Referral application form to use for the fast-track process

Under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

About this referral application

This referral application form has been approved by the Secretary for the Environment in accordance with the fast-track approvals process of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). All referral applications under the Act must be submitted using this form.

We recommend you discuss your referral application and the information requirements with us before you lodge the referral application. Please contact the Fast-track support team on 0800 327 875 or email info@fasttrack.govt.nz

Please provide a general level of detail in your application; sufficient to inform the Minister's decision on the referral application.

You must use this form to apply for referral applications and complete all relevant fields, even where you provide supporting attachments that are more detailed. Include attachment or appendix numbers in the relevant fields and list the attachments in section 5 of this form.

If the required information and relevant supporting material is not provided, the application will be returned to you as incomplete.

If your application is determined to be complete, and the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) considers that your project may be capable of satisfying the assessment criteria and does not appear to involve an ineligible activity, and you have paid all related fees, charges and/or levies, then we will provide it to the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister).

Unless the Minister decides to decline the application before doing so, the Minister will invite comments on the application from relevant local authorities, Ministers, administering agencies, identified Māori groups, owners of Māori land in the project area and any other person the Minister decides is appropriate. The Minister may also request further information from you, the relevant local authorities, or relevant administering agencies before making a decision on the referral application.

If the Minister accepts your referral application, then you may lodge a substantive application with the EPA and the substantive application may be considered by a decision-making panel.

Application fees and Cost recovery

Under the Fast-track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025 (the Regulations), applicants lodging a referral application are required to pay a fee (deposit) of $12,000 (plus GST), and a levy of $6,700 (plus GST) to the to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). The fees are set in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These fees must be paid before lodgement of your referral application. If the required amount is not paid the application will be returned as incomplete.

Please note the final costs payable at the referral stage may exceed the referral application fee (deposit) paid. More information about cost recovery under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 is available from Fast-track approvals cost recovery process.

Submitting your application

You will need to submit this form through our digital Fast-track portal. You will need to receive a link to register/access the portal.

If you need any help with the form, you can call or email us:

- 0800 327 875 (0800 FASTRK) (from within New Zealand)
- email: info@fasttrack.govt.nz

Ways you can send your completed form to us
By digital portal – you will need to receive a link to register/access: Fast-track website
By email – info@fasttrack.govt.nz

Your personal information

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) is collecting your personal information for the purpose of administering your referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. We will only use the information for the purposes of contacting you in relation to this application.

MfE may provide your application, or details from your application to other agencies or local authorities for the purpose of administering your referral application. If your application is accepted as complete and progresses through the referral process, the Minister may consult with other agencies and groups on your application. This will require the Minister to share the details of your application with the EPA, the Panel Convener, and those groups.

We will store your personal information securely. You have the right to access the personal information we hold about you and to ask for it to be corrected if it is wrong. If you would

like to access your personal information, or have it corrected, please contact us at referrals@fasttrack.govt.nz

Official information

All information you provide with this application is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and may be released in accordance with that Act.

Publishing your application

We intend to publish your referral application on the Fast-track Approvals website.

Any personal contact details in application documents will not be made publicly available. Please provide a copy of the application with all personal contact details redacted.

MfE may also redact certain information from publication in accordance with the Official Information Act 1992. If you think your application contains information which should be withheld, please clearly identify it and provide an explanation as to why it should be withheld.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 1: Applicant details

A person or persons may apply to use the fast-track process for a project. Where there is more than one person, the referral application must be lodged jointly by all of the persons who are proposed to be authorised persons for the project.

If the referral application is accepted and referred by the Minister, the person or persons who lodged the referral application will be specified as the person who is, or the persons who are, authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project.

1.1 Applicant(s) – repeat for all applicants

1.1.1 Organisation name: Environmental Manager, Meridian Energy Limited

1.1.2 NZBN (optional): 9429037696863

1.1.3 Contact name: Lynley Fletcher

1.1.4 Phone: 021 589 782

1.1.5 Email address: lynley.fletcher@meridianenergy.co.nz

1.1.6 Postal address (if preferred method of contact):

Additional Applicants: Meridian Energy Limited

1.2 Agent acting on behalf of applicant (if applicable)

1.2.1 Organisation name: Tonkin & Taylor Limited

1.2.2 Contact name: Alia Cederman

1.2.3 Phone: 07 858 0021

1.2.4 Email address: acederman@tonkintaylor.co.nz

1.2.5 Postal address (if preferred method of contact):

1.3 Finance – Agent acting on behalf of applicant (if applicable)

1.3.1 Organisation name: Meridian Energy Limited

1.3.2 Contact name: Norma Scott

1.3.3 Phone: 027 277 8345

1.3.4 Email address: norma.scott@meridianenergy.co.nz

1.3.5 Postal address (if preferred method of contact): Level 2 98 Customhouse Quay Wellington New Zealand 6011

If you are making this application on behalf of the applicant, please attach evidence that you are authorised to make this application.

1.3.6 Please direct all correspondence relating to this application (including correspondence from MfE) to:

If selecting Applicant and there is more than 1 person who lodged the referral application, please identify 1 person to receive all correspondence on behalf of all applicants.

1.4.1 Compliance and enforcement history – repeat for all applicants

1.4.1 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

1.4.2 If you answered yes above, please provide a summary of the relevant legislation and provisions, and any compliance or enforcement actions, and

the outcome of those actions taken under the specified Act against the applicant or applicants, if the referral is being lodged jointly.

Section 2: Referral application summary

2.1 Project name

This is the name by which the project will be known publicly. For example - avoid using street addresses, place names, company names.

Western Bays Solar Farm

2.2 Project description and location

2.2.1 Provide a description of the project and the activities it involves

The project description helps us with inviting comments from relevant parties on the application, and publishing information about the application.

Meridian Energy Limited (Meridian) is seeking approvals to construct, operate and maintain the Western Bays Solar Farm (the Project).

The Project will generate up to 420MW (enough to power 113,000 homes).

The Project will consist of the following key components and their associated supporting infrastructure and facilities that enable the establishment and ongoing operation, including:

1) Solar Farm – this will consist of solar photovoltaic panels, inverters, power conversion and storage blocks (PCSBs) (including co-located battery energy storage systems (BESS)) and related electrical infrastructure (such as an internal electricity network of 33kV underground cables) across an area of approximately 620ha. Therewill also be an onsite 33/220kV substation and associated operational facilities and buildings, including a perimeter fence for security. The Solar Farm is located within a modified rural environment (currently an existing dairying operation). The Solar Farm is located on Karangahape Road which is a no-exit local road off SH32. Mitigation planting will occur on the Solar Farm site, and it is intended that sheep will graze beneath the solar panels.

2) Transmission Line Corridor – this contains a 220kV double circuit transmission line, approximately 9.7km in length, supported by towers of up to 60m in height. The transmission line will connect the Solar Farm substation to the Grid Injection

Point.

