reported in Hui 11 of the WCPAG) shows the Mean Annual Low Flow (“MALF”) is higher than previously thought at 2,550 l/s instead of the 2,000 l/s that is currently estimated in the 2015 Catchment Plan. This new understanding shifts the proposed minimum flow from 65% of MALF to approximately 51% of the actual MALF, highlighting the need for updated minimum flow values to better support the river's environmental values. The minimum flow for Waipaoa A Block, currently set at 1300 l/s will need to increase significantly to provide for ecological flows in the river. It is expected that in turn, the minimum flow for B Block will need to increase too.

This project allows an opportunity for those minimum flows to be increased to support river environmental values, while ensuring water security for the irrigators who rely on this water.

As discussed further in Section 3.5, it is not anticipated that the Project will result in any adverse effects that cannot be appropriately managed or that considered disproportionate to the national and regional benefits it would provide. Initial technical investigations (refer to **Attachment 7**) indicate that any adverse effects arising from the construction and operation

⁸ IPCC Sixth Assessment Report: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, [Chapter 4: Water](#).



of the Project will be appropriately addressed through design of the project, conditions of consent and the provision of acceptable management and/or monitoring plans.

2.7.2.12 Will the project promote competition in the grocery industry?

Not applicable to this Project.

2.7.2.13 Is the Project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies

Yes. The relevant local and regional planning documents are:

- > The Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (being the Unitary Plan for Gisborne)
- > Te Aitanga a Mahaki Iwi Environmental Inventory; and
- > Nga Ariki Kaiputahi Hapu/Iwi Management Plan.

In summary, the planning framework is supportive of water storage and with appropriate mitigation and environmental management, the project is generally consistent with these planning documents.

A high-level assessment against these documents is provided in **Attachment 11 (RMA Planning Assessment)**. This assessment will be undertaken in further detail as part of the substantive application.



3. PROJECT DETAILS

3.1 CONSTRUCTION COMMENCEMENT AND COMPLETION

Assuming that consents and approvals are in hand by late 2026/early 2027, the Project will commence design and investigations in 2027 which (accounting for a contractor selection process) could be ready to commence construction 2 years later in 2028. Construction activities are anticipated to take 3 years (approx.) and be completed by 2031.

3.2 APPROVALS TO BE SOUGHT

3.2.1 Resource Management Act 1991

The Project will require land use consents, discharge permits and water permits, from Gisborne District Council (“GDC”) under the Resource Management Act 1991 (“RMA”).

Approval under Regulation 45 and 57 of the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (updated 2026) is likely to be sought.

On a precautionary basis, approval under the National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011 (“**NES-CS**”) is likely to be sought in relation to network distribution pipelines in road corridors.

In relation to the distribution network, written approval will be sought separately for any works required within state highway designation corridor under section 176(1)(b) and 178(2) of the RMA.

Refer to **Attachment 11 (RMA Planning Assessment)** to this application for an assessment against the relevant rules of the TRMP.

3.2.2 Conservation Act 1987

Not applicable.

3.2.3 Reserves Act 1977

Not applicable.

3.2.4 Wildlife Act 1953

Wildlife Act approvals in New Zealand are required from the Department of Conservation (DOC) for any activity that catches, holds, releases, or kills protected wildlife, including research, rehabilitation, or development projects.



A Wildlife Act Authorisation under section 53 is required for the potential disturbance and incidental handling of lizards and, subject to further ecological survey work, Wildlife Act approval may also be required in relation to birds and bats.

3.2.5 National Parks Act 1980

Not applicable.

3.2.6 Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

On a precautionary basis, a general archaeological authority, that would otherwise be required under section 44(a) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (“**HNZPT**”) Act, is sought in the event that archaeological material is encountered during earthworks associated with the Project.

3.2.7 Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983

The project will require approvals or dispensations that would otherwise be applied for under regulation 43 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 in respect of the following complex freshwater fisheries activities:

- > Permanent dam structure located in the Pouarua Stream;
- > Permanent diversion, structure and associated disturbances associated with the proposed high flow intake from the Waipaoa River;
- > Any trapping and transferring of fish required in association with constructing the dam structure.

3.2.8 Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012

Not applicable

3.2.9 Crown Minerals Act 1991

Not applicable

3.2.10 Public Works Act 1981

Not applicable

3.2.11 Other Approvals

For clarity, the approvals bulleted below will not form part of the substantive application under the Fast Track Approvals Act and will be applied for under separate processes.



- > A Corridor Access Request (CAR) and Licence to Occupy road reserve will be sought separately from GDC under the Local Government Act 1974 for any works within local road reserves.
- > Building consent will be sought for the dam structure under the Building Act 2004 as a matter of final design.

No other statutory approvals, including concessions or other legal authorisations are required to authorise this Project.

3.3 PROJECT STAGES

No staging is proposed. Construction of the Project is anticipated to occur over approximately three years with all works constructed within this timeframe.

3.4 ALTERNATIVE PROJECT

The Project is not proposed as an alternative project.

3.5 ADVERSE EFFECTS

Preliminary assessments have been provided by technical specialists and are outlined below, with further detail provided in **Attachment 7**:

- > Ecological Assessment, prepared by Gary Bramley and Richard Montgomerie of ecoLogical Solutions (**Attachment 7.A**);
- > Landscape and Amenity Assessment, prepared by Ben Ormsby and Shannon Bray of Wayfinder (**Attachment 7.D**);
- > Land use Nutrient losses from Increased Irrigation Assessment, prepared by Ian Millner of LandVision (**Attachment 7.E**); and
- > Archaeological Assessment, prepared by Kim Tatton of Clough and Associates (**Attachment 7.C**).

All other preliminary effects described below have been considered by planning consultants from Mitchell Daysh.

3.5.1 Ecological Effects

The ecologists note that freshwater and terrestrial ecological values associated with components of the scheme are reflective of the highly modified nature of the environment. Further field-based surveys (e.g., water quality, stream habitat, fish, wetlands, vegetation and terrestrial fauna) will be undertaken to fully assess water quality and ecological effects associated with the proposed construction and operation of the Scheme.



