

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 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: Harmony Energy NZ Limited

1.1.2 NZBN (optional): 9429047523876

1.1.3 Contact name: Christina Walker

1.1.4 Phone: s 9(2)(a)

1.1.5 Email address: s 9(2)(a)

1.1.6 Postal address (if preferred method of contact):

Additional Applicants: Harmony Energy NZ Limited

1.2 Agent acting on behalf of applicant (if applicable)

1.2.1 Organisation name: SLR CONSULTING NEW ZEALAND LIMITED

1.2.2 Contact name: Emily Buckingham

1.2.3 Phone: s 9(2)(a)

1.2.4 Email address: s 9(2)(a)

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: HARMONY ENERGY NZ LIMITED

1.3.2 Contact name: Christina Walker

1.3.3 Phone: s 9(2)(a)

1.3.4 Email address: s 9(2)(a)

1.3.5 Postal address (if preferred method of contact): s 9(2)(a)

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.

Tauhei Solar Farm Extension

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.

To construct, operate, maintain and decommission an extension to the Tauhei Solar Farm (TSF). The Tauhei Solar Farm Extension (TSF-Ext) will accommodate an installed capacity of approximately 50MW AC, located in Te Aroha West, Waikato.

Electricity generated by the project will be exported to the existing substation within the TSF, via underground cabling. From there it will be exported to the national grid via existing overhead and underground lines to Transpower's Waihou Substation, located on Mikkelsen Road.

The exact infrastructure (specifications, numbers of components etc) will be confirmed as part of the detailed design, however, an indicative list of activities follows:

- The installation of approximately 115,000 solar panels with an installed capacity of approximately 50MW AC. The solar panels will be supported by mounting structures ("tables") that are pile driven into the ground. The mounting structures will support a single axis tracking system, a fixed tilt system, or a combination of both. Single axis tracking system tables typically measure between 32m and 130m in length with row separation in an east-west direction typically between 4.5m to 7.0m (centre to centre). Fixed tilt system typical tables typically measure between 15m and 37m in length with row separation in a north-south direction typically between 7m and 10m (centre to centre). The maximum height for the solar panels will be 3.5m.
- DC string cable systems: DC cables will be connected in series from the solar

panels to string combiner boxes (estimated number 250). From the combiner boxes larger DC cables will be trenched from the ends of the rows of panels to central Power Conversion Units.

- Approximately 22 Power Conversion Units: the Power Conversion Units (PCUs) convert the direct current (DC) electricity generated by the solar panels into alternating current (AC). They then increase the voltage from low voltage (LV) to medium voltage (MV), making the electricity suitable for distribution to the substation at TSF. PCUs are typically containerised units of 20-40ft length. MV cables will then be trenched from the PCUs to the TSF substation.
- Security fencing with a maximum height of 2.4m around the perimeter of the solar farm (integrating with the TSF fencing), CCTV cameras within the site with a maximum height of 10m, and lighting for security and health and safety purposes.
- The use of hazardous substances for construction and maintenance, typically being diesel, petrol, lubricants, oils, grease, cleaning solutions, herbicides, pesticides (storage of hazardous substances will be at the TSF).
- Approximately two full meteorological stations with a maximum height of 4m and, should single axis tracking be utilised, approximately 12 additional wind meteorological stations with a maximum height of 10m are proposed to monitor meteorological conditions on site.
- The establishment of an internal roading network for stable and safe construction and maintenance access, including connections to the TSF roading network, and two new vehicle crossings to the public road network.
- Enabling earthworks / cleanfill deposition for internal roading construction, forming level platforms for PCUs, trenching for cabling and the formation of temporary construction areas.
- Dewatering of trenches and foundations as required to facilitate construction.
- Temporary works and construction facilities – contractors' camp and parking area (~12,500m²), laydown areas (~25,000m²), temporary utilities.
- Works within streams and drains, including Waikato Regional Council managed drains – primarily for the installation of culverts.
- Water tanks for firefighting, potable supply, operations and maintenance and onsite wastewater disposal.
- Provision for ongoing farming of the land around the solar panels, specifically, sheep grazing.
- The restoration and planting of riparian areas and areas of wetland.
- Landscape mitigation/planting and the modification of consented areas of planting and setbacks at the TSF to allow for internal road connections.
- Minor consequential changes to the Tauhei Solar Farm consent as required.

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 TSF-Ext will adjoin the existing TSF and will have frontage to Mikkelsen Road to the west, O'Donoghue Road in the centre and Waiheka Road to the south. Please refer to the following attached documents:

Attachment 1 - Record of Title - 154670

Attachment 2 - Record of Title - SA281_194

Attachment 3 - Site Location Plan

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?

No

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?