3) Grid Injection Point (GIP) – this is a 220kV switchyard. The GIP will connect the Solar Farm, via the transmission line to the National Grid (specifically, Transpower New Zealand Limited's (Transpower) Bunnythorpe-Whakamaru (BPE-WKM) A and B 220 kV lines) located on the western side of SH32.

The construction of the Project will require earthworks, associated discharges, vegetation removal, and other construction activities including laydown areas, concrete batching, creation of vehicle access points, access tracks, and road widening. The construction and operation of the Project will require taking and using groundwater from an
existing bore.

The exact infrastructure (specifications, number of components etc.) will be confirmed as part of detailed design.

2.2.2 Provide a description or map of the whole project area that identifies its boundaries in sufficient detail to enable consideration of the referral application.

For example, site address(es), certificate of title(s), shape files

The Solar Farm is located on the properties at 624, 632 and 808 Karangahape Road, Kuratau.

The Transmission Line Corridor spans across the properties at 632 and 624 Karangahape Road, and 403 SH32 (legally described as Part Hauhungaroa 1D3B Block).

The GIP is located on the property at Hauhungaroa 1D3B on the western side of SH32.

The site location is identified on the maps provided as Attachment 1. Attachment 2 also provides property maps, a summary of the relevant properties and the applicable Records of Title.

2.3 Ineligible activity

Your referral application must demonstrate that the project does not involve any ineligible activities as defined in Section 5 of the Act. Please consider each ineligible activity below and where relevant, provide the requested details.

When providing your response below, where possible, ***provide details of any parties involved, the extent of their holding and the activity relevant to their area****.*

Where a project involves an activity that may be the subject of a determination under sections 23 or 24, and you are intending to seek a Ministerial determination for that activity under either section, you must still complete this section in full. Determinations under, and information required in respect of, sections 23 and 24 are covered further under 2.5 Ministerial determinations under sections 23 and 24.

If your application relates to certain mining activities below the surface of the land and meets the other relevant criteria under section 5(2) of the Act then an agreement under section 5(1)(a), (b), (j) or (k) may not be required. This should be identified under the relevant questions below, and you must provide the additional information required in respect of section 5(2) under 2.3 Ineligible activity.

2.3.1 Does the project include an activity that would occur on identified Māori land as defined in section 4 of the Act?

Yes

a. If yes, please address the following:
    i. identify the land involved and the owner(s) of the land.

    ii. Confirm that the activity on the land has been agreed with the owners of the land and provide evidence of the written agreement; or
        A. advise whether it is proposed to seek a determination under section 23 and provide the information under 2.5 Ministerial determinations under sections 23 and 24 below; or
        B. advise whether it is proposed to rely on section 5(2) of the Act and provide the information under 2.3 Ineligible activity below.

2.3.2 Does the project involve an activity that would occur in a customary marine title area?

No

a. Address the following:
    i. Identify the relevant customary marine title area, who the customary marine title group is;

    ii. Provide evidence that written agreement has been obtained from the customary marine title group and provide a copy of the same; **or**
        A. advise whether it is proposed to rely on section 5(2) of the Act and provide the information under 2.3 Ineligible activity below.

2.3.3 Does the project involve an activity that would occur in a protected customary rights area?

No

a. Address the following:

i. Identify the protected customary rights area, the group who holds these rights and the nature of the protected customary right(s)

ii. Explain your proposed activity and identify whether you consider that it would have a less than minor adverse effect on the exercise of the protected customary right(s), and briefly explain why; **or**

iii. Advise whether you consider that your proposed activity would have a more than minor effect on the exercise of the protected customary right(s), and if so, confirm that the activity has been agreed to in writing by the protected customary rights group and provide a copy of that agreement.

2.3.4 Does the project involve an activity that would occur on:
Māori customary land; OR land set apart as a Māori reservation as defined in section 4 of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993.

No

2.3.5 Does the project involve an aquaculture activity or an activity that is incompatible with aquaculture activities that would occur within an aquaculture settlement area (under section 12 of the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004); or an area reserved under another Treaty settlement for the aquaculture activities of a particular group?

No

2.3.6 Provide details of the aquaculture activity or the activity that is incompatible with aquaculture and the location

2.3.7 Provide details of the relevant aquaculture settlement area or Treaty settlement legislation reserving space for aquaculture and include details of the impacted parties or particular group.

2.3.8 Provide details on whether or not the applicant is authorised to apply for a coastal permit within the aquaculture settlement area, or area reserved under another Treaty settlement for aquaculture activities, including a copy of any such authorisation.

2.3.9 Does the project include an activity that would require an access arrangement under section 61 or 61B of the Crown Minerals Act 1991?
No

a. Provide the following information:
   i. what is the activity that would require the access arrangement; and

   ii. does the project include an activity that would occur on Crown owned land or internal waters and land of the common marine and coastal area described in Schedule 4 of that Act and provide details of the same.

   iii. If so describe how the activity meets the criteria in section 61(1A)(a-e) of the Crown Minerals Act 1991; **or**

   iv. Confirm and provide evidence that the project would not occur in an area for which a permit cannot be granted under that Act:

2.3.10 Does the project include an activity that would be prevented under any of sections 165J, 165M, 165Q, 165ZC, or 165ZDB (regarding the management of occupation in common marine and coastal area) of the Resource Management Act 1991?

No

2.3.11 Provide details about which section the project does not comply with and, if relevant, the provisions of the regional coastal plan that are applicable.

2.3.12 Does the project include an activity (other than an activity that would require an access arrangement under the Crown Minerals Act 1991) that would occur on land that is listed in Schedule 4 of this Act?
No

a. Provide the following:
   i. identify the activity and which clause under Schedule 4 is applicable; and

   ii. confirm whether you are seeking that the Minister make a determination under section 24, and if so, whether the determination sought relates to existing electricity infrastructure or new electricity lines and provide the information under 2.5 Ministerial determinations under sections 23 and 24 below.

2.3.13 Does the project involve an activity that would occur on a national reserve held under the Reserves Act 1977 and requires approval under that Act?
No

a. Address the following:
   i. identify the activity and type of national reserve under the Reserves Act

   ii. identify what approval(s) would be required under the Reserves Act.

   iii. Confirm whether you are seeking that the Minister make a determination under section 24 and if so whether the determination sought relates to existing electricity infrastructure or new electricity lines.? If so, provide the information under 2.5 Ministerial determinations under sections 23 and 24 below

2.3.14 Does the project involve an activity that would occur on a reserve held under the Reserves Act 1977 that is vested in someone other than the Crown or a local authority?
No

a. Address the following:
   i. identify the activity, the reserve type under the Reserves Act, and the person in whom it is vested.

   ii. provide evidence that written agreement has been obtained from the person in whom the reserve is vested and provide a copy of the same; or

   iii. advise whether it is proposed to rely on section 5(2) of the Act and provide the information under 2.3 Ineligible activity below.