3.5.1.1 Vegetation

The main adverse effect of the proposal on vegetation would be loss of currently low botanical values due to inundation. Positive effects would include planting of reservoir edges.

3.5.1.2 Birds

Adverse effects of inundation include the loss of foraging, breeding, roosting, and nesting habitat for common native species and possibly NZ falcon. Positive effects include provision of a substantial amount of new habitat for waterfowl, particularly if planned appropriately. Timing and management of vegetation clearance can avoid/minimise adverse effects on birds.

3.5.1.3 Lizards

Indigenous lizards recorded from within the wider Waipaoa catchment include:

- > Barking gecko, ornate skink and copper skink (At Risk – Declining)
- > Raukawa gecko and northern grass skink (Not Threatened).

Forested and shrubland vegetation, debris and rank grassland are all habitats that may support one or more lizard species. These habitats are all present in the dam footprint.

The inundation and associated ground disturbance during the dam wall construction would remove lizard habitat and could affect lizards directly via incidental injury or killing if not managed.

A search and relocation of lizards in advance of works would minimise effects. A Wildlife Act Authority will be sought to manage effects on lizards.

3.5.1.4 Effects on Bats

There are 104 detections of long-tailed bats ('Threatened – Nationally Critical') within 25 km of the Project Area. No short-tailed bats have been detected. The Project Area may provide foraging and perhaps roosting habitat for long-tailed bats.

The inundation could result in indirect adverse effects on long-tailed bats due to vegetation removal resulting in loss of potential roosting habitat and changing bat behaviour if not managed.

The new dam would provide more diverse, high quality foraging habitat for bats.

Adverse effects can be managed via monitoring to detect roost trees and avoiding their clearance when occupied.

3.5.1.5 Wetlands

Potentially NPS-FM qualifying highly modified wetlands are present across the property; commonly occur along floodplains of low-gradient streams, alluvial flats and along toe slopes and surrounding hillside seepages.

Up to approximately 30 ha of potentially NPS-FM qualifying, highly modified wetland habitat would be affected by inundation.

Vegetation includes cover dominated by common native and exotic species that is mostly affected by livestock access.

Restoration of wetland habitat nearby would address adverse effects on wetland values. The reservoir lake comprises a large area of new wetland habitat providing habitat for wetland fauna, including birds and invertebrates.

Wetland creation, where there is scope to do so, can address loss in wetland extent.

3.5.1.6 Stream Habitat

The proposed dam and reservoir is located in the Pouarua Stream catchment. The Pouarua Stream joins the Repongaere Stream before entering the Waipaoa River.

The lower Waipaoa River is highly modified by flood protection works and characterised by a high sediment load. The Waipaoa River at the proposed abstraction points is a moderate gradient, gravel bed river. The potential gallery intake structure will be buried beneath the riverbed. The construction and operation of the gallery intake or alternative water take structure is not expected to affect instream habitat quality.

The Pouarua Stream and tributaries within and immediately upstream and downstream of the proposed reservoir are low gradient, highly modified soft-bottomed streams with extensive aquatic plant growth and little stream channel shading.

It is estimated that up to 16 km of intermittent or permanently flowing stream would be lost within the reservoir footprint. A full survey and classification of all affected streams will be required to fully assess effects on stream habitat and determine suitable mitigations or offsetting/compensation.

3.5.1.7 Water Quality

The potentially affected section of the Waipaoa River is characterised by poor water quality and macroinvertebrate community health.

The proposed harvesting of sediment laden water during high flows could reduce sediment loads downstream of the take.

The potential use of the river to convey water from the reservoir to different parts of the distribution system could affect water quality and will need to be evaluated as part of the assessment of effects for the substantive application.

There is no water quality data currently available for the Pouarua Stream. The construction and operation of the dam and reservoir could have both positive (e.g., reduced sediment loads and increased water clarity) and negative (e.g. reduced dissolved oxygen and increased water temperature) water quality effects that will need to be considered and evaluated.

Algal blooms could occur in the reservoir which could cause adverse effects on water quality and ecological health and cause a human health risk within and downstream of the reservoir.

The construction of the dam and reservoir has the potential to mobilise and ‘export’ sediment and nutrients and cause decomposition and breakdown of organic matter.

Changes in land use resulting from irrigation could alter water quality in the Waipaoa River (e.g., increasing nutrient concentrations). Water quality effects associated with changes to land use will be evaluated as part of the assessment of effects for the substantive application.

3.5.1.8 Fish

Twelve native fish have been recorded in the Waipaoa River catchment, nine of which are considered ‘Threatened’ or ‘At Risk’ (Dunn et. al. 2025). Longfin eel (At Risk – Declining), redfin bully (At Risk – Naturally Uncommon), bluegill bully (At Risk – Naturally Uncommon), upland bully (At Risk – Naturally Uncommon), common smelt (At Risk – Declining), Cran’s bully (At Risk – Naturally Uncommon), Dinah’s bully (At Risk – Naturally Uncommon), inanga (Threatened –Nationally Vulnerable) and torrentfish (At Risk – Naturally Uncommon).

The mainstem of the Waipaoa River supports low trout numbers and is not a valued trout fishery.

The potential for the proposed high flow water harvesting and gallery intake (or alternative intake structures) to affect native fish, however, these effects can be avoided by having fish screens that meet relevant guidelines integrated into the design of these structures. Fish screen design will be fully evaluated as part of the detailed assessment of effects.

The dam could affect upstream and downstream fish passage if not managed appropriately. These effects can be mitigated by ensuring the dam meets the requirements of the NPS-FM and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1983) and that the dam design provides for upstream and

downstream fish passage through the construction of a fish pass and/or implementing trap and transfer methods.

The Pouarua Stream and its tributaries support predominantly shortfin eel, although a full survey of the stream downstream, within and upstream of the reservoir footprint, will be used to fully assess current native fish values and effects.

The presence of pest fish, and the potential for introducing them, will also be investigated as part of the assessment along with the development of any appropriate management plans if required.