No

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 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 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 project meets the definition of infrastructure, as defined in the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (WRPS), as it involves ‘facilities for the generation of electricity, lines used or intended to be used to convey electricity, and support structures for lines used or intended to be used to convey electricity’.

The infrastructure project will have significant regional or national benefits, as detailed in the Economic Assessment prepared by Insight Economics (Attachment 4). In summary:

- During the 15 to 18-month construction period, the project is estimated to support approximately 117 FTE-years of employment, generate approximately \$11 million in wages and salaries, and contribute approximately \$21 million in GDP, primarily within the Waikato region. This is equivalent to an average of approximately 78 to 94 full-time positions sustained at any given time across the construction programme;
- The project will displace approximately 53,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions per year – equivalent to approximately 2.4 percent of New Zealand’s total annual electricity generation emissions from gas – supporting New Zealand’s statutory climate objectives and the Emissions Reduction Plan 2026-2030;
- The project will lift national solar generation by approximately 18 percent relative to the 2024 baseline, generate sufficient electricity to meet the annual needs of approximately 15,525 New Zealand households or to power approximately 69,700 electric vehicles, enhance competition in the wholesale electricity market, improve the flexibility and resilience of the national electricity system through complementarity with hydro and wind generation, and contribute to moderating the rate of retail electricity price growth over time; and
- The project delivers these benefits at materially lower incremental cost than a standalone solar farm would require, by leveraging the consented grid connection, infrastructure, and operational workforce already being established for TSF. Avoided grid connection and high-voltage infrastructure costs are conservatively estimated at around \$27 million and lifecycle operating efficiencies are expected to be worth several million dollars over the project’s operational life.

Summary

The project’s benefits are both significant and national in scope. Further information on the specific matters to be considered by the Minister with regards to significant national and regional benefits, as per section 22(2)(a) of the FTAA, is provided in the following sections.

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

The project represents a large solar farm project in the current New Zealand context. For this reason, under the normal consenting process there is the potential for the doubling of timeframes due to the scale and complexity of the project. There is also the potential for limited notification, or public notification of the application under 'special circumstances', which would result in delays to the project. In addition, given the relative 'newness' of large-scale solar technology in New Zealand there is a risk that a lack of expertise and experience both within local government and the community could result in unnecessary delays through the traditional consenting pathways. This remains true despite the application being for an extension to an existing and constructed solar farm, noting that the TSF was also consented under the previous Covid-19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting) Act 2020.

Under a traditional consenting process, the requirement for doubling of timeframes, notification and a hearing could result in a processing time of some 200 days (excluding any delays due to further information requests) and incur substantial costs. This time could be at least doubled in the event of an appeal; furthermore, the costs involved in resolving any appeal are uncertain.

The FTAA pathway materially accelerates the decision-making process relative to the standard RMA process described above, including through excluding public notification, limiting the scope for appeal, and taking a greater focus on the regional or national benefits of a project. Consequently, it is considered likely that the project will progress faster under the Fast Track process than the traditional RMA consenting pathway and the Fast Track process will also be more cost-effective, particularly when taking into account the costs associated with potential delays to the project's construction.

The project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process. Harmony Energy New Zealand (HENZ) is very familiar with the fast-track consenting process and has a proven track record in providing robust, complete applications that address all relevant environmental, cultural, and operational matters. The application will be prepared by suitably qualified and experienced experts. The project represents a relatively straightforward increase in renewable generation capacity as it is an extension to an existing solar farm, with key supporting infrastructure already constructed.

HENZ has already invested heavily in the project, the land required for the

project has already been secured and is already in the process of preparing the full array of technical reports it anticipates will be necessary for the project to obtain resource consent. Consultation with neighbours, iwi and councils has commenced.

Electricity generated by the extension will be exported to the national grid via the existing on-site substation at the TSF and then Transpower's Waihou substation. The TSF on-site substation has been constructed and energised and the necessary upgrades to the Waihou substation have been completed as part of the TSF project. Both substations have been sized to accommodate the additional generation anticipated by the TSF-Ext.

As evidenced by the construction of the TSF, HENZ is already very familiar with the processes of appointing a contractor, obtaining Overseas Investment Office consent, securing off-take contracts for the power produced by the project and selecting senior lenders.

Therefore, there are unlikely to be any delays to the operation of the fast-track approvals process resulting from any matters under HENZ's control.

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.

No

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

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 meets the definition of Regionally Significant Infrastructure under the WRPS as it is 'infrastructure for the generation and/or conveyance of electricity that is fed into the national grid or a network (as defined in the Electricity Industry Act 2010)'. The project will deliver an additional 50MW AC of renewable energy to the national grid via the TSF and Waihou substation, sufficient to power the annual requirements of 15,525 New Zealand households, or to power approximately 69,700 electric vehicles per year.