2.3.15 Does the project involve an activity that would occur on a reserve held under the Reserves Act 1977 that is managed by someone other than the Department of Conservation or a local authority?
No

a. Address the following:
   i. identify the activity, the reserve type under the Reserves Act, and the person or body who manages the reserve.

   ii. Provide evidence that written agreement has been obtained from the person or body responsible for managing the reserve and provide a copy of the same; **or**

   iii. advise whether it is proposed to rely on section 5(2) of the Act and provide the information under 2.3 Ineligible activity below; **or**

   iv. advise whether you consider the activity falls within the scope of section 5(5) of the Act, and provide the information under 2.3 Ineligible activity below.

2.3.16 Does the project involve an activity that is:

a. a prohibited activity under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 or regulations made under that Act?

b. described in section 15B (Discharge of harmful substances from ships or offshore installations) of the Resource Management Act 1991 and is a prohibited activity under that Act or regulations made under it;
No

c. prohibited by section 15C (Prohibitions in relation to radioactive waste or other radioactive matter and other waste in coastal marine area) of the Resource Management Act 1991
No

2.3.17 Does the project involve a decommissioning-related activity as described in section 38(3) of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012:

No

2.3.18 Does the project involve an activity undertaken for the purposes of an offshore renewable energy project?

No

2.4 Exemptions from requirement to provide agreement

2.4.1 Mining activities under section 5(2)

The agreement of the relevant groups referred to under 3.5 Persons affected *is not required for certain mining activities under section 5(2). If you think this might apply to your application, answer the questions below.*

2.4.1.2 Is your application for an activity that is prospecting, exploration, mining or mining operations of Crown-owned minerals undertaken below the surface of any land or area?

No

2.4.1.3 Provide details of the activity and identify the owner and occupier of the land and any relevant details concerning the land or area (such as whether it is identified Māori land)

2.4.1.4 Explain the extent, if any to which your activity may be likely to cause any damage to the surface of the land or any loss or damage to the owner or occupier of the land.

2.4.1.5 Explain the extent, if any to which your activity will be likely to have any prejudicial effect in respect of the use and enjoyment of the land by the owner or occupier of the land.

2.4.1.6 Explain the extent, if any to which your activity will be likely to have any prejudicial effect in respect of any possible future use of the surface of the land, and if no such effects are anticipated, please explain why.

2.4.2 Activities on land proposed to be the subject of a land exchange

The agreement of relevant groups referred to in (subsection 5(1)(a) of the Act) is not required if section 5(5) applies. If you consider this section may be relevant to your application, complete the below.

2.4.2.1 Is the reserve on which the activity is to occur proposed to be the subject of a land exchange?

N/A

2.4.2.2 Is the reserve a Crown-owned reserve?

2.4.2.3 Are the person or persons responsible for managing the reserve in place because of a Treaty settlement?

2.4.2.4 Provide any supporting details which may be relevant for your responses to the above questions.

2.5 Ministerial determinations under sections 23 and 24

Complete this section if you are wish to seek a ministerial determination under section 23 or section 24 that your project is not an ineligible activity.

2.5.1 Determination in relation to linear infrastructure on Māori land under section 23

2.5.1.1 Is your application is seeking a determination under section 23 (linear infrastructure on certain identified Māori land)

No

Provide the following information:

2.5.1.2 Confirmation that the activity is the construction of electricity lines or land transport infrastructure (and identify which it is)

2.5.1.3 Confirmation that the above construction (or operation of) will be undertaken by a network utility operator that is a requiring authority, and that that same party is the applicant for the necessary approvals, providing details of the same.

2.5.1.4 Confirmation that the activity would occur on identified Māori land that is Māori freehold land or General land owned by Māori that was previously Māori freehold land (and identify that land)

2.5.1.5 Provide information on the rights and interests of Māori in that land

2.5.1.6 Provide an assessment of the effects of the activity on those Māori rights and interests and on the relevant land.

2.5.2 Determination in relation to existing electricity infrastructure under section 24(2)

2.5.2.1 Is your application seeking a Ministerial determination under section 24(2) (in relation to maintenance, upgrading, or continued operation of existing electricity infrastructure on certain Schedule 4 land or in a national reserve)

No

Provide the following information:

2.5.2.2 Confirmation that the activity is the maintenance, upgrading, or continued operation of existing electricity infrastructure.

2.5.2.3 Confirmation that the activity would occur on eligible land, as defined in section 24(3).

2.5.2.4 Advise whether the activity would materially increase the scale or adverse effects of the existing electricity infrastructure and provide an explanation of the same.

2.5.3 Determination in relation to new electricity lines under section 24(4)

2.5.3.1 Is your application seeking a determination under section 24 (the construction and operation of new electricity lines on eligible land (as defined in schedule 4 excluding land classified as a national park or listed in subsections 2, 4, 5(a), 7 or 8 of that schedule)?

No

Provide the following information:

2.5.3.2 Is the activity the construction and operation of new electricity lines? (provide any necessary details)

Would the activity occur on eligible land (and identify which category of eligible land);

2.5.3.3 Provide the requested information for each alternative site considered for the construction and operation of the new electricity lines:

2.5.3.4 A description of the alternative site.

2.5.3.5 A statement of the anticipated and known financial cost of undertaking the activity on the alternative site.

2.5.3.6 A description of the anticipated and known adverse effects of undertaking the activity on the alternative site.

2.5.3.7 A description of the anticipated and known financial cost and practicality of available measures to avoid, remedy, mitigate, offset,

or compensate for the anticipated and known adverse effects of the activity on the alternative site.

2.5.3.8 A description of any issues (including financial cost) that would make it impractical to undertake the activity on the alternative site.

2.5.3.9 An assessment of whether it would be reasonable and practical to undertake the activity on the alternative site, considering the matters referred to above.

2.6 Appropriateness for fast-track approvals process

Here you must explain how the project meets the referral application criteria (section 22). Please consider and respond where relevant, to each question.

If the project is planned to proceed in stages, you must explain how each stage meets the referral application criteria.

If a part of the project is proposed as an alternative project, you must explain how each stage meets the referral application criteria,

2.6.1 The criteria for accepting a referral application is that the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits. Explain how this project satisfies the criteria:

The regional and national benefits of the Project have been considered by Thomas Brent Layton, an economic expert in electricity market design and regulation, and a former Chair of the Electricity Authority. His assessment, provided as Attachment 4, outlines the significant national and regional benefits of the Project, including its contribution to dry year risk management, electricity market efficiency, and future energy demand.

The Project, with an estimated capital investment of $758M, is a nationally significant infrastructure project that would have significant national economic and other benefits. It is one of the largest solar developments in New Zealand to date and will make a significant contribution towards increasing New Zealand's renewable energy generation. The Project is anticipated to generate 870 GWh of renewable electricity per year, which

equates to 2.1% of New Zealand's current generation. Electricity demand in New Zealand is forecast to increase by 68% by 2050 (Transpower's Whakamana i Te Mauri Hiko Monitoring Report October 2024). This reflects the continuing electrification of private vehicles, transport and industry sectors. The scale of the Project, including the substantial energy storage component, means it will make a substantial contribution to meeting this demand and decarbonising and electrifying the New Zealand economy.

The specific regional benefits of the Project are also significant, given the high level of demand and potential for renewable energy generation in the North Island, where there is currently more limited resilience compared to South Island supply.

