
MINUTE OF THE PANEL CONVENER

Request for Section 51 report Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage and Dam Resilience Works

[FTAA-2510-1120]
(12 December 2025)

[1] Meridian Energy Limited lodged a substantive application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) on 5 November 2025. The referred application relates to the temporary easing of access restrictions on Lake Pūkaki hydro storage by removing the current triggers, allowing it to operate between 518 m RL and 513m RL. At the lower lake level permanent rock armouring on Pūkaki Dam at the southern end of the lake is required to ensure structure's resilience to wave erosion.

[2] This application seeks an approval for:

- a) Wildlife approval under section 42(4)(h)

[3] Pursuant to section 51 of the Act, the panel convener directs the EPA to obtain the following reports:

- a) A report under clause 3 of Schedule 7 for the wildlife approval 2 (s 42(4)(h))

Advice requested

[4] The panel convener also directs the EPA to obtain advice from the Department of Conservation (DoC) on the following:

- a) How the weighting of matters set out in the relevant schedules should be approached, having regard to applicable statutory provisions and relevant senior court decisions (s51(1)).
- b) If DoC does not agree with, or wishes to amplify, the expert and planning assessments lodged in support of the application, it must file a report in accordance with the relevant schedule (s51(2)(c) or s51(2)(d)).
- c) DoC may confirm and append advice previously given in response to directions under section 51 on another project and does not need to provide an assessment if it concurs with the applicant's assessments.
- d) DoC is to respond to the draft conditions, including any management plans attached to the application, recommending tracked changes (if any).

Timing

[5] Reports and advice must be provided to the EPA within **10 working days after the panel invites comments on the application**, in accordance with section 51(4) of the Act.

[6] Any advice or report received will be provided by the EPA to persons listed in s 51(5).

[7] Finally, it would assist the panel convener if the Director-General of Conservation is able to indicate their views on the application at the convener's conference, tentatively scheduled for **29 January 2025**.



Jane Borthwick

Panel Convener for the purpose of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024