3.5.2 Effects Management

The initial desktop assessment has identified a range of options available for avoiding, mitigating, remedying, offsetting and compensating for residual adverse effects on water quality and freshwater and terrestrial ecological values. These are set out in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Potential and Actual Ecological Effects and Potential Mitigation/Management

Effect	Potential Mitigation/Management
Effects Management for Stream Habitat	
Loss of Stream Habitat within the reservoir footprint	Enhancement of stream habitat (e.g., riparian planting and weed and pest control) upstream and downstream of the reservoir; and Enhancing the instream habitat of other streams within the Pouarua Stream or wider Waipaoa catchments (in order of preference) via planting of erosion prone areas to reduce sediment loads and through including habitat features (e.g., islands and woody debris) for native fish within the reservoir.
Effects on fish distribution and migration in the Pouarua Stream	Ensuring the dam meets the requirements of the Freshwater Fisheries Act (1983) and that the dam design provides upstream and downstream fish passage at the dam through the construction of a fish pass and/or implementing trap and transfer.
Loss of Stream Extent	The loss of stream extent cannot be mitigated and offset/compensation will be required.
Effects Management for Water Quality	
Downstream water quality effects (e.g. elevated water	Using a multi-level discharge as set out in the Proof-of-Concept Scoping Study (Mitchell Daysh et al, 2025) and/or other

Effect	Potential Mitigation/Management
temperature or low dissolved oxygen)	interventions such as aeration to manage dissolved oxygen or catchment source reduction to manage nutrient levels.
Hydrology of Pouarua Stream	Provision of a flow regime that protects and enhances the ecological health (e.g., provision of a minimum flow and flushing flows).
Short-term and localized effects on streams associated with the construction and operation of the water distribution network	Managed through the implementation of management plans.
Potential effects on the water quality and the ecological health of streams within or downstream of land with additional or new irrigation	Implementation of farm environmental plans.
Effects Management of Water Take from Waipaoa River	
Effects of water take	Minimum flows will be maintained in the Waipaoa River.
Potential effects of harvesting water from the Waipaoa River during high flows on the water quality and ecological health of the Waipaoa River	Not expected to require mitigation.
The potential for effects on water quality and ecological health due to water take (e.g., whitebait spawning habitat near the tidal interface between freshwater and saltwater)	Further assessment will be undertaken as part of the substantive application to fully quantify the level of impact, however, these effects can be appropriately minimised and mitigated through a combination of initiatives including; the implementation of robust farm environmental plans, interventions such as aeration to manage reservoir dissolved oxygen, the use of Regen Alguard and Regen flocc and floating wetlands to reduce reservoir nutrients and the use of a multi-level discharge structure.
Effects on fish distribution and migration in the Waipaoa River	Avoided through the use of a gallery intake structure or alternative take structure that includes fish screening that meets relevant guidelines.



Effect	Potential Mitigation/Management
Short term localised ecological effects associated with the construction on the intake structure	Managed through implementation of a Construction Management Plan.

Effects Management for the Reservoir

Effects on fish distribution and migration in the Pouarua Stream	Ensuring the dam meets the requirements of the Freshwater Fisheries Act (1983) and that the dam design provides upstream and downstream fish passage at the dam through the construction of a fish pass and/or implementing trap and transfer. The reservoir water level is expected to fluctuate seasonally and will result in a varial zone supporting aquatic plant and animal communities capable of exploiting 'transitional' habitat. The reservoir will act as a sink for sediment from the upstream catchment. A wide range of variables such as sediment loads, water level fluctuations, residence time, edge stability and trophic state will determine water clarity and dissolved oxygen levels and determine its suitability for rooted aquatic plants, phytoplankton, benthic invertebrates, zooplankton and fish. Phytoplankton blooms could occur in the reservoir and have the potential to cause adverse effects on water quality and ecological health and cause a human health risk within and downstream of the reservoir that will require management. The reservoir is expected to significantly increase the amount of highly productive shortfin eel habitat within the Waipaoa River catchment as well as provide significant habitat for other native fish suited to lacustrine environments (e.g., common bully) and possibly trout. The construction of the dam and reservoir has the potential to cause significant adverse water quality effects through the mobilisation and 'export' of sediment and nutrients and decomposition and breakdown of organic matter. These effects will require careful evaluation and management through the implementation of detailed construction management, water quality and ecological management plans. A fish capture and relocation plan will be needed for the portion of the Pouarua Stream affected by the dam and depending on the fish species present a fish capture and relocation plan will be
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Effect	Potential Mitigation/Management
	required for the streams that will be inundated by the rising reservoir.
Effects Management for Terrestrial Ecology	
Loss of indigenous vegetation	Can be offset by planting indigenous vegetation. Areas to be planted will be identified and the substantive application will include a revegetation planting plan to address habitat removal.
Effects on lizards	Can be managed via search, salvage and relocation of any lizards detected and creation of new lizard habitats to offset habitat removal. The substantive application will include a draft lizard management plan to address effects on lizards.
Effects on birds	Any effects identified can be managed via an avian management plan to be provided with the substantive application
Effects on bats	Mitigated via implementation of a bat management plan to be provided with the substantive application.

3.5.3 Landscape and Amenity Effects

3.5.3.1 Landscape Context

As a preliminary assessment, the Project sits within steep and varied hill country that is characteristic of the wider area, part of a broader transition from the broad alluvial plains to the east and steep, erosion-prone hinterland to the west. The geology is primarily soft sedimentary rock dissected by small gullies and tributaries to the Waipaoa River.

Overall, the site is contained within the hill country. The hilly margins and steep gullies result in an enclosed and somewhat intimate character, with various ridges and spurs creating a patchwork of visual 'rooms' or areas.

The Project is located within the wider Waipaoa River catchment, which is a significant landscape to mana whenua.

The Project site is largely on land owned by the WPT which is associated with Te Aitanga a Mahaki iwi. Some of the reservoir (and associated infrastructure) will also extend onto neighbouring land.

The catchment has come to be strongly associated with pastoral farming, forestry and water management with collective experience of extreme weather events and land instability.

3.5.3.2 Statutory Context

Tangihanga Station is within the Rural General Zone for the TRMP. The TRMP guides consideration of rural amenity values, effect on natural landform characteristics, indigenous vegetation and habitat, scale and nature of the activity, and effects on rural activities.

