

10 March 2026

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Tēnā koe ██████████

FTAA-2509-1100 – FAR NORTH SOLAR FARM – THE POINT SOLAR FARM

Thank you for your letter dated 6 March 2026 requesting further information following our recent engagement with Far North Solar Farm Limited (FNSF). This letter represents a joint response to the Expert Panel on behalf of mana whenua, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited (AECL), and Aukaha.

Hui with Far North Solar Farm and Lodestone Energy Limited, 4 March 2026

Mana whenua, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited (AECL), and Aukaha met separately with Far North Solar Farm (FNSF) and Lodestone Energy Limited at Te Whare o Te Waipounamu, Ōtautahi on 4 March 2026, to discuss their respective substantive applications.

The purpose of the hui with FNSF was to discuss how the substantive application had been amended in response to comments received from the s53 parties, including the comments from mana whenua, and to discuss the proposed conditions of consent. The hui focussed on:

- FNSF responses to the matters raised by the s53 parties, including the significant amendments to the ecological enhancement approach,¹ stormwater management, and the response to mana whenua specific matters, including management of adverse effects on taoka bird species;
- the FNSF draft consent condition set dated 18th February 2026, including the Kaitiaki Forum condition; and
- the draft Kaitiaki Governance Group and Cultural Monitoring Programme conditions proposed by mana whenua.

Outcomes of the Hui with Far North Solar Farm

During the hui, mana whenua emphasised to FNSF that they sought meaningful opportunities to further discuss amendments made to the substantive application, informed by information obtained post-lodgement, given the evolving nature of the proposal. Mana whenua also confirmed their interest in the

¹ Noting that the ecological enhancement approach outlined in the substantive application included planting an 82ha area around the borders of the project site, which has reduced to a 14ha reserve area with potential clustered plantings and landscape screen planting around the site perimeter.

review and refinement of the proposed consent conditions, the development of management plans and their associated objectives, and the broader implementation of the project.

It was reiterated that the proposed Kaitiaki Governance Group and Cultural Monitoring Programme conditions seek to ensure that mana whenua have an ongoing role in managing the cultural and associated environmental effects of the proposed solar farm on site, as well as on the wider environment, including Te Ao Marama (Lake Benmore). FNSF confirmed that the inclusion of the mana whenua-specific conditions is supported and will form part of the revised suite of consent conditions.

Mana whenua also raised concerns that the draft consent conditions do not consistently identify mana whenua as a party to be informed or involved on a range of relevant matters, including the ecological impacts on taoka species and indigenous biodiversity, and landscape considerations.

As an example, mana whenua noted that both their involvement and the outcomes sought through the draft avifauna conditions are currently unclear. Specific concerns were raised regarding the proposed compensation triggers for bird mortality at the solar farm, including for mortality of taoka bird species. Mana whenua observed that there is no clear linkage between these triggers and the intended outcomes.

FNSF advised that an independent planner had been engaged to support the further revision of the draft consent conditions and address known issues with their structure. FNSF also advised of a scheduled meeting with Lodestone Energy Limited set to take place on Monday 9 March to discuss alignment of the structure and content of the draft consent conditions.² This discussion between both solar farm applicants is anticipated to provide greater clarity regarding the outcomes and standards sought through the consent conditions and the role of management plans (where required) in implementing those outcomes.

FNSF advised that the consent condition set dated 18 February is subject to further significant changes and will be superseded. It was agreed that detailed discussion on the draft conditions, including how the mana whenua-specific conditions sit alongside and integrate with the revised consent conditions, should be deferred until after the meeting between FNSF and Lodestone Energy Limited.

Further Engagement with Far North Solar Farm

Given the ongoing revision of the draft consent conditions, mana whenua, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, AECL, Aukaha and FNSF have agreed to the following actions:

- Following the meeting with Lodestone Energy (in response to the Expert Panel's Minute 7) and prior to the scheduled online hui (see next bullet), FNSF will provide a revised suite of consent conditions that clearly identifies any agreed common conditions (applicable to both solar farm projects) as well as conditions specific to the Point Solar Farm Project, where issues or environmental contexts differ. It is anticipated that Lodestone Energy Limited will provide its latest revised consent conditions in a similar format.
- An online hui will be held on 16 March 2026 involving FNSF, Lodestone Energy Limited, AECL, Aukaha, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu to advance discussions on the latest consent condition sets (including any revised responses). This hui will focus on clarifying the outcomes and standards set in the revised conditions, particularly for ecological and landscape matters, including how the conditions address concerns previously raised by mana whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and exploring how these outcomes align and integrate with the mana whenua-specific conditions.

In-person hui with FNSF and Lodestone Energy at Te Whare o Te Waipounamu, Ōtautahi, are scheduled for 31 March 2026. These hui are partly structured as a wānanga for the benefit of mana whenua, with both applicants providing project-specific presentations outlining how their substantive applications have evolved in response to s53 party comments, further surveys, onsite investigations, and collaboration between the two applicants. These hui will also allow mana whenua, AECL, and Aukaha to understand, at a broader level, the objectives of each solar farm project and the intended outcomes of the proposed consent conditions, including how these outcomes respond to concerns previously raised by mana whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, noting that Lodestone Energy is extensively revising its ecological enhancement measures. Finally, these hui are expected to provide a last opportunity to review the draft conditions in detail before submission to the Expert Panel on 10 April 2026.

Caucusing

Aukaha, AECL, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu understand that s.53 parties³ have proposed caucusing between Planners, Technical Experts, and FNSF to narrow the issues in contention and enable the formulation of Joint Witness Statements. While there is an agreed arrangement already in place with FNSF to continue input into the revised consent conditions (as outlined above), the Planners from Aukaha, AECL, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu are available for caucusing if directed by the Expert Panel.

Conclusion

Mana whenua, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, AECL, and Aukaha appreciate the constructive engagement with Far North Solar on this fast-track consent application and the conditions of consent and look forward to engaging further through the upcoming series of hui.

Key Contacts

Please contact AECL's Principal Planner, Kylie Hall, on [REDACTED] if you have any questions or require further clarification from AECL.

Please contact Aukaha's Senior Planner, Tim Vial, on [REDACTED] if you have any questions or require further clarification from Aukaha.

Please contact TRoNT's Senior Planner, Amy Beran, on [REDACTED] if you have any questions or require further clarification from TRoNT.

Kā mihi,



Maru Rout
Programme Leader - Mauri
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu


³ Environment Canterbury and the Department of Conservation.



Ally Crane
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cc. 
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