The project also integrates with the TSF which is existing regionally significant infrastructure, reducing construction costs and duration.

The significance of the project's benefits are detailed in the Economic Assessment (Attachment 4) and are both regional and national in scope. The project will significantly contribute to the supply and resilience of electricity within the national grid and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The project will also assist in the diversification of New Zealand's energy mix, reducing reliance on hydroelectric power generation, which is susceptible to fluctuations in rainfall and water availability. This diversification enhances New Zealand's energy security and ensures a more stable and resilient power supply. An increase in resilience and supply in the network will also encourage the country's electrification, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and in turn the adverse climate effects associated with burning coal and gas.

The project will deliver new regionally and nationally significant infrastructure.

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 significant economic benefits are set out in the attached Economic Assessment by Insight Economics (Attachment 4). In summary, the project would generate substantial one-off economic benefits in the region during construction. Over the estimated 15 to 18-month development period, it is projected to support approximately:

- \$21 million in GDP;
- \$11 million in wages and salaries; and
- 117 full-time equivalent (FTE)-years of employment in total.

This is equivalent to an average of approximately 78 to 94 full-time positions sustained at any given time across the 15 to 18-month construction programme, including all upstream supply-chain employment.

Once operational, the extension will be operated in conjunction with the TSF and is expected to add up to one additional permanent on-site FTE role. The operational project is expected to improve competition in the wholesale electricity market through the addition of low-marginal-cost generation, placing downward pressure on

wholesale prices and moderating the rate of retail electricity price growth over time.

The project also represents a meaningful private-sector capital commitment in nationally significant renewable energy infrastructure, delivering positive investment signal effects in a sector that requires sustained large-scale investment to meet projected demand.

The main economic cost of the project – forgone rural production from the site’s current dairy farming use – is modest in comparison to the scale of the energy and economic benefits enabled. If used in its current configuration, the site could sustain annual GDP of approximately \$0.8 million, employment for approximately three FTEs, and wages and salaries of approximately \$0.3 million. Continued agrivoltaic grazing within the panel arrays may further offset this opportunity cost.

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

The project will be designed to integrate and allow for the ongoing grazing of stock (sheep) on the land below the solar panels.

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

The project will utilise irradiance (sunlight), being a natural resource, to generate 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 Economic Assessment (Attachment 4) has estimated the net greenhouse gas emissions displaced as a result of the project. Gas-fired generation is adopted as the generation source most likely to be displaced by the project. Specifically, as set out in the attached Economic Assessment by Insight Economics (Attachment 4), the project will avoid approximately 53,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions per year when calculated by reference to the emissions of gas-fired generation, being the marginal thermal fuel in the New Zealand electricity system.

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 to the national electricity mix will enhance resilience to changing precipitation levels (i.e. 'dry years') as a result of climate change. Specifically, solar power complements hydroelectricity by providing a reliable energy source during periods of low rainfall or drought, and by mitigating the impact of disruptions to hydrological generation. Additionally, solar energy helps to smooth out wind energy volatility, contributing to grid stability and reliability.

Solar farms exhibit resilience to climate effects, offering a dependable energy source that is less susceptible to weather volatility compared to other renewable energy sources. Annual solar irradiation, measured at any point on the Earth's surface, is predictable within a variance of 2%-3%, providing consistency in energy generation. Furthermore, the strategic location of solar farms away from high-risk areas such as coastal regions minimises exposure to extreme weather events, enhancing resilience to climate-related hazards.

While actively contributing to the reduction in greenhouse gases and adaptation to climate change, the project is also resilient to the risks of climate change itself. The design and construction of the project will be resilient to natural hazards, with solar panels and key infrastructure elevated approximately 300mm above the 100 year flood levels, ensuring continued operation even in the event of flooding. Additionally, geotechnical inputs will support the design and construction of the project to ensure that all risks associated with natural hazards such as wind, are adequately addressed.

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

New Zealand's electricity system faces a substantial capacity challenge. Increasing New Zealand's supply of renewable energy is necessary to both meet growing demand for electricity and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In regard to electricity supply, the 2026 National Climate Change Risk Assessment for Aotearoa New Zealand, the Commission identified energy supply as one of the significant risks to New Zealand's built environment from the current and future effects of climate change. The assessment states that:

- Electricity is a cornerstone of modern life in Aotearoa New Zealand, underpinning essential services, economic activity and daily living. As climate change accelerates, understanding its implications for electricity generation becomes increasingly critical to ensuring

long-term energy resilience. As Aotearoa New Zealand transitions towards a low-emissions economy and net zero by 2050, the electrification of various sectors will significantly increase the country's reliance on electricity.