There are no identified Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes within or affected by the Project.

3.5.3.3 Natural Character Effects

Natural character is relatively low due to the highly modified nature of the Pouarua Stream but is higher for the Waipaoa River. Pumping structures associated with the Waipaoa River intake may impact on natural character of the river but that is subject to final design.

Effects on natural character would be **low to low-moderate**.

3.5.3.4 Landscape Effects

The Proposal may be perceived as a continuation of the long-standing relationship between people and water management in the Waipaoa catchment, with effects experienced not as a singular intrusion but as part of an evolving landscape narrative linked to resilience and adaptation.

Temporary construction effects associated with the dam and pipeline/s are anticipated to be very limited. It is considered (depending on the design) that the intake structure would result in moderate landscape effects.

Overall, at this stage, with proposed mitigation in place, it is considered that **landscape effects would be low**.

3.5.3.5 Visual Effects

There are expected to be limited to no views toward the site from within the immediate valleys and from elevated ridgeline routes and farm tracks, with limited to no long-distance visibility from the wider floodplain or coastal areas due to intervening landform.

No views from public roads of the reservoir are anticipated, and views of the intake structure are likely to be distant and very limited if any.

Installation of the rising main pipeline and the water intake may result in temporary construction effects, but this will be limited when viewed from publicly accessible locations and are readily mitigated if necessary.

The proposal is considered to result in **low to very-low visual effects**.

3.5.3.6 Design Response

Mitigation is focused on principles rather than detailed measures, with the intent of shaping the Proposal in a way that responds to landscape values rather than attempting to mask its presence.

Mitigation would consider the relationship of reservoir edges, earthworks, and structures with existing landform patterns, where this would conflict with the surrounding gullied, alluvial and irregular terrain.

Vegetation strategies would focus on integrating existing landscape structure and ecological patterns, including indigenous species where planting is proposed. Planting would be designed to support land stability, visual integration and cultural values associated with waterways and land stewardship, rather than as visual screening.

Further mitigation and design refinement would be informed by engagement with mana whenua, with the aim of embedding cultural landscape values into the layout, treatment, and ongoing management of the Project.

This may include consideration of how water bodies are shaped, accessed, and understood, as well as opportunities for restoration or enhancement of areas as part of an integrated landscape response.

It is anticipated that subject to further refinement, these design measures will achieve the low landscape effects anticipated by this high-level assessment.

3.5.4 Land Use Nutrient Losses

LandVision has investigated current and potential future land use patterns and potential nitrogen and phosphorus losses from current and future land use patterns across the Poverty Bay flats.

Land use and nutrients assessment undertaken to date indicates that an increase in the proportion of cultivated ground associated with vegetables, squash and maize results in a higher potential loss of phosphorus and sediment.

All scenarios investigated produce nitrogen loss results very similar to what is existing. This is because the scheme enables a shift towards a greater proportion of permanent crops



being established in the catchment (which have low nitrogen loss) and a lesser proportion of pasture (which has comparatively high nitrogen loss). That is, any substitution of pasture for permanent crops reduces overall nitrogen loss.

Effective nitrogen and phosphorus loss mitigations are available if required and can be implemented through detailed site-specific farm plans that can accommodate different soil and land use combinations.

3.5.5 Archaeological Effects

Te Tairāwhiti is a rich archaeological landscape, containing evidence from all periods of human history in Aotearoa. The region contains several small-scale settlements dating from the initial occupation of Aotearoa around 750 years ago.

The Waipaoa River catchment and its tributaries were a significant site of Māori settlement from the 12th century AD, with dense habitation on and near fertile flood-free alluvial terraces and fans and hill slopes, with evidence of intensive horticulture. Early settlement evidence suggests initial use of levees soon after their formation, with continuous occupation into the 19th century.

3.5.5.1 Effects from Dam Site

There are no previously recorded archaeological sites in ArchSite within the Pouarua Dam project area. There are no sites within the project area identified on the TRMP Archaeological Sites and Areas Overlay 2, Wāhi Tapu and Wāhi Tapu Areas Schedule Overlay 3, and Post-European Contact and Central Business District Schedules Overlay 4.

The proposed alignment of the rising main, the Waipoua River Intake, new pump station and possible alternative river intake will cross within the TRMP Heritage Alert Layer Overlay 1 in the vicinity of Lavenham Road and Tangihanga Road.

The TRMP Heritage Alert Layer Overlay 1 is a tool for the recognition and protection of cultural heritage accompanied by a schedule of archaeological sites. The Alert Layer is an early warning system and predictive model of past human settlement where unrecorded archaeological / cultural and historic heritage sites may exist and be impacted on by the proposed activity.

There are known archaeological sites in proximity to works near the Waipaoa River as identified and mapped within the preliminary Archaeological Assessment by Clough and Associates in **Attachment 7.C**. The proximity of the proposed activity to these places increases the risk of unrecorded archaeological / cultural and historic heritage sites that may be impacted by the proposed activity. However, the TRMP enables development within



the site-specific buffer area identified around each archaeological site where there is no adverse effect on the archaeological site.

3.5.5.2 Effects from Distribution Network

The indicative distribution network will be constructed by open trenching within road reserves (including SH2, SH35 and local roads), which have been modified to at least some extent by road construction and associated works.

The majority of the proposed alignment of the Distribution Network is located within the TRMP Heritage Alert Layer Overlay 1 (refer to section 3.5.5.1 in this regard), to the west and east of the Waipaoa River.

The proposed alignment of the Distribution Network is located within close proximity to a number of recorded archaeological sites in ArchSite and identified within the TRMP Archaeological Sites and Areas Overlay 2, and in several places will cross within the recorded extent (buffer) of sites.

The proposed alignment of the Distribution Network is located within close proximity to several scheduled Wāhi Tapu and Wāhi Tapu Areas Overlay 3, and in three locations will cross with the buffer of Wāhi Tapu sites.

The proximity of the proposed activity to these places increases the risk that recorded and unrecorded archaeological / cultural and historic heritage remains may be impacted by the proposed activity. However, the TRMP enables development within the site-specific buffer area identified around each archaeological site where there is no adverse effect on the archaeological site.