The construction of the Project is anticipated to result in significant regional job creation over the 5-year construction period. This is expected to be approximately 280 direct full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs at peak construction. During the operation of the Project, there are anticipated to be 6-20 permanent FTE jobs.

The Project aligns with many government strategies for increasing energy from renewable sources and supports a low carbon future, contributing directly to national climate change mitigation and electrification targets. This includes New Zealand's current target of net zero emissions by 2050. The Project also supports Pillar 3 of the New Zealand Climate Strategy: "Clean energy is abundant and affordable" and contributes to the delivery of "Electrify NZ," a key action in New Zealand's Second Emissions Reduction Plan (2026–2030), which aims to double renewable electricity generation.

The Project directly supports the overall objective of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011, as amended in December 2025, to increase renewable energy generation as a matter of national significance. The District and Regional planning frameworks also recognise renewable energy generation assets as regionally and nationally significant infrastructure and seek to enable them through the policy framework.

2.6.2 Explain how referring the project to the fast-track approvals process:

2.6.2.1 Would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and

Meridian has extensive experience in consenting and delivering renewable energy projects. If the project were to follow a standard RMA consent process, notification is likely. A public notification process is likely to lead to

a hearing and potentially to Environment Court appeals. This process typically takes around 2-3 years (sometimes longer) and results in significant consent processing and external support costs and uncertainty. Under the Fast Track Approvals Act (FTAA), a decision from the Expert Panel is required to be issued within 30 working days (default period) after comments from invited parties are received. Consequently, the Project will progress faster under the Fast-track process than the traditional RMA consenting pathway.

Under the RMA, any submitter has a right of appeal to the Environment Court in respect of a matter raised in their submission. Under the FTAA, an appeal may be made only on a question of law and it is made to the High Court. Therefore, as compared to the RMA, the FTAA essentially reduces the potential delays and uncertainties associated with appeals in the Courts. Altogether, the FTAA provides a condensed timeframe for a decision on the resource consent applications and one forum/process for consideration for the proposal, including the consideration of multiple different approvals that a project may require under multiple Acts. The Project is a large-scale renewable electricity development for Meridian that will provide significant benefits and will enable Meridian to deliver part of the required pipeline of renewable electricity in New Zealand. The FTAA process provides more certainty around timeframes and costs for delivering this Project.

The usual consent process with multiple processes, associated costs and longer timeframes can impose a significant barrier to new renewable electricity developments. Fast-tracking the resource consent process provides a much higher degree of timeframe and process certainty.

Obtaining the Archaeological Authority for the Project as part of a ‘one stop shop’ will also make the process more efficient and cost-effective.

The Project is an eligible activity with significant national and regional benefits that aligns with the nature and scale of initiatives that the FTAA was enacted to provide for.

The referral of the Project is not anticipated to materially affect the efficient operation of the Fast-track Approvals process. The Project is at an advanced stage of development, with a comprehensive suite of technical assessments either already completed or underway and soon to be completed. In addition, Meridian has undertaken, and continues to undertake, comprehensive engagement with Mana Whenua and stakeholders.

This level of readiness ensures that the Expert Panel would have a well-defined information base upon which to assess the application, reducing the likelihood of delays commonly associated with incomplete or under-developed proposals. This proposal is unlikely to create undue pressure on

the processing system or delay the progression of other applications. The Project is well-placed to proceed efficiently through the Fast-track process, without imposing an undue burden on the system or compromising the integrity of decision-making on this or other projects.

2.6.2.2 Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process

2.6.2.3 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?
For example – a sector plan that specifically identifies the project including details such as location.
Yes

a. Identify the plan, strategy or list (or any other relevant document).

The Project has not been specifically identified as a priority project. The wholesale electricity system in New Zealand operates under a competitive market model so there is no centrally planned list of generation projects for the industry. However, the Project was identified as a High Priority project recommended for inclusion in Schedule 2B of
the Fast-track Approvals Act by the Fast-track Projects Advisory Group.

The Project makes a large contribution to, and is highly consistent with, applicable policies for electricity and climate change. The Project is directly consistent with New Zealand's national and international commitments in relation to climate change and supports the achievement in the Emission Reduction Plan (ERP) and other national targets.
Aotearoa New Zealand's First ERP (published by Ministry for the Environment in 2022) includes the long term vision that: By 2050, our energy system is highly renewable, sustainable and efficient, and supports a low-emissions and high-wage economy. Energy is accessible and affordable and supports the wellbeing of all New Zealanders. Energy supply is secure, reliable and resilient, including in the face of global shocks.

The Government has committed to reaching net zero for long-lived gases by 2050, set a target that 50% of total final energy consumption will come from renewable sources by 2035, and has an aspirational target of 100% renewable electricity by 2030. The Second Emissions Reduction Plan 2026 – 2030 comes into effect on 1 January 2026 and seeks
to enable more renewable energy projects (the Government has committed to doubling renewable energy by 2050) and encourage technology such as battery storage. The Project is consistent with the direction set by the New Zealand ERPs.

The RMA also includes the effects of climate change and benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy as matters to which particular regard shall be given.

The Project also contributes to achieving the objective and associated policies of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 to develop, operate and maintain renewable electricity generation activities throughout New Zealand.

Other notable strategies and plans relevant to the Project include:
• Rautaki Hanganga o Aotearoa, the New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2052 sets out actions New Zealand needs to take to ensure the infrastructure system meets the challenges of a growing population and environmental factors, such as climate change, over the next 30 years.
• The National Infrastructure Plan, February 2026, builds on this Strategy by setting out a pathway to deliver the infrastructure the country needs over the next 30 years. The Plan's 16 recommendations include accelerated electricity investment: Establish clear, consistent, and coordinated government policies to accelerate electricity infrastructure investment that supports economic growth and emissions reduction.

2.6.2.4 Will the project deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure or enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

Yes

a. Explain how the project will deliver this.

The Project will deliver new regionally and nationally significant infrastructure. The proposed 420 MW solar farm is anticipated to generate 870 GWh of electricity per year. This is 2.1% of New Zealand's current generation. It is a nationally significant infrastructure project as it will:
• substantially increase generation to respond to New Zealand's growing energy demand and its increasing dependence on electricity from renewable sources;
• contribute towards management of dry year risk in future years.
This strongly aligns with key strategies and makes a notable contribution of renewable energy generation to assist New Zealand to meet government stated national electricity targets.

The Project will also contribute to the resilience of New Zealand's electricity supply through the storage of energy. The co-location of BESS at each of the PCSBs, with an aggregated capacity of 250MW and up to 8 hours of storage, will enable portions of the generation to be stored and discharged during peak periods, as well as providing ancillary services to the National Grid if required (avoiding capacity induced security of supply issues). The battery storage will therefore improve system stability and support renewable energy integration.