- Climate change affects electricity generation through altered weather patterns (such as precipitation and wind), temperature extremes and increased frequency of extreme weather events. Climate change introduces systemic risks to electricity generation through supply chain disruptions and shifting demand patterns. Solar energy faces relatively minor risks.
- Regional climate variations will influence electricity generation differently across the country. Demand is concentrated in the North Island, while a large share of existing and potential renewable generation resources, particularly hydro, are located in the South Island. With limited capacity to transmit power north, there is a risk of increasing regional mismatch between supply and demand.
- Expansion of the generation mix across a range of generation technologies, supporting resilience through diversification, is well under way. Significant additions of wind, solar and geothermal capacity have occurred since the first risk assessment. Larger, well-resourced entities are beginning to integrate climate projections into long-term planning, but this practice is not yet widespread. Realising the sector's full adaptive potential will require coordinated investment, modernisation and planning.
- Efforts that expand renewable generation and diversify the electricity mix (such as wind, solar and geothermal) can reduce reliance on thermal generation (fuelled by coal, gas and diesel) and associated transition risks such as fuel price volatility, exposure to carbon pricing, and regulatory and/or policy changes.

Likewise, Rautaki Hanganga o Aotearoa, the New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy (2022) also 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 strategy recognises that electricity generation capacity needs to increase by 170% and that a major energy transition is required to meet net-zero carbon emissions targets (p. 9) and to enable well-functioning cities and energy reliant industry. The action plan includes an Action (11.2.1) to accelerate development of new renewable electricity generation across the economy.

The project will contribute come 50MW of renewable electricity to NZ's electricity mix, increasing both overall supply and contributing

to diversification within the generation profile.

In regard to greenhouse gases, the He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission (the Commission) Monitoring Report: Emissions Reduction completed in July 2025 states that energy and industry emissions in 2023 were 23% of the country's gross emissions. The risks to the environment from climate change caused by carbon emissions are accepted and understood in multiple policy statements such as the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation and legislation such as the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act.

The project will result in a significant displacement of CO₂-equivalent emissions per year and assist in increasing New Zealand's resilience to climate change induced hazards.

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

Waikato Regional Policy Statement

The project meets the definition of Infrastructure and Regionally Significant Infrastructure under the WRPS and is consistent with the direction provided by the WRPS. In summary:

- Integrated Management - The project will be designed to withstand the effects of climate change and will provide a regional source of renewable energy which will have significant benefits in enabling communities to provide for their economic, social and cultural wellbeing as well as reducing reliance on fossil fuels and contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Energy, Infrastructure and Transport - The project will provide for significant additional renewable electricity generation, which will contribute to a reduced reliance on fossil fuels. The project is also located adjacent to an existing solar farm with grid connection.
- Land and Freshwater - The project will overall maintain and enhance the water quality and values of streams and wetland habitats on the site through avoiding works within these where practicable, implementing appropriate erosion and sediment controls, and incorporating riparian / wetland restoration planting.
- Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity - The indigenous habitats identified on the site will be avoided where practicable and carefully managed to ensure these objectives and policies are achieved.
- Hazards and Risks - The project will result in a significant displacement of CO₂-equivalent emissions per year and assist in increasing New Zealand's resilience to climate change induced hazards. The effects of climate change will be considered in the

design of the project.

- Iwi- The relationship of tangata whenua with the environment (te taiao) is recognised by the WRPS as being of paramount importance (SRMR-15), HENZ is committed to responding to cultural values, including through the enhancement of biodiversity and will proactively engage with all relevant iwi authorities.

Waikato Regional Plan

The WRP gives effect to the direction set by the WRPS. The following key areas of consistency are noted:

- Chapter 2 - Consultation with iwi is already being undertaken as part of the design process for the project.
- Chapter 3 - Erosion and sediment control measures will be in place during any earthworks to ensure that there is no adverse effect on water quality or aquatic habitats.
- Chapter 3 - Discharges associated with the project will be managed to ensure that there is no discharge of contaminants or increase in natural hazards.
- Chapter 3 - Culverts will provide for fish passage.
- Chapter 4 - Culverts will be sized and designed to allow for passage of fish as required, and for the conveyance of floodwaters to ensure that the effects of flooding are appropriately managed.
- Chapter 5 - The earthworks and fill deposition required for the project will be managed to ensure that works do not result in the degradation of soil productivity or versatility, water quality or aquatic ecosystems, waahi tapu, or result in accelerated erosion.
- Chapter 5 - The project will include riparian / wetland restoration planting to enhance the values and/or extent of waterbodies and aquatic ecosystems on the site.