The proposed alignment of the Distribution Network in the road reserve is located within close proximity to a number of HNZ Listed Historic Places and Listed Wahi Tapu Area. These sites are unlikely to be directly affected however, as they are principally located on adjacent properties. However, the proximity of the proposed activity to these places increases the risk that recorded and unrecorded archaeological / cultural and historic heritage remains may be impacted by the proposed activity.

It is likely that subsurface archaeological remains will be exposed and affected by the proposed Distribution Network trenching in areas where archaeological sites have previously been recorded in close proximity and within the recorded extent (buffers) of sites.

3.5.5.3 Further investigations

A detailed archaeological assessment of the effects on archaeology/historic heritage is undertaken within the Project footprint as part of the FTAA Substantive Application,

including archaeological field survey, to identify archaeological remains that may be affected and highlight areas where there is also potential for unrecorded subsurface archaeological remains.

3.5.5.4 Mitigation measures

The effects of the Project on any sites identified during the detailed archaeological assessment can be mitigated in a variety of ways including:

- > modification of the project design in some areas to avoid visible archaeological surface features, or identified areas of potentially high archaeological sensitivity, where possible.
- > development of construction methodologies that minimise the potential for effects;

Appropriate effects management in this area will be confirmed as part of the archaeological authority process, and subject to review by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

3.5.5.5 Approvals to be sought

A General Archaeological Authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (HNZPTA) will be applied for within the FTAA process for the Project area (including dam site and distribution network) as a precaution, and for any archaeological sites identified as affected during the development of detailed design.

3.5.5.6 Summary

There is the potential for unrecorded archaeological / cultural and historic heritage sites to be located within the proposed Pouarua Dam Project area that could be affected by the proposed activity.

There is a high potential that the proposed Distribution Network will impact on recorded archaeological / cultural and historic heritage sites and/or unrecorded subsurface archaeological remains located within road reserves.

It is considered that these potential effects can be mitigated to an acceptable level by the proposed mitigation/management and that the potential effects (post mitigation) are able to remain consistent with the Objectives of the TRMP (C4.1).

3.5.6 Cultural Effects

As mana whenua and landowners of much of the Project site, the trustees of WPT will ensure cultural effects associated with this project are considered and appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated, as appropriate. A number of hui have and will continue to be held with iwi and hapu to further inform and shape this Project.



The Project site does not include any identified wāhi tapu or other known cultural sites of significance identified within the TRMP. The dam and reservoir will however locate within the Pouarua Stream and include a high flow water take from and associated works within the Waipaoa River. As kaitiaki, the mauri of water remains a key consideration for this Project. The piped distribution network may locate in proximity to wāhi tapu.

The potential for cultural effects relate to the health of waterbodies and any accidental destruction of cultural sites, in particular, these effects could include:

- > The establishment of the dam wall and reservoir resulting in effects on waterbodies, including the loss of Pouarua Stream length;
- > Erosion and sediment discharge during construction works, given the proximity of the works to and within waterbodies;
- > The potential for water quality or hydrological effects associated with high flow water takes;
- > The potential for ecological effects where the river is used for water distribution conveyance instead of a pipeline network;
- > The potential for nutrients to water from land use changes; and
- > The potential for accidental destruction of unidentified cultural artifacts or sites during construction.

Preliminary ecological, archaeological, nutrient assessments provided in **Attachment 7.A** indicate that any potential adverse effects can be appropriately managed or mitigated. Good practice construction methodologies will be employed when working within and around waterbodies. The substantive application will include further detailed investigations, a set of conditions and a suite of management and monitoring plans. Appropriate resource management methods are to be adopted before, during and post construction.

Wi Pere's leadership as environmental kaitiaki is evident in its Land Optimisation Plan, participation in Council Advisory Groups for freshwater and erodible land transition and commitment to overall improvement in water quality and biodiversity in the region.

As set out in Section 2.7.1 and the Economic Assessment in **Attachment 7.B**, the PWSS offers significant benefits to whenua Māori of the region. The Project is not anticipated to result in any adverse cultural effects that cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated.

3.5.7 Effects of High Flow Take

In addition to local catchment inflows to the reservoir, water harvesting infrastructure from the Waipaoa River B Block allocation is proposed, requiring a river intake and pumping

capacity to utilise the available unallocated B Block (high flow) water from the Waipaoa River of 1,255 litres per second, conveying water over a 3.5-kilometre (approx.) distance from the river to the reservoir.

Under the operative TRMP, the Waipaoa River B Block has an allocation cap of 2000 l/s and a cease-take flow of 4000 l/s.

There is currently sufficient allocation within the Waipaoa B-Block to accommodate the high-flow take required to supplement the Dam in this location.

The purpose of high flow water allocation blocks is to balance water use with the needs of instream ecosystems by only allowing water to be taken when flows are naturally high. High flow / supplementary allocation blocks are typically designed to be used in combination with storage, as flows high enough to allow this water to be taken do not occur frequently enough (particularly during the irrigation season) to make it viable as a stand-alone supply.

High flow take limits are designed to preserve the natural variation in river flows, which is crucial for the health of the river's ecosystem. Takes from the B block cease before any A block water can be taken, ensuring that taking high flow water has no impact on ecological minimum flow requirements in the river. The hydrological effects of the high flow take are therefore expected to be insignificant and are anticipated by the planning framework.

3.5.8 Construction Traffic Effects

Traffic effects for the Project are expected to be limited to the construction phase, with minimal traffic movements associated with the ongoing operation and maintenance of the Project infrastructure.

The likely access environment indicates potential interaction with general rural traffic, farm-related movements and other local road users.

Potential construction traffic effects include safety, network operation, road condition, amenity, traffic management and access coordination.

The surrounding public road network operates in a low to moderate volume environment, with more relevant considerations relating to heavy vehicle movements, access management and temporary delays, rather than capacity under normal conditions. Use of local and near-site dam materials is also expected to reduce reliance on external haulage.