The output from the Project will be connected directly into the Bunnythorpe-Whakamaru A & B 220kV lines. These two parallel lines are major parts of Transpower's infrastructure to carry power from the South

Island, where a lot of the country's generation is located, to the upper North Island, where a lot of the country's load demand is located.
The site's proximity and compatibility with the existing transmission corridor enhances constructability and operational efficiency, reducing the need for new transmission infrastructure and supporting grid reliability.

The Project will not directly increase the supply of housing but will indirectly support housing and a well-functioning urban environment through the provision of essential electricity.

2.6.2.5 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). If yes, explain how the project will achieve this.

2.6.2.6 Will the project deliver significant economic benefits, and if so, how?

The project will deliver significant national, regional, and local economic benefits. The economic benefits include:
• New Zealand's society and economy require electricity and the Project will contribute to New Zealand's transition to a low emissions economy. The Project is anticipated to generate 870 GWh of electricity per year, which equates to 2.1% of New Zealand's current generation.
• The Project will provide substantial employment opportunities during the construction phase, with an estimated average of 60 direct FTE jobs, up to a peak of 280 FTE jobs, during the approximately five year construction period. This will be a significant regional benefit. Local roles required include civil, mechanical and electrical contractors, fencing and planting contractors and other skilled labourers. There will also be a number of secondary benefits (freight and logistics, accommodation, hospitality, transport and traffic management).
• It is estimated that 6 - 20 direct FTE jobs will be required onsite or within the local area to maintain and operate the plant for the 35 year lifetime of the Project.
• Ongoing agricultural production through the co-location of sheep grazing which provides an ongoing productive capacity. The conversion away from dairy production will result in a minor reduction of nitrate emissions and this will permit some increase in other farming activities in the Lake Taupō basin.

Meridian estimates the capital investment to construct the Project will be around $758M. Annual operational costs are estimated to be $14.3 M in current prices for the 35 plus year lifetime of the Project.

2.6.2.7 Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture, and if so, how?

The Project is not specifically for the purpose of supporting primary industries, but the following points are noted:
• The Project is located in the Lake Taupō catchment and will reduce nutrient contributions due to conversion from dairy farming, thereby contributing to reducing nutrient load pressure in the catchment.
• Sheep grazing is proposed on the site to be designed and co-located with the solar farm.

2.6.2.8 Will the project support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum, and if so, how?

Sunlight is a natural renewable resource that the Project will utilise to convert to electricity.

2.6.2.9 Will the project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions, and if so, how?

The Project directly supports climate change mitigation by contributing materially to New Zealand's renewable energy transition. The substantial volume of new solar generation delivered over the Project's lifespan will provide a valuable and complementary addition to the existing electricity mix. Integrating solar generation with onsite energy storage,
enabling supply during periods of peak demand, is also expected to reduce New Zealand's reliance on fossil fuels such as coal and gas thereby lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

2.6.2.10 Will the project support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards, and if so, how?

New Zealand's current electricity mix primarily relies on hydroelectric power, supplemented by thermal (coal and gas) and wind energy sources. The addition of solar power at diversified locations across the country will enhance resilience to natural hazards.

The Project is proposed to be located away from areas of high natural hazard risk. The site is not subject to inundation, flood risk, notable seismic activity or fault lines, enhancing resilience to climate-related hazards.

The construction of solar energy further contributes to resilience against natural hazards, potentially minimising black out down time after a significant weather event.

2.6.2.11 Will the project address significant environmental issues, and if so, how?

The Project will address significant environmental issues by providing a meaningful increase in New Zealand's supply of renewable energy which is necessary to both meet growing demand for electricity and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2.6.2.12 Is the project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies, and if so, how?

The Project, which involves the development of new regionally (and nationally) significant infrastructure, is consistent with local and regional planning documents including the Waikato Regional Policy Statement, the Waikato Regional Plan, and the Taupō District Plan.

The Project is consistent with the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (RPS), particularly the Energy, Infrastructure and Transport chapter which provides enabling and supportive objectives and policies for regionally significant infrastructure and renewable electricity generation and electricity transmission including:

• Energy use is managed, and electricity generation and transmission is operated, maintained, developed and upgraded, in a way that:
o Recognises and provides for the national significance and local benefits of electricity transmission and renewable electricity generation activities (EIT-O1-5);
o Reduces reliance on fossil fuels over time (EIT-O1-6);
o Recognises the technical and operational constraints of the electricity transmission network and electricity generation activities (EIT-O1-8 and EIT-P1-3);
o Recognises the contribution of existing and future electricity transmission and electricity generation activities to regional and national energy needs and security of supply (EIT-O1-9);
• Management of the built environment ensures particular regard is given to the benefits that can be gained from the development and use of regionally significant infrastructure and energy resources, recognising and providing for the particular benefits of renewable electricity generation, electricity transmission… (EIT-P1-2).

Regional Councils must give particular consideration to waste discharges, soils, water quality, lake and river beds, air pollution, energy use, waste management and ecosystems. The Waikato Regional Plan manages activities related to the project such as earthworks, stormwater, contaminated land and groundwater. The Project is consistent with the Regional Plan such that, based on assessments undertaken to date, many of the activities are likely to

be permitted (and therefore consistent with the objectives and policies of the Regional Plan).

Taupō District Council has recently been through a plan review process. A key update of the Taupō District Plan was to introduce an energy chapter and to promote renewable energy activities throughout the policy and rule frameworks, including enabling renewable electricity activities in the General Rural Zone within which the Project is located. The Project is consistent with the following key policy provisions:

- Recognise and provide for the local and national benefits of the sustainable development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of renewable electricity generation resources and activities (SI-O2).
- Recognise and provide for renewable electricity generation activities to facilitate decarbonisation of the economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CC-P5).
- Recognise and provide for the national, regional and local benefits of renewable electricity generation activities and resources, and transmission activities, in relation to climate change, security of supply, and social, and economic wellbeing of people and communities and for their health and safety (SI-P1).
- Enable the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of renewable electricity generation activities and transmission activities in the General Rural Zone (ENGY-O6).
- Maintain the General Rural Zone character, as defined by ... (b) Renewable Electricity Generation Activities and electricity transmission and distribution (GRUZ-P1).

The Project is consistent with the policy direction set out in these plans through providing a significant renewable electricity source to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels. The location of the Project has been carefully selected and assessed to meet operational constraints (to be in proximity to the National Grid) while also minimising environmental
impacts as far as practicable.

To date, no applicable spatial plans or strategies have been identified although it is noted that Waikato Regional Council is currently underway with a regional spatial plan project that commenced in 2024 and is anticipated to be complete in 2028.

While not a spatial plan, the Waikato Regional Council (in March 2024) released the Waikato Regional Energy Inventory that serves to create an updated evidence base for a review of the 2008 Regional Energy

Strategy. Section 4.4.1 of the Inventory shows the rise in uptake of solar (due to the decrease in relative cost over time) and the known consented and proposed solar projects in the region. It notes that "large, property scale solar arrays are modular and, if near transmission infrastructure, can be constructed and commissioned relatively quickly." It also notes "Farm scale installations diversify the rural environment in the transition to 'agrivoltaics', enabling dual use of the same land."