Matamata Piako District Plan

The project is consistent with key objectives and policies of the MPDC. In summary:

- Section 2 - The project involves the provision of regionally significant infrastructure that will provide energy needs and associated social and economic benefits to surrounding communities while minimising adverse effects on the natural and physical environment.
- Section 3.1 and 3.5 - The project will be specifically designed to protect natural character, amenity and landscape values whilst also providing for regionally significant infrastructure.
- Section 3.2 - The risks of natural hazards and climate change will be considered, and the project will be designed to appropriately manage any risk to an acceptable level.
- Section 3.3 - The project is appropriate in the rural context, and the

life supporting capacity of the soil is not compromised.

- Section 3.6 - Activities within water (culvert installation) will be carried out in a manner that does not adversely affect water quality or amenity. Proposed restoration planting will enhance biodiversity and amenity.

- Section 3.7 - The proposal will promote a safe, reliable electricity network that provides for the needs of the community.

- Section 3.8 - The project will be designed to not compromise the safety and efficiency of the transportation network.

- Section 3.10 - Consultation with iwi is already being undertaken as part of the design process for the project.

Future Proof

The project is not located within any area identified for urban growth, or within any Waahi Taituu or Waahi Toiora layers. The project supports the Future Proof approach to responding to the effects of climate change through decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

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.

It is anticipated that construction will commence on the Project in Q4 2027. Construction is anticipated to take approximately 15-18 months to complete from start to finish. Anticipated completion date is therefore Q2 2029.

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.

This application is seeking approval for resource consents which would otherwise be applied for under the Resource Management Act 1991 under the

provisions of relevant National Environmental Standards, the Regional Plan and District Plan.

While not yet confirmed, it is anticipated that approvals will/may be required for the following matters:

- Section 9 land use consent under Matamata-Piako District Plan (earthworks, hazardous substances, trip generation, electricity transmission and distribution activities, vehicle access);
- Section 9 land use consent under Waikato Regional Plan for soil disturbance;
- Section 13 water permit under Waikato Regional Plan for riverbed structures (culverts);
- Section 14 water permit under Waikato Regional Plan for temporary dewatering, damming & diversion of water associated with trenching and culvert installation;
- Section 15 discharge permit under Waikato Regional Plan for discharge of cleanfill;
- Section 127 change of conditions to Tauhei Solar Farm consent (MPDC reference 102.2022.12700) (landscaping and any consequential changes resulting from the extension);
- Section 9 land use consent and Section 13 water permit under the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F) for the construction of specified infrastructure (and associated earthworks, discharges, diversions) in or in proximity to streams and wetlands; and
- Section 9 land use consent under the National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil (NES-CS) for disturbance of potentially contaminated soil.

3.1.2 Outline the approvals sought under the Conservation Act 1987

None

3.1.3 Outline the approvals sought under the Reserves Act 1977

None

3.1.4 Outline the approvals sought under the Wildlife Act 1953

While unlikely to be required, a wildlife authority may be sought to catch, handle and relocate any native lizards and bats that are discovered or accidentally injured/killed during construction. Whether or not it is sought will depend upon extended bat and lizard survey results.

3.1.5 Outline the approvals sought under the National Parks Act 1980

None

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

None

3.1.7 Outline the approvals sought under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983

'Standard freshwater fisheries activity' (culverts) will form part of the application. However, this will be addressed as part of consents under the RMA.

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

None

3.1.9 Outline the approvals sought under the Crown Minerals Act 1991

None

3.1.10 Outline the approvals sought under the Public Works Act 1981

None

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

Not applicable

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).

No

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.

There are no designations or resource consents required by other parties. Other authorisations and approvals required or held by HENZ are outlined below.

Legal interest in the land

The site is privately owned. HENZ has binding option agreements with the landowners in the form of caveats on the titles, providing HENZ with the option to take a 34 year registered easement over the land for development, construction and operation of a solar farm. It is free to exercise that option and will do so when consents and Overseas Investment Office (OIO) consents are in place. The terms of the easement contain all the land rights needed to construct and operate the solar farm for 34 years. Under the terms of the easement agreements, the landowners will retain the right to farm the land underneath the panels.

Overseas Investment Office (OIO)

HENZ will prepare the applications for OIO consent in parallel with the consent application and submit applications promptly to the OIO if resource consent approval is obtained. A staged approach will be necessary because the benefits of the project (such as generation output) cannot be accurately described to, or assessed by, the OIO until the scale and design of the project is refined through the substantive application process.

The OIO's guideline for maximum processing periods for applications for OIO consent to interests in sensitive land is 100 days, but the OIO has indicated that applications relating to renewable energy projects are prioritised and processing times have materially reduced below the maximum. HENZ is confident that its standing as an experienced and reputable developer and the significant public benefits of the investment mean that it is highly likely that OIO consent will be given. As such, it is very unlikely that the OIO process would cause delays in the construction of the project.