As regards construction of the distribution network, it is anticipated that any works within the road corridor will occur in moving work fronts such that activities in any one location will be temporary and managed through temporary traffic management measures agreed with the relevant Road Controlling Authority.



No transport issue has been identified at this preliminary stage that would preclude the project in principle. The likely construction traffic effects identified are typical of a rural civil infrastructure project and appear capable of being managed through appropriate planning and traffic management measures.

It is anticipated that construction traffic effects will be appropriately managed through conditions of consent and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (“**CTMP**”) which would likely cover route and access planning, traffic management and road protection and monitoring.

3.5.9 General Construction Effects

As is expected with a nationally and regionally significant project of this scale, there is potential for construction activities to give rise to a range of environmental effects, including those relating to lighting, dust generation, and sediment and erosion. These effects are anticipated to be temporary and typically confined to the active construction footprint. They are anticipated to be managed by way of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (“**CEMP**”). For this Project, these effects would include:

Construction lighting effects may occur as a result of morning or night works, security requirements, and vehicle movements. Potential effects include light spill and glare. These effects are expected to be limited in extent and duration and can be appropriately mitigated through the use of directional and down shielded lighting, avoidance of unnecessary afterhours works, and placement of lights to minimise direct visibility from any dwellings and public roads.

Dust effects may arise from earthworks, construction traffic and wind on unsealed surfaces, and material handling. If unmanaged, dust emissions have the potential to cause nuisance to nearby properties, reduce visibility for road users, and result in deposition on vegetation. It is anticipated that dust effects will be managed through the location of construction yards, material stockpiles and implementation of industry standard dust management measures such as regular surface dampening, vehicle speed restrictions, covering of stockpiles, installation of wheel wash facilities, and timely stabilisation of disturbed surfaces.

Sediment and erosion effects represent a key construction consideration given that ground disturbance will be required for the Project. An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (“**ESCP**”), prepared in accordance with relevant guidelines and including industry standard measures such as staged earthworks, diversion channels, sediment retention ponds, silt



fences, stabilised construction entrances, and rapid surface stabilisation, will appropriately manage sediment and erosion effects.

3.5.10 Recreational Effects

The Project is expected to have minimal impact on recreational values, as components will be located on private land. For the distribution network, some temporary construction related disruptions may occur for cyclists or walkers using footpaths. These effects are expected to be short-term and will be managed in conjunction with broader transport related mitigation measures.

3.5.11 Noise Effects

It is anticipated that the construction noise associated with the Project (over three years) can be undertaken in a manner that remains compliant with construction standard NZS 6803:1999 and that the distance of dam wall works from sensitive receivers (e.g. residential dwellings) will assist in limiting the main source of construction noise.

Operationally, the Project does not generate noise, other than during maintenance or upgrades, which are temporary.

An acoustic specialist will review the construction methodology and construction traffic assessments as part of the substantive application process and, where required, would recommend appropriate mitigation measures to include.

3.5.12 Summary of Effects

Overall, the potential and actual adverse effects of the Project are anticipated to be appropriately managed through conditions, management and monitoring plans prepared as part of the substantive application.

No adverse effect is considered to outweigh the national and regional benefits that this Project would provide.

3.5.13 Prohibited Activities

There are no prohibited effects associated with this Scheme. Refer to Section 7 of **Attachment 11** for a list of the relevant rules which apply.



3.6 PERSONS AFFECTED

3.6.1 Persons, groups and/or entities who are considered likely to be affected by the Project

The Applicant consider the following persons, groups and entities are likely to be affected by the Project:

- > Te Atianga a Mahaki;
- > Ngā Ariki Kaipūtahi;
- > Te Whanau a Kai;
- > Rongowhakaata;
- > Ngāi Tāmanuhiri;
- > Gisborne District Council;
- > New Zealand Transport Authority;
- > Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga;
- > Ministry for the Environment;
- > Department of Conservation (as the administering agency for the Wildlife Act 1953);
- > LINZ as administering agency for Crown Land riverbed held under the Land Act (1948);
- > Local residents, specifically, immediate neighbours where the reservoir or dam infrastructure and ancillary works will locate, including:
 - > Tahurua Farming Limited (Section 12S Repongaere SETT);
 - > Hickling (Section 11S Repongaere SETT);
 - > Bruce Farming Limited (Section 15S Repongaere SETT);
 - > Gunson (being Lot 1 DP 3147); and
 - > Māori Trustee (Rapongaere 4H3 Block3).

3.6.2 Consultation undertaken with the above persons and/or groups and how this has informed the Project

A schedule of consultation is provided in **Attachment 8**. Notification Letters under Section 11 of the FTAA are provided in **Attachment 10.A** through to **Attachment 10.R**.

Engagement with these parties is ongoing.



Feedback received from those consulted has been very supportive. This demonstrates the need to progress this project under the FTAA to facilitate the benefits of the Project.

Adjoining Landowners

Meetings have been held with adjoining landowners where land will be impacted by the extent of the reservoir or by infrastructure, access or works associated with the project.

Meetings with Mana Whenua

The trustees of WPT (as mana whenua) has been consulting closely with and has notified key representatives of iwi and hapu who could be potentially affected in relation to this FTAA referral application.

Gisborne District Council (as the Unitary Authority)

The Applicant has consulted and notified GDC, outlining the Project Scoping Report findings and its intention to submit a referral application to seek eligibility under the FTAA. The Applicant has included GDC staff in key briefings, has hosted a site visit and will establish a Consultation Reference Group to keep them informed during the preparation of a substantive application in due course.

NZTA

NZTA have been notified of the proposal and a meeting is to be arranged regarding the potential for distribution pipelines to locate within sections of designated highway corridors and the construction traffic movements anticipated.

Department of Conservation

The Applicant has consulted and notified DOC on the Wildlife Act and Fisheries Regulation authorisations to be sought for the Project. An initial meeting was held with DOC on 17 April 2026, with the Applicant's ecologists in attendance.

Attachments 10.S and **Attachment 10.T** respectively provide DOC's comments in response to the pre-lodgement notification letter and the Applicant's subsequent comments on these responses. The pre-lodgement responses provided by DOC have not resulted in any amendments to the scheme design or its intended operation method, however, DOC's comments did helpfully confirm the types of approvals required for the project.