Section 3: Project details

Remember: at this stage only a general level of detail is required, enough to inform eligibility to use the fast-track approvals process.

For construction activities, please state the anticipated commencement and completion dates.

The timing of construction of the Project is dependent on multiple factors including the consenting timeline, detailed design, construction planning, supply chain for components, and financing. However, Meridian anticipates commencing construction in 2028. Construction is anticipated to take around 5 years, with completion in 2033.

3.1 Approvals required

Applications must specify all of the proposed approvals sought but only need to provide a general level of detail about each proposed approval, sufficient to inform the Minister's decision on the referral application.

For each proposed approval an applicant must be eligible to apply for any corresponding approval under a specified Act. For example, if an approval is for a notice of requirement under the RMA, the applicant for that approval would need to be a requiring authority.

Applications for approvals under a specified Act, as required by in section 13(4)(y), are covered below in 3.8 Specific proposed approvals.

3.1.1 Outline the approvals sought under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Land use consent
Groundwater take and use consent
Discharge consent
Certificates of Compliance

3.1.2 Outline the approvals sought under the Conservation Act 1987

N/A

3.1.3 Outline the approvals sought under the Reserves Act 1977

N/A

3.1.4 Outline the approvals sought under the Wildlife Act 1953

N/A

3.1.5 Outline the approvals sought under the National Parks Act 1980

N/A

3.1.6 Outline the approvals sought under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

General Authority

3.1.7 Outline the approvals sought under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983

N/A

3.1.8 Outline the approvals sought under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012

N/A

3.1.9 Outline the approvals sought under the Crown Minerals Act 1991

N/A

3.1.10 Outline the approvals sought under the Public Works Act 1981

N/A

3.1.11 *Only applicable if more than one applicant:* Provide a statement of which approvals are proposed to be held by which applicant.

N/A

3.1.12 Where there are any particular eligibility requirements to apply for an above approval; identify what they are, who the relevant applicant is, and confirm that the relevant applicant meets those requirements (including providing any necessary supporting information or documentation to evidence this).

N/A

3.1.13 Are there any other types of consents, certificates, designations, concessions, and other legal authorisations (other than contractual authorisations or the proposed approvals) and you consider are needed to authorise the project (including any that may be needed by someone other than you as the applicant(s)). Provide details on whether these have been obtained.

N/A

3.2 Project stages

3.2.1 If the project is planned to proceed in stages, provide: Yes

1. A statement of whether the project is planned to proceed in stages, including:
   a. an outline of the nature, scale and timing of the stages; and
   b. a statement of whether you intend to lodge a separate substantive application for each of the stages.
      i. If a substantive application is intended to be lodged for each stage, address the questions under the section (Appropriateness for fast-track approvals process) for each stage of the project

Construction of the Project is expected to take 5 years. While Meridian is not intending to undertake the Project in independent stages, it does anticipate sequencing the construction as follows:
1: Construction of the northern half of the Solar Farm and completion of the Solar Farm Substation, Transmission Line and GIP (2.5 years).
2: Construction of the southern half of the solar farm and decommissioning of all temporary construction facilities and infrastructure (2.5 years).

The Project would be advanced as a single integrated Project under the Fast-track Approvals process. As a separate substantive application is not to be lodged for each stage of the project it is not a "staged project" as defined in section 21(8) and section 21(1)(a) does not apply. Therefore, no explanation of how each stage meets the criteria in section 22 is required or provided.

3.3 Alternative project

3.3.1 If the project is proposed as an alternative project, provide: No

1. A statement of whether a part of the project is proposed as an alternative project in itself; and
   a. Describe that part of the project; and
   b. Explain how that part of the project proposed as an alternative project meets the referral assessment criteria in section 22 of the Act.

3.4 Adverse effects

3.4.1 Describe any anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment.

The construction and operation of the Project in this environment has the potential to give rise to a limited range of adverse effects. None of the anticipated or known adverse effects are considered to be significant.

The site selected has very few environmental constraints and the few that do exist have either been avoided completely (for example, the Significant Natural Areas) or

the adverse environmental effects of the Project are otherwise able to be appropriately mitigated.

Comprehensive investigations and fulsome technical assessments have been conducted by leading sector experts to initially identify any constraints and then to refine the Project layout and support the process of obtaining the necessary approvals. All potential effects of the project can be appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated and can be managed by conditions of consent such that they are not considered to result in any significant adverse effects. A summary of these effects is set out in Attachment 5.

Given the importance of landscape and ecology (including bats) within this environment technical memos outlining the anticipated effects are provided as Attachments 6, 7 and 8.

3.4.2 Provide a statement of any activities involved in the project that are prohibited activities under the Resource Management Act 1991, and identify the relevant prohibited activity provision.

The Project does not include any prohibited activities under the Resource Management Act 1991.

3.5 Persons affected

3.5.1 Provide a list of the persons, groups and/or entities who you consider are likely to be affected by the project.

The list should include, as relevant, local authorities, relevant Māori groups (as set out at section 13(4)(j)(ii)-(vii) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024), persons with a registered interest in land that may need to be acquired under the Public Works Act 198; and if the project includes a land exchange, the holder of an interest in the land that is to be exchanged by the Crown (see Consultation requirements for referral application).

Relevant Local Authorities (s11(1)(b)(i)) and s13(4)(j)(i) (notify)
• Taupō District Council
• Waikato Regional Council

Relevant administering agency (s11(1)(b)(iii)) (notify)
• Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (as Administering Agency for the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere
Taonga Act 2014)

Iwi Authorities, hapū, and Treaty settlement entities (s11(1)(b)(ii) and s13(4)(j)(ii)-(iv)) (notify)
• Te Kotahitanga ko Ngāti Tūwharetoa (TKNT)
• Tuwharetoa Māori Trust Board (TMTB)

• Ngāti Parekaawa
• Raukawa Settlement Trust

Other persons or groups that may be affected by the project or have an interest in the project:

Neighbouring landowners
• Gareth and Alison McVicar
• Kotare Development Ltd (Keith and Sharon Ensor)
• Y Wuri Ltd (Roger Garland)
• Phillip and Jay Ford
• Bhana Investments Ltd (Jack Bhana)
• Te Hapua Farm (Sarah Jane and Johnny Westbrooke)
• Hauhungaroa #7 (Te Tumu Paeroa)
• Whakarawa Trust
• Hauhungaroa 1D3A
• Hauhungaroa 1D2
• Hauhungaroa 1C

Other
• New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) (roading authority)
• Transpower (national grid authority)
• Department of Conservation (interested party)
• Fire and Emergency New Zealand (interested party)
• Ngāti Te Maunga (interested party)
• The Lines Company (interested party)

There are no customary marine rights or customary marine title groups affected by this proposal. The Project is not within the rohe of Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou. There are no relevant applicant groups under the Marine and Coastal (Takutai Moana) Act affected by this proposal. There is also no land to be acquired under the Public Works Act.

3.5.2 Provide a summary of any consultation undertaken with the above persons and/or groups who you consider are likely to be affected by the project, and any other groups required to be consulted with under section 11 of the Act, **and** how the consultation has informed the project.