Works within Road Reserve

Cable trenching will be required within the O'Donoghue Road reserve (within existing easements) to connect the eastern and western blocks of the TSF-Ext site to the switching station at the TSF. HENZ holds Electricity Operator Status under section 4A and 24 of the Electricity Act 1992 which will allow it to construct and maintain transmission lines within the road reserve. The usual authorities (i.e. Corridor Access Request approval, Temporary Traffic Management Plan) are still required for all work within the road reserve.

Grid Connection

The Waihou substation is managed by Transpower under a designation. The anticipated electricity generation from the TSF-Ext can be dispatched via the Waihou Substation without further substantive upgrades being required to the substation. Accordingly, no additional approvals are required in respect of the Waihou Substation.

3.2 Project stages

3.2.1 If the project is planned to proceed in stages, provide: No

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

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.

It is anticipated that all adverse effects can be appropriately avoided or managed so as not to be significant, and in most cases negligent or less than minor. A summary of potential or actual adverse effects are set out below.

Noise and Vibration - An initial acoustic review has been undertaken which identified that the project can comply with the relevant standards in respect of both construction and operational phases. A detailed acoustic assessment will be completed and provided with the substantive application. A draft construction noise and vibration management plan will also be prepared.

Traffic - Vehicle crossing locations have been informed by suitably qualified and experienced traffic engineers. Final traffic generation estimates (including peak daily movements, heavy vehicle proportions, and peak-period activity) will be confirmed once the construction programme, staging and quantities are finalised and the appropriate controls/mitigations will be set out in a detailed traffic assessment and draft Traffic Management Plan at the time of substantive application.

Earthworks - Earthworks will be limited to those required for roading, trenching and levelling building platforms (for PCUs). There is no generalised levelling of the site required. All earthworks will be subject to appropriate erosion and sediment control and dust management measures, and a draft Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will be provided with the substantive application.

Landscape and Visual Effects - A landscape expert has visited the site and undertaken a preliminary assessment of the project's potential landscape and visual effects. It was considered that the project has the potential to be integrated within the existing modified rural landscape of Te Aroha West. Landscape mitigation will likely focus primarily on maintaining appropriate setbacks, coherent layout and careful edge treatment and will be designed to address any adverse landscape or visual effects, including cumulative effects.

Glint and Glare - A glint and glare assessment will be undertaken to assess effects on adjoining properties and road users, and the project design amended if required. A number of options are available to ensure that unacceptable glare is avoided at

sensitive residential receivers and for road users and these will be applied appropriately.

Ecological Effects - Site investigations undertaken by qualified ecologists have identified key ecological features of the site. Where practicable ecological features will be avoided or impacts will be mitigated or remedied. It is also anticipated that riparian and restoration planting will result in an overall net gain in biodiversity values on the site. Appropriate responses will be developed to the findings of the bat and lizard surveys as required.

Cultural - The project will be designed in consultation with iwi to reflect cultural values and aspirations in the final design. Consultation has commenced and no significant sites, cultural values or waahi tapu have been identified to date.

Archaeological - An Archaeological Assessment has been prepared and there are no known archaeological sites on the property. Accidental discovery protocols will be included in conditions of consent at the time of substantive application.

Contaminated Land - A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) has been undertaken by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Practitioner. The PSI identified areas on the site that have been subject to HAIL activities. These areas will be avoided to the extent practicable, and where not able to be avoided a DSI and SMP will be prepared to manage any adverse effects.

Hazardous Substances - Hazardous substances will be appropriately stored and banded (as necessary). Appropriate firefighting access and facilities will also be provided within the site.

Rural Productivity - The Site contains highly productive land / high class soils. The project will be designed to allow for ongoing productive use of the site throughout the life of the project. Additionally, at the end of the life of the project, productive use can continue.

Decommissioning/Repowering - If the project is decommissioned, all infrastructure will be removed, and where necessary the site will be rehabilitated to ensure it can be safely returned to pasture. It is anticipated that the vast majority of the components will be fully recyclable, any non-recyclable products will be appropriately disposed of. Re-powering may require additional consents (not sought as part of this application).

In summary, the effects of solar farms are well understood by HENZ and will be appropriately managed so as to ensure no significant adverse effects arise.

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.

There are no prohibited activities that form part of the project.

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](#)).

There are no relevant applicant groups with applications for customary marine title under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 and the project area is not within or adjacent to ngā rohe moana o ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou. Likewise, there are no relevant Mana Whakahono ā Rohe or joint management agreements and the project is not within a taiāpure-local fishery. There is also no land to be acquired under the Public Works Act.