The Applicant will continue to engage and welcome input from DOC, including as it works towards submitting a substantive application under the FTAA.



Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (as the administering agency for the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014)

The Applicant has consulted and notified Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT). A meeting was held on the 14th of April to outline the Project and its intention to submit a referral application to seek eligibility under the FTAA.

The Applicant will continue to consult with HNZPT on the Project before it lodges a substantive application.

Ministry for the Environment (as the administering agency for the RMA)

The Applicant has notified the Ministry for the Environment, outlining the Project and its intention to submit a referral application to seek eligibility under the FTAA.

3.6.3 Treaty settlements that apply to the project area and a summary of the relevant principles and provisions in those settlements

3.6.3.1 Rongowhakaata Claims Settlement Act 2012

The Rongowhakaata Claims Settlement Act 2012 is the statute that provides for the final settlement of the historical Treaty of Waitangi claims of the Rongowhakaata iwi.

Key aspects of the Act include a formal Crown apology and acknowledgement of past wrongs, the provision of cultural and financial redress, the vesting of 9 cultural redress properties, and the establishment of a Right of First Refusal (“RFR”) for Rongowhakaata in relation to certain Crown land. It also sets out protocols related to Conservation, Crown Minerals, and Fisheries, as well as a protocol for Taonga Tuturu (cultural taonga).

Through consultation, the scheme is expected to remain consistent with the Rongowhakaata Claims Settlement Act 2012 and associated statutory acknowledgement area (refer to Attachment 11 – RMA Planning Assessment) in relation to the Waipaoa River.

3.6.3.2 Ngāi Tāmanuhiri Claims Settlement Act 2012

Key aspects of this Act include a formal Crown apology (including an agreed historical account and crown acknowledgements), cultural redress and financial and commercial redress.

Through consultation, the scheme is expected to remain consistent with the Ngāi Tāmanuhiri Claims Settlement Act 2012 and associated statutory acknowledgement area (refer to Appendix 11 – RMA Planning Assessment) in relation to the Waipaoa River.



3.6.3.3 Other Treaty Settlement Negotiations

Te Aitanga ā Māhaki does not currently have a completed treaty settlement, though a significant Waitangi Tribunal report on the Mangatū forest in 2013 recommended the return of land and compensation for the prejudice suffered by the iwi and its associated shareholders. The iwi was awarded negotiation mandate in 2014 and has been actively engaged in the settlement process, including negotiations and potentially other remedies through the Waitangi Tribunal.

There is no specific, recently completed or actively negotiated treaty settlement explicitly named for Ngā Ariki Kaipūtahi; however, they are claimants within the broader Turanganui-a-Kiwa inquiry, which aims to settle claims for various iwi and hapū in the region, including those of Mangatū Incorporation and Te Aitanga ā Māhaki. Ngā Ariki Kaipūtahi have filed historical claims with the Waitangi Tribunal, focusing on issues such as the Crown's purchase of Mangatū forest land.

3.6.4 Any principles or provisions in the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 that would be invoked by the project

Not relevant to the Project.

3.6.5 Treaty Settlement Land

The Project will not be located on land returned under a Treaty Settlement.

3.6.6 Treaty Settlement Land – written agreement

Not relevant to the Project.

3.6.7 Public Works Act 1981

No processes have been undertaken under the Public Works Act 1981 in relation to the Project.

3.6.8 Māori Land, Marae, or Identified Wāhi Tapu within the Project Area

As discussed in Section 2.3, the applicant's land and the adjoining land being Rapongaere 4H3 Block are identified as Māori Freehold Land. A schedule of land ownership is provided in **Attachment 1**.

There are no identified or known Marae or Wāhi Tapu within the Project footprint area. It is noted in the archaeological assessment in **Attachment 7.C** that sections of the distribution pipeline network are within close proximity to Wāhi Tapu and in three locations will cross into the buffer of Wāhi Tapu sites identified under the TRMP. Appropriate mitigating

measures can be employed as detailed in the archaeological assessment. A general archaeological authority is also proposed in relation to this Project.

The Applicant is not aware of any other Māori Land, Marae or Wāhi Tapu that could be affected.

3.7 LEGAL INTERESTS

The Applicant owns a significant portion of the land required for the implementation of this Scheme, including access into the site from Lavenham Road (refer to **Figure 1** and **Attachment 4**).

The Applicant is in the process of securing commercial agreements with the relevant landowners of the properties subject to the dam and reservoir site, rising main, high flow take infrastructure and distribution network. A list of those parties is provided in Section 2.3.2.

A table of properties and interests relevant to land within which works are required for this Scheme (including the distribution network) are provided in **Attachment 1.I** (Dam Structure Land) and **Attachment 1.J** (Rising Main and Primary Distribution System). Records of title for the land where the dam, reservoir, rising main, pump and high flow take are situated are provided in **Attachment 1.A** through to **Attachment 1.G**.

3.8 OTHER MATTERS

3.8.1 Previous Application or Decision

No activities included in the Project have been the subject of an application or a decision under a specified Act.

3.8.2 How Would the Project be Affected by Climate Change and Natural Hazards

As noted above, the purpose of the Project is to improve the resilience of the Gisborne Region (and namely the Poverty Bay flats) to the anticipated effects of climate change, particularly drought.

The main risks to the Project from natural hazards are from seismic events and landslides as identified and assessed by Damwatch in the Project Description provided in Section 3.8.2.1 and 3.8.2.2 below.

While it is noted that there are flood hazards to the east of the site (adjacent to the Waipaoa River), which may impact primary vehicular access into the site if inundated, this would be temporary.



The implementation of infrastructure (including underground pipelines, rising main, pump stations or river intake) will not exacerbate flood hazard risks to life, with appropriate design and construction measures in place.

3.8.2.1 Seismic Hazards

Damwatch has considered seismic hazard risk associated with the site (in a Proof-of-Concept Scoping Study, 2025).

The proximity of the proposed dam to the active Repongaere fault has implications for dam type selection and design.

