

# Waiinu Energy Park.

## Brief Statement of Archaeological Record.

Commissioned by Meridian.

Author: Ivan Bruce - Archaeological Resource Management.

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Meridian Energy has commissioned Ivan Bruce – Archaeological Management to undertake an Archaeological Assessment of Effects for a proposed renewable energy project between Waitotara and Waiinu Beach, in the South Taranaki and Whanganui districts known as the Waiinu Energy Park (the project).

This assessment involves the field survey and assessment of proposed turbine locations, proposed solar farm areas, an above ground transmission line, and roading and access tracks. The project area covers an extensive area, located on both banks of the Waitotara River. The area comprises a mix of stabilised dunes under pasture and pine forests and allophanic soils predominantly used for dairy grazing.

The project is situated in the Waitotara - Nukumarū district, which contains a high number of recorded archaeological sites including a dense concentration of pit and terraces sites, Māori horticulture sites, and pa sites. The area also contains significant sites relating to the events of the Taranaki Wars 1865 – 1869.

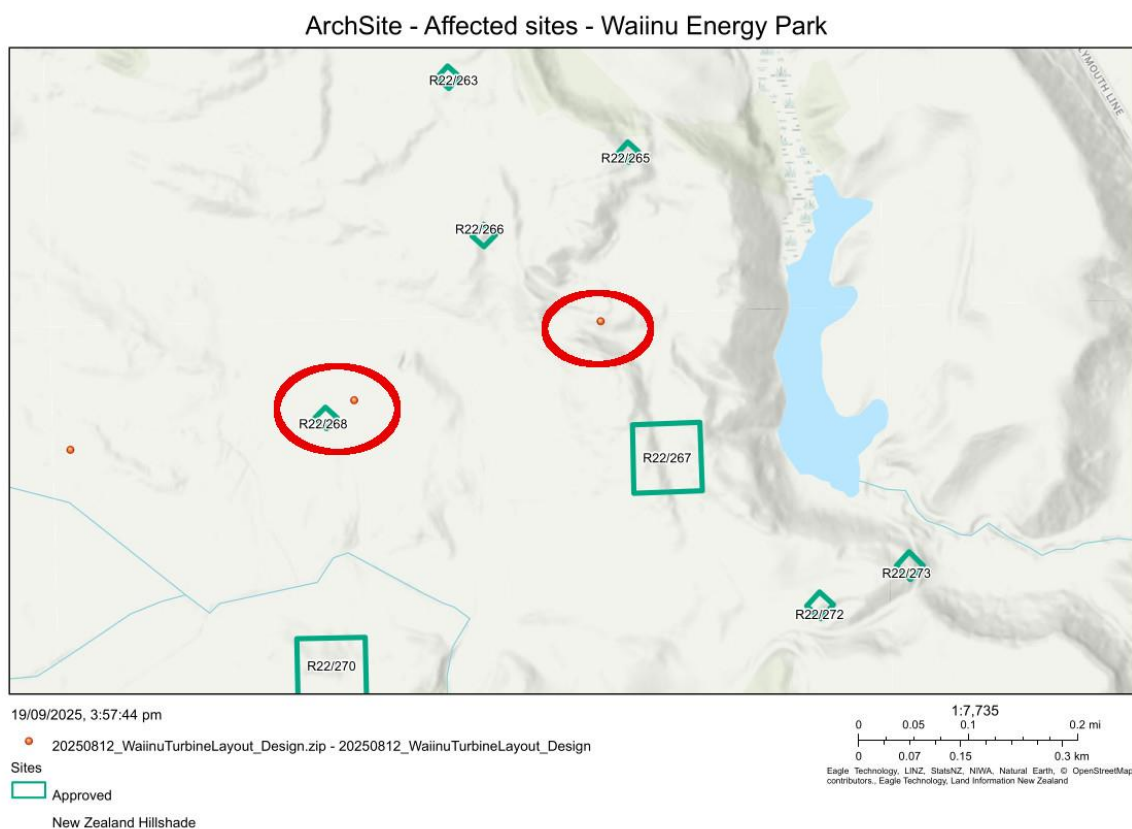
This project is primarily situated in the coastal zone, characterised as the Foxton Ecological District, an area of formerly shifting sand dunes, now largely stabilised, which extend 7km inland from the Waitotara river mouth.

This ecological zone is problematic for the identification of archaeological sites, due to the tendency for archaeological deposits to be covered and intermittently exposed by shifting dunes. However, these dunes contain significantly fewer archaeological sites than the allophanic soils inland and I consider this representative of pre-1900 era land use in the district.

The project area does contain a small number of a recorded archaeological sites, predominantly recorded on the inland margin of the dune complex, on the western (true right) bank of the Waitotara River. No sites are recorded within the project area in the dunes of the eastern (left bank). The proposed transmission line route avoids all recorded archaeological sites, passing no closer than 160m from the nearest recorded site.

I have undertaken a pedestrian archaeological survey of the project area over the months of July - September 2025. No new archaeological sites have been recorded during this survey, however all potentially affected archaeological sites within the project area have been revisited and sites records will be updated as part of the resulting assessment of effects.

Three archaeological sites are recorded within 200m of proposed turbines and may be affected by project earthworks. Two of these sites R22/266 and R22/267 (both Pit/ terrace sites) have been visited during recent field survey. These sites contain pit features located in stabilised dunes. While some pit features were clear and could be effectively protected by fencing off from project works, the overall extent of the sites cannot be determined due to the nature of the dune environment, and I consider it best practice in this case to undertake the construction of the turbines in this area under an archaeological authority.



*Figure 1: Location of turbines with potential to affect archaeological sites R22/266, R22/267 and R22/268 circled in red.*

Another site R22/268 is situated within 20m of another Pit/ terrace site location that has since been levelled by farming operations and is no longer visible to pedestrian survey. Again, in this case I consider it best practice for earthworks in the vicinity of this site to be undertaken under an archaeological authority.

I am currently drafting the assessment of effects for this project. My preliminary findings are as follows:

1. That this project may have limited effects on a small number (3) of archaeological sites and that these effects could be appropriately managed through the HNZPT Archaeological Authority process.
2. Due to the shifting nature of the dunes on which the project is predominantly based, neither the extent of all known archaeological sites, nor currently unrecorded subsurface archaeological sites can be identified with confidence prior to undertaking earthworks.
3. Consequently, I will be recommending that Meridian make an application to HNZPT for a general archaeological authority for all earthworks undertaken during the construction of the Waiinu Energy park.

**Archaeological Resource Management  
33 Scott Street/ Moturoa/ NEW PLYMOUTH**

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