There are no relevant parties that are required to be consulted with under section 11(1)(a).

In accordance with section 11(1)(b), the relevant local authorities (Taupo District Council and Waikato Regional Council); the relevant iwi authorities, hapu and Treaty Settlement Entities; and the relevant administering agencies (being the Councils and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga) only need to be notified. However, Meridian has undertaken consultation over a period of time and this is described in Attachment 9. This includes a summary of where the responses have informed the project (section 13(4)(ka)). All consultation commenced prior to 31 March 2026 therefore these parties have not been separately notified (Schedule 1, clause 10).

3.5.3 List any Treaty settlements that apply to the project area and provide a summary of the relevant principles and provisions in those settlements.

Treaty Settlement: Ngāti Tūwharetoa signed a Deed of Settlement on 8 July 2017 with the Crown.
Relevant principles and provisions: The Ngāti Tūwharetoa Claims Settlement Act 2018 requires consent authorities, the Environment Court and Heritage New Zealand to have regard to the statutory acknowledgement areas of Ngāti Tūwharetoa.
The site is not within a Ngāti Tūwharetoa statutory acknowledgement area.

Treaty Settlement: Raukawa signed a Deed of Settlement on 2 June 2012 with the Crown (Raukawa Claims Settlement Act 2014).
Relevant principles and provisions: The Raukawa Deed of Settlement is made up of a package that includes an agreed historical account and Crown acknowledgements, which form the basis for a Crown apology to Raukawa, cultural redress, and financial and commercial redress (including statutory acknowledgement areas).
The site is not within a Raukawa statutory acknowledgement area. Raukawa have a statutory acknowledgement over the Waikato River and its tributaries.

3.5.4 If relevant, detail any principles or provisions in the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 that would be invoked by the project and identify which aspects of the application trigger or otherwise invoke these requirements.

N/A

3.5.5 Will the project be located on land returned under a Treaty settlement?

No

3.5.6 Provide evidence of written agreement by the owners of the land returned.

3.5.7 Describe any processes already undertaken under the Public Works Act 1981 in relation to the project:

N/A

3.5.8 Provide information identifying any parcels of Māori land, marae, or identified wāhi tapu within the project area:

Part Hauhungaroa 1D3B Block [SA7B/33] The Proprietors of Hauhungaroa 1D3B is Māori freehold land. This land block will host the GIP and the majority of the Transmission Line infrastructure. Refer Attachment 3.

There are no marae or other identified sites within the project area. Poukura marae (4km south of the project area) and Whanganui Bay marae (5km north of the project area) are both in the broader vicinity.

3.6 Legal interests

3.6.1 Provide a description of any legal interests you or any others applying, have in the land on which the project will occur, including a statement of how that affects your ability to undertake the work.

The Solar Farm site is owned by a single landowner who entered into a development agreement with Meridian in September 2023. This agreement grants comprehensive rights and registerable interests to carry out all aspects of the project, including access, construction and continuous operation. There is a caveat by Meridian on titles SA43B/384
and SA43B/499 relating to this agreement.

The land on which the transmission line corridor and grid injection point are proposed is owned by a single entity, which has resolved to agree in principle to grant an easement and lease over its land (refer Attachment 3). These rights will enable the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission lines and grid injection point, together with all necessary ancillary property rights.

3.7 Other matters

3.7.1 Have any activities included in the project, or any that are substantially the same as those involved in the project, previously been the subject of an application or a decision under a specified Act?

Please note the term 'application' incudes a notice of requirement and any other means by which a decision may be sought under a specified Act.

No

3.7.2 If an application has been made, provide details of the application.

3.7.3 If a decision has been made, also provide the outcome of the decision and the reasons for it.

3.7.4 Provide a description of whether and how the project would be affected by climate change and natural hazards:

The Project is designed and located away from areas of high natural hazard risks (inundation, flood risk, or fault lines etc) as identified on the Taupō District Planning maps. Solar panels will be mounted on solar tables that are anticipated to a minimum height of 1m above ground.

The design and construction of solar farms contribute to resilience against natural hazards, minimising down time of electricity outage after a significant weather event.
Provide the additional details requested below as relevant to your application.

3.8 Specific proposed approvals

3.8.1 Approvals under the Resource Management Act 1991

3.8.1.1 *Resource consents*

If your application is seeking a consent for an activity that would otherwise be applied for under the Resource Management Act 1991, including an activity that is prohibited under the Act, provide the information below:

- An assessment of the project against any relevant national policy statement, any relevant national environmental standards and, if relevant, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

  Refer Attachment 10

- Information on whether, to the best of your knowledge, there are any 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

An existing groundwater take is held by Thelands for 'milk cooling and dairy shed washdown' purposes and expires in December 2030. The existing consent would not need to expire in order to enable the Project. However, it is noted that once dairying operations cease and construction of the solar farm commences, the existing take would no longer
be required. It is noted that through this fast-track process, Meridian is applying for a separate water take consent to support the Project.

As such, section 30(1)(b) of the FTAA is not relevant.

3.8.1.2 *Resource consents where the project includes standard freshwater fisheries activities*

If your application is seeking a resource consent and your project includes a standard freshwater fisheries activity, provide the information requested below:

- If an in-stream structure is proposed (including formal notification of any dam or diversion structure), provide a description of the extent to which this may impede fish passage.
  N/A
- Indicate whether any fish salvage activities or other complex freshwater fisheries activities are proposed.
  N/A

3.8.1.3 *Designations*

If your application is seeking a designation or an alteration to an existing designation for which a notice of requirement would otherwise be lodged under the Resource Management Act 1991, provide the information below:

- An assessment of the project against any relevant national policy statement, any relevant national environmental standards, or, if relevant, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

  N/A

3.8.1.4 *Designations where the project includes a standard freshwater fisheries activity*

If your application is seeking a designation or an alteration to an existing designation and your project includes a standard freshwater fisheries activity, provide the information requested below:

- If an in-stream structure is proposed (including formal notification of any dam or diversion structure), provide a description of the extent to which this may impede fish passage.

  N/A

- Indicate whether any fish salvage activities or other complex freshwater fisheries activities are proposed.

  N/A

3.8.1.5 *Change or cancelation of conditions*

If your application is seeking a change of cancellation of resource consent condition that would otherwise be applied for under the Resource Management Act 1991, provide:

- Information about whether the change or cancellation of the condition is material to the implementation or delivery of the project.

  N/A

3.8.1.6 *Certificates of compliance*

If your application is seeking a certificate of compliance that would otherwise be applied for under the Resource Management Act 1991, provide:

information that demonstrates the activity that the certificate of compliance is intended to cover can be done lawfully in the location without a resource consent.

Attachment 11 provides comment on the permitted activities Meridian may seek Certificates of Compliance (CoCs) for as part of the substantive application.

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

3.8.2.1 *Concessions*

For applications seeking a concession that include a lease, answer the following:

- Will the lease be for a term (including any renewals that will, or is likely to, be more than 50 years?
  No
- Will the granting of the lease trigger a right of first refusal or a right of offer or return?