The left abutment of the proposed dam site is located within approximately 100 m of the Repongaere Fault Avoidance Zone. Through dam design for seismic loads, the risk to infrastructure and other property from seismic hazards can be appropriately mitigated.

3.8.2.2 Landslides

Damwatch has considered landslide risk associated with the site (in a Proof-of-Concept Scoping Study, 2025).

While relatively shallow failures (typically a few metres or less) are widespread, they are not expected to pose a risk to the long-term operational safety of the dam. The primary considerations of surficial landslides on dam development and operation are:

- > **Construction** – selection of final dam alignment to avoid areas of instability, removal of failed material within the dam footprint, and removal or stabilisation of failed/unstable material adjacent to the dam
- > **Operation** – ongoing surficial failures should be expected throughout the life of the dam, with an increased frequency during and after reservoir filling. Such failures may impact water turbidity, reservoir sedimentation and infrastructure such as access roads

Although no evidence of deep-seated landslides within the Tolaga Bay Formation bedrock has been observed within the scheme area, regionally there are documented large-scale landslides within this formation. Further design work will investigate the presence and associated hazard of such landslides further. Central to this will be understanding the nature and orientations of defects within the Tolaga Bay Formation bedrock.

3.8.2.3 Summary

The detailed design and construction methodology will be informed by multiple engineering design reports to ensure the risks from natural hazards are managed to acceptable levels.

With appropriate design and construction measures in place, the Project is not subject to significant risks associated with climate change and natural hazards.

3.9 SPECIFIC PROPOSED APPROVALS

3.9.1 Approvals under the Resource Management Act 1991

The Project is seeking approvals that would otherwise be applied for under the RMA. These are set out in **Attachment 11 (RMA Planning Assessment)**.

No activities proposed as part of this Scheme are prohibited under the RMA.

A high-level assessment of the project against relevant national policy statement, any relevant national environmental standards and, if relevant, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement is set out in **Attachment 11 (RMA Planning Assessment)**.

There are no existing resource consents relevant to the Project site to which RMA section 124C(1)(c) (existing consent would need to expire to enable the approval to be exercised) or RMA section 165ZI (space already occupied by the holder of an aquaculture permit) would apply if the approval were to be applied for as a resource consent under that Act.

3.9.2 Resource consents where the project includes a standard freshwater fisheries activity

The Project does not involve standard freshwater activities.

3.9.3 Designations

Not applicable – no designations are proposed and no alterations to designations are required.

3.9.4 Designations where the project includes a standard freshwater fisheries activity

Not applicable – the Project does not involve standard freshwater activities.

3.9.5 Change or cancelation of conditions

Not applicable.

3.9.6 Certificates of compliance

Not applicable.



3.9.1 Approvals relating to Conservation Act 1987, Reserves Act 1977, Wildlife Act 1953, and National Parks Act 1980

3.9.1.1 Concessions

Not applicable.

3.9.1.2 Land exchanges

Not applicable.

3.9.2 Approvals relating to Complex Freshwater Fisheries activities

3.9.2.1 Whether any fish salvage activities or other complex freshwater fisheries activities are proposed.

A complex freshwater fisheries activity approval means an approval that would otherwise be applied for under regulation 42 and 43 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983

The Project will require approvals or dispensations that would otherwise be applied for under regulation 43 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 in respect of the following complex freshwater fisheries activities:

- > Permanent dam structure located in the Pouarua Stream;
- > Permanent diversion structure and associated Waipaoa River bed disturbances associated with the proposed high flow intake; and
- > Any trapping and transferring of fish required in association with constructing the dam structure.

3.9.2.2 Whether any in-stream structure (including formal notification or any dam or diversion structure) and a description to which this may impeded fish passage.

According to the preliminary ecological assessment provided in **Attachment 7.A**, effects on fish distribution and migration in the Pouarua Stream can be mitigated by ensuring the dam meets the requirements of the NPS-FM and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1983) and that the dam design provides upstream and downstream fish passage through the construction of a fish pass and/or implementing trap and transfer.

The high flow intake structure in the Waipaoa River bed is unlikely to impede fish passage or require fish salvage.



A potential pipeline structure may be required under the Waipaoa River bed to facilitate water distribution conveyance down the river. This would likely be constructed by horizontal directional drilling and is unlikely to impede fish passage or require fish salvage.

3.9.3 Approvals relating to Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012

Not applicable.

3.9.4 Approvals relating to Crown Minerals Act 1991

Not applicable.

4. AUTHORISATION

I confirm that Mitchell Daysh Limited on behalf of WPT is authorised to make this application.

I have provided a copy of the application with all contact details redacted.

I understand that all actual and reasonable costs incurred in relation to this application by MfE, EPA and other central and local government agencies will be recovered from me in accordance with section 104 of the Act, and the Fast-track Approvals Cost Recovery Regulations 2025.

I agree to sign this application electronically and that my electronic signature will be deemed to be provided in accordance with the Contract and Commercial Law Act 2017. I accept this electronic signature as valid and binding.

Susan Jones

Senior Consultant

Mitchell Daysh Limited



15 May 2026





ATTACHMENT 1

Record of Titles and Land Ownership
Schedules

The Property Group



ATTACHMENT 2

Scheme Location Map

Damwatch



ATTACHMENT 3

Indicative Scheme Layout

Damwatch



4



ATTACHMENT 4

Adjoining Properties Affected

Damwatch



5



ATTACHMENT 5

Rising Main and pump footprint

Damwatch



6

ATTACHMENT 6

Distribution Network Plan Layout and
Command Area

Damwatch



ATTACHMENT 7

Assessment of Effects on the Environment

(multiple technical experts)



8



ATTACHMENT 8

Consultation Record

Mitchell Daysh Ltd



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ATTACHMENT 9

Letter from Rongoaere 4H3 Block
Trustees

Maori Trustees



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ATTACHMENT 10

Notification Letters (Section 11 FTAA)
and Response to Comments Table



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ATTACHMENT 11

Planning Assessment

Mitchell Daysh Ltd



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ATTACHMENT 11

Planning Assessment

Mitchell Daysh Ltd



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ATTACHMENT 12

Proof of Concept Scoping Report 2025

Damwatch