Local Authorities

The relevant local authorities are:

- Matamata-Piako District Council
- Waikato Regional Council.

Iwi Authorities

The relevant iwi authorities, due to each iwi's rohe extending over the subject site, are:

- Hako Tūpua Trust
- Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust
- Ngāti Tumutumu Trust
- Ngāti Tara Tokanui Trust
- Te Puāwaitanga o Ngāti Hinerangi Trust
- Ngaati Whanaunga Incorporated Society
- Ngāti Maru Ki Hauraki Inc
- Ngāti Tamaterā Treaty Settlement Trust
- Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Incorporated

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.

A consultation report is attached (Attachment 5). A summary is provided below:

Local Authorities

Both Matamata Piako District Council and Waikato Regional Council have been notified of the intention to submit a referral application. In addition, an introductory meeting has been held with MPDC. It is intended that consultation with both councils will continue through the development of the substantive application, including (but not limited to):

- Matters relating to rule interpretation and applicability.
- Scope and detail of effects assessment.
- Conditions of consent.

Iwi Authorities

The following iwi authorities have been notified of the project:

- Hako Tūpua Trust

- Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust
- Ngāti Tumutumu Trust
- Ngāti Tara Tokanui Trust
- Te Puāwaitanga o Ngāti Hinerangi Trust
- Ngaati Whanaunga Incorporated Society
- Ngati Maru Ki Hauraki Inc
- Ngāti Tamaterā Treaty Settlement Trust
- Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Incorporated

Hui have been held with some of these iwi groups and consultation will continue. By way of feedback to date, Ngāti Tumutumu Trust has provided a draft ecological whakapapa framework to assist with articulating cultural values, which was provided to the project team.

Administering Agencies

Formal notice of the referral application was sent to the Department of Conservation on 28 May 2026, noting that the referral application would include the possibility of wildlife approvals. Whether or not wildlife approval(s) will be required will be determined following the completion of bat and lizard surveys which are currently underway at the site.

A pre-application meeting with the Ministry for the Environment was held on 24 April 2026.

The meeting covered a range of matters including:

- Requirements for notification
- Timeframes and costs
- Level of detail
- Types of applications.

Neighbouring landowners

Although there is no requirement to consult with neighbouring properties under Section 11 of the FTAA, HENZ has advised property owners within the vicinity of the site of the referral application. In person meetings have been held with some of the owners. Consultation with neighbours will continue through the life of the project.

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.

The following Treaty settlements, either legislated or in the process of being legislated, apply to the geographical location of the project near Te Aroha West due to each Iwi's rohe extending over the subject site:

- Ngāti Rāhiri Tumutumu Deed of Settlement 2017
- Ngāti Hauā Deed of Settlement 2013
- Ngāti Tara Tokanui Deed of Settlement 2022
- Ngāti Hinerangi Deed of Settlement 2019
- Ngāti Tamaterā Deed of Settlement 2017
- Ngāti Maru (Hauraki) Deed of Settlement 2017
- Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Deed of Settlement 1995
- Ngāti Whanaunga Deed of Settlement 2017
- Pare Hauraki Collective Redress Deed 2018.

Each settlement includes; an agreed historical account, a Crown acknowledgement and apology, and varying levels of cultural, financial and commercial redress. Except as noted

below, these settlements do not contain any vested sites, statutory acknowledgement areas, areas of interest or overlays relevant to the subject site.

- Ngāti Hinerangi - The statutory acknowledgements for Ngāti Hinerangi in the Matamata-Piako District include the Waihou River and its tributaries within the area of interest. The site is located within the area of interest described as the Waihou River and its tributaries (as shown on OTS-135-24). Specifically, the Mangawhengu Stream located within the site is a tributary of the Waihou River.

- Pare Hauraki Collective - The Deed provides for the establishment of the Waihou, Piako and Coromandel Catchment Authority to provide co-governance, oversight and direction for the management of the Coromandel, Waihou and Piako waterways. The project site is within the catchment of the Waihou River.

Nonetheless, HENZ has reached out to all settlement entities and will continue to consult throughout the life of the project. Based on early consultation and noting the sites' location within the Waihou catchment, the project will incorporate restoration planting over both riparian and wetland areas.

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.

The Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 is not relevant to the site.

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:

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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.

HENZ has binding agreements with the landowners (as noted in caveats to the titles – provided in Attachments 1 and 2) that provide HENZ with an option to acquire a 34-year registered easement over the relevant land. The terms of the easement contain all of the land rights needed to construct and operate the project for 34 years and thereby secure HENZ's ability to undertake the work.

The owners of the land subject to the project are:

- Raewyn Shirley Berger
- Selwyn Wayne Berger
- Cooper Aitken Trustees Limited.

