
MINUTE 3 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Project overview briefing and site visit update
Lake Pukaki Hydro Storage and dam Resilience Works [FTAA-2510-1120]

(25 March 2026)

[1] The purpose of this Minute is to update parties with further details of the Panel's proposed project overview briefing (from the Applicant) and the Panel site visit.

[2] The briefing will be held on 1 April 2026 in person commencing at 8.30am at the Applicant's offices in Twizel.

[3] A site visit will then occur subsequently, commencing at approximately 1pm. If not completed that day for whatever reason, the site visit may continue the following day on 2 April 2026.

Request for clarification

[4] The Panel has received the attached memorandum of counsel for Transpower Limited requesting clarification about its participation in the project overview briefing.

[5] The Panel confirms that no parties invited to comment are requested or expected to attend the briefing conference. The conference will be recorded by the EPA and that audio file will be loaded to the project web-site for other parties to review in due course.

[6] Please contact Application Lead, Awesta Seddiqi, at info@fastrack.govt.nz with any matters arising from this minute.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KRMjl', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kitt R M Littlejohn
Expert Panel Chair

Attachment 1

Fast-track Expert Panel

FTAA-2510-1120

Under: the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

in the matter of: a substantive application by Meridian Energy Limited for approvals for the Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage and Dam Resilience Works

Memorandum of counsel for a section 53 party, Transpower New Zealand Limited, seeking clarification regarding attendances at the project overview briefing conference

Dated: 24 March 2026

Reference: T D Smith (tim.smith@chapmantripp.com)
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**MEMORANDUM OF COUNSEL FOR A SECTION 53 PARTY,
TRANSPOWER NEW ZEALAND LIMITED, SEEKING CLARIFICATION
REGARDING ATTENDANCES AT THE PROJECT OVERVIEW BRIEFING**

May it please the Expert Panel:

Introduction

- 1 Counsel for Transpower New Zealand Limited files this memorandum to seek clarification about attendances at the in-person project overview briefing conference in Twizel.

Background

- 2 The Expert Panel's Minute No 1 dated 6 March 2026 confirmed 1 or 2 April 2026 as the date for an in-person project overview briefing conference in Twizel, "with specific details to be resolved closer to the time".
- 3 The Minute also confirmed that a site visit will be conducted during the same period and that, during the conference, "the participants" may raise any matters that they wish to bring to the panel's attention.
- 4 It was not clear to Transpower whether the reference in the Minute to "the participants" was intended to include persons, such as Transpower, invited to provide comments under s 53 of the Fast-track Approvals Act. If so, and mindful of the need under s 10 of the Act for timely, efficient, consistent and cost-effective processes, Transpower files this memorandum to confirm that it is prepared to attend the conference if that would be useful to the Expert Panel, but would appreciate confirmation from the Expert Panel about whether:
 - 4.1 the attendance of persons invited to provide comments under s 53 is required or permitted; and
 - 4.2 if so, whether Transpower attendees could participate via audiovisual link.

Transpower's current position

- 5 Meridian has previously identified, as a matter to be considered in Schedule 1 of its memorandum ahead of the Panel Convener's Conference, that there is "some complexity involved in describing and quantifying the national energy-related benefits of the proposal" and that "any residual adverse impacts of the proposal are not sufficiently significant to be out of proportion to the project's national benefits".
- 6 In case it is helpful for the Expert Panel to have an indication of Transpower's position at this juncture, Transpower records that it currently envisages that its comments on the application will

address those issues. That will include addressing the broader economic benefits and disbenefits of removing significant contingent storage from the electricity system. Transpower has commissioned independent modelling of the potential benefits to the electricity system of permitting Meridian to lower Lake Pūkaki below 518.0 m where it is in Meridian's commercial interests to do so. It will provide that modelling with its comments. Transpower is happy to speak further to its position if the Panel is minded to hear from it at the upcoming conference.

Clarification sought

- 7 For the above reasons, Transpower respectfully seeks the clarification set out at [4], above.

Dated: 24 March 2026



T D Smith / N S Wood
Counsel for Transpower New Zealand
Limited