  - If you answered yes to both a. and b. above, provide evidence that the applicant has written agreement from the holder(s) of the right of first refusal or right of offer or return to waive that right for the purposes of the proposed lease.

3.8.2.2 *Land exchanges*

For applications seeking an approval for a land exchange involving conservation land, provide the details below:

No

- A description of both land areas proposed for exchange (for example, maps showing areas and location, addresses and legal descriptions where possible)
- The financial value of the land proposed to be acquired by the Crown
- A brief description of the conservation values of both pieces of land, including an explanation of why the exchange would benefit the conservation estate.
- If the land exchange would trigger a right of first refusal or a right of offer or return, provide evidence that the applicant has written agreement from the holder of the right of first refusal or right of offer or return to waive that right for the purpose of the land exchange
- Provide sufficient detail in respect of both land areas to confirm that no part of any land to be exchanged by the Crown is land listed in Schedule 4 or a reserve declared to be a national reserve under section 13 of the Reserves Act 1977.

3.8.3 Approvals relating to complex Freshwater Fisheries activities

If your application is seeking an approval or dispensation that would otherwise be applied for under regulation 42 or 43 of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 in respect of a complex freshwater fisheries activity provide the information requested below:

- Whether an in-stream structure is proposed (including formal notification of any dam or diversion structure), and a description of the extent to which this may impede fish passage.

  N/A

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

  N/A

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

If your application is seeking a marine consent that would otherwise be applied for under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Act 2012, provide the information requested below:

- Any information relating to whether the Minister for Conservation is an affected person.

  N/A

- If the applicant or the proposed holder of the marine consent has already applied for a consent under the EEZ Act in relation to the project, provide:

  - Details of any application made;
  - An explanation of any decisions made on that application; and
  - Any information that Minister may consider under section 22(6) (comparison of activity against current or likely use of the area).

  N/A

- Additional information (in a summary form) about compliance or enforcement action taken against the applicant or the person who is identified in the application as the proposed holder of the marine consent by the EPA under the EEZ Act.

  N/A

3.8.5 Approvals relating to Crown Minerals Act 1991

3.8.5.1 *Access arrangements*

For an approval for an access arrangement that would otherwise be applied for under section 61 or 61B of the Crown Minerals Act 1991, provide:

- Information that confirms the applicant or the person identified in the application as the proposed holder of the access arrangement complies with section 59(1) and (2) of the

Crown Minerals Act 1991 (which applies as if a reference to an access arrangement under that Act were a reference to an access arrangement under this Act) including;

- Evidence that the applicant or person has provided each owner and occupier of the relevant land a notice in writing of their intention to obtain an access arrangement; and
- Evidence that the notice complies with the requirements in section 59(2) of the Crown Minerals Act, and any matters required by regulations. =

N/A

3.8.5.2 *Mining permits*

For an approval for a mining permit that would otherwise be applied for under section 23A of the Crown Minerals Act 1991, provide the information requested below:

- A copy of the relevant exploration permit or existing privilege to be exchanged for a mining permit that entitles the holder to mine a Crown-owned mineral.

  N/A

- The name and contact details of the proposed permit participants and the proposed permit operator.

  N/A

- A proposed work programme for the proposed permit, which may comprise committed work, committed or contingent work, or both.

  N/A

- Evidence of the technical or financial capability of the proposed permit holder to comply with and give proper effect to the work programme.

  N/A

- Information about the proposed permit holder's history of compliance with mining or similar permits and their conditions.

  N/A

- The proposed date on which the substantive application is intended to be lodged (if your referral application is accepted) in accordance with section 42(11).

  N/A

- If the authorised person proposes to provide information under section 37 (to the relevant chief executive), the date on which the person intends to provide that information.

  N/A

- The proposed duration of the permit.

  N/A

3.8.5.3 *Mining permits for petroleum*

If the proposed approvals include a mining permit for petroleum, provide:

- A map of the area over which the mining permit application is intended to be made, the area in which the surrender of an exploration permit or existing privileges is proposed (which must be the same area as the area over which the mining permit application is intended to be made), and the extent of the resource and reserves to which the development plan relates.

  N/A

- The resources and reserves relating to the project, estimated in accordance with the Petroleum Resources Management System.

  N/A

- A high-level overview of the following:
  - the proposed field development plan;
  - the proposed date for the commencement of petroleum production;
  - the economic model for the project;
  - the proposed duration of the proposed mining permit and;
  - decommissioning plans.

  N/A

3.8.5.4 *Mining permits for minerals other than petroleum*

If the proposed approvals include a mining permit for minerals other than petroleum, provide:

- A map of the area over which the mining permit application is intended to be made, the area in which the surrender of an exploration permit or existing privileges is proposed (which must be the same area as the area over which the mining permit application is intended to be made), and the extent of the resource and reserves to which the development plan relates.

  N/A

- For minerals other than gold or silver, a report or statement confirming the ownership of the minerals targeted

  N/A

- Information on whether the application will be for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 permit.

  N/A

- An estimate of the mineral resources and reserves relating to the project, including a summary on acquisition of the data and the data underpinning the estimate (such as information on sample locations, grade, and geology). For a Tier 1 permit application the resources and reserves relating to the project are to be estimated in accordance with a recognised reporting code such as JORC or NI 43-101.

  N/A

- An indicative mine plan.

  N/A

- A high-level overview of the following:
  - the proposed mining method;
  - the proposed date for the commencement of mining and estimated annual production;
  - the economic model for the project;
  - the status of or anticipated timing for completing any pre-feasibility or feasibility studies;
  - the proposed methods for processing mined material and handling and treating waste and;
  - anticipated plans for mine closure and rehabilitation.

  N/A

Section 4: Authorisation

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is true and correct.

I confirm that I am authorised to make this application - Yes

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

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 - Yes

Signature: *MikaylaWoods* **Date:** 7/15/2026

Name: Mikayla Woods

Section 5: Attachments

List any documents submitted with the application.

- *Remember: include a copy of your application with all contact details redacted.*

Attachment number	Document name	Author	Document version

Referral application checklist

Use this checklist to confirm you have completed all sections of the referral application form.

Section 1: Applicant details	No
1.2 & 1.3 Agent's evidence of authority to represent the applicant(s) - if applicable	No
1.4 Compliance and enforcement history	No
Section 2: Referral application summary	No
2.1 Project name	No
2.2 Project description and location	No
2.3 Ineligible activity	No
2.4 Exemptions from requirement to provide agreement	No
2.5 Ministerial determinations under sections 23 and 24	No
2.6 Appropriateness for fast-track approvals process	No
Section 3: Project details	No
3.1 Approvals required	No
3.2 Project stages	No
3.3 Alternative project	No
3.4 Adverse effects	No

3.5 Persons affected	No
3.6 Legal interest	No
3.7 Other matters	No
3.8 Specific proposed approvals	No
Section 4: Authorisation	No
Section 5: Attachments	No