

**Before a panel appointed under the
Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024**

FTAA-2510-1120

UNDER: the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**Act**)

IN THE MATTER: an application for approvals for the Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage
and Dam Resilience Works

BY: **MERIDIAN ENERGY LIMITED**
Applicant

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF DR GRAHAM USSHER ON BEHALF OF
MERIDIAN ENERGY LIMITED**

Ecology

Dated: 15 April 2026

Counsel acting:
Stephen Christensen
Project Barrister
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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Graham Thomas Ussher.
2. I am a Principal Ecologist at RMA Ecology Ltd, and have held that position for 10 years, since I established the company in 2016.
3. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Science (Zoology)(1993), Master of Science (Conservation Ecology)(1995) and Doctor of Philosophy (Conservation Management)(2000) from the University of Auckland.
4. I have been practising for over 30 years in environmental research and consulting roles with a particular focus on land-based ecology and methods for providing improvements to indigenous biodiversity. I am a specialist herpetologist and have undertaken survey, effects management, salvage, and husbandry of lizards across New Zealand for over 40 years.
5. I founded RMA Ecology Ltd in 2016. In my role as director, I have undertaken approximately 260 projects that have involved site assessment; impact evaluation; effects management design (including offsetting); management plan preparation, construction management, including lizard, fish and plant salvage and ecological monitoring and reporting.
6. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses as contained in section 9 of the Environment Court Practice Note (2023), and have complied with it in preparing this evidence. I confirm the issues addressed in this evidence are within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my evidence.

EVIDENCE

7. I have been engaged by Meridian Energy Limited to provide expert advice regarding lizard management for the project. This has included providing advice to Sam Heggie-Grace, participating in engagement with the Department of Conservation (DOC), and providing advice on proposed wildlife approval conditions. I have peer reviewed both the updated Lizard Management Plan and evidence drafted by Mr Heggie-Grace in response to DOC's comments and agree with the content of those documents.

8. Should the Panel require any further expert evidence or advice with respect to the project's effects on or management of lizards, I am available to assist.

Dated: 15 April 2026



Dr Graham Ussher