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' includes 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:

A desktop geotechnical assessment of the site has not identified any hazards which present significant geotechnical constraints to the feasibility of the project. Detailed geotechnical investigations are underway to support the design and construction of the project.

An Acid Sulphate Soil (ASS) investigation has also been undertaken. Field results indicate that there is a potential for the generation of ASS within the site. Elevated ASS risk is predominantly associated with subsurface horizons below approximately 1.0 m bgl, with shallower soils generally lower risk. ASS management measures will be required during construction of the project, particularly where excavations extend into subsurface horizons ≥ 1.0 m bgl. A site-specific ASS management plan will be implemented for these works.

Pre-development flood modelling has identified that only limited areas of the site are subject to moderate or high hazard flooding, focused around the Mangawhengu Stream channel, a ponding area in the northwest corner of the eastern block, and an abandoned stream meander in the southwest corner of the western block. The modelling showed that

the network of farm drains across the site do not generally overflow in a flood event. The project will avoid high hazard flooding areas. Post development flood modelling (taking into account climate change) will also be undertaken and all infrastructure will be appropriately located above anticipated flood levels. All key infrastructure will be designed and located clear of floodwater and the project will be designed so as to not accelerate or worsen flooding beyond the site boundaries. Any culverts will be designed to convey floodwaters in a 50-year flood event.

Accordingly, the project will be designed to appropriately respond to natural hazards and climate change.

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.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation (NPS-REG)

The NPS-REG recognises and provides for the national significance of renewable electricity generation activities and provides for the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing renewable electricity generation activities, such that the proportion of New Zealand's electricity generated from renewable energy sources increases to a level that meets or exceeds the New Zealand Government's national target for renewable electricity generation.

The project provides for the construction and operation of a solar farm extension which will contribute to increasing renewable electricity generation capacity. The project will result in various national, regional and local benefits, including the displacement of approximately 53,000 tonnes CO₂-equivalent emissions per year, competition in the wholesale electricity market, enhancing system flexibility and resilience, and the creation of various employment and wider social benefits.

There is a functional and operational need for the project to be located in this particular location, including connections to the existing TSF and to the grid, proximity to major urban areas, appropriate amount of irradiance,

sufficient land with flat topography, geotechnical properties and access. The project is considered to be consistent with the NPS-REG.

National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL)

The site contains Land Use Capability 1 and 2 soils which are classified as highly productive land. The NPS-HPL is therefore relevant.

The NPS-HPL aims to protect and manage highly productive land in New Zealand for future generations, ensuring its availability for land-based primary production. Clause 3.9 of the NPS-HPL provides a pathway for the maintenance, operation, upgrade, or expansion of specified infrastructure on highly productive land. The project will accommodate agrivoltaics during its life span, and should the solar farm be decommissioned at the end of the lifespan of the solar panels, the site could be returned solely to productive use.

The project is therefore consistent with the NPS-HPL.

National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)

The NPS-FM has a single overarching objective which seeks to ensure natural and physical resources are managed in a way that prioritises the health and wellbeing of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems, the health needs of people and the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being, now and in the future.

Low value natural inland wetlands have been identified on site and while works are likely to be required in proximity to these wetlands, works within the wetlands will be avoided where practical and the effects hierarchy applied. A limited number of stream crossings are likely to be required. In addition, restoration or enhancement planting in riparian areas and selected wetland areas will provide additional habitats for indigenous species and will improve freshwater values of the surrounding catchment. For these reasons, the project will be consistent with the direction provided by the NPS-FM.

National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F)

As there are wetlands and streams identified within the project site, the NES-F is applicable. The project meets the definition of 'specified infrastructure', therefore any works within or in proximity to wetlands may require consent under Regulation 45 of the NES-F.

Should consent be required, the requirements of Regulation 45 will be

demonstrated.

Any proposed structures in streams will need to be assessed under Subpart 3 of the NES-F with respect to fish passage. It is anticipated that culverts will be designed to comply with the requirements in Subpart 3. The required information about any culverts will be provided to the regional council.

National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health (NES-CS)

Isolated areas of the site are identified as a 'Piece of Land' in accordance with the NES-CS. The panels and associated infrastructure will likely be constructed around the identified pieces of land. However, should HENZ elect to disturb these pieces of land, all necessary consents will be sought under the NES-CS and a DSI and SMP will be provided.

- 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

There are no existing resource consents relevant to the site to which RMA section 124C(1)(c) or section 165ZI would apply.

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.
In-stream culverts are likely to be required to manage stormwater and establish internal roading. Culvert length will be kept to the minimum required and culverts will be designed and installed to avoid barriers to fish passage. Any required culverts will be sized and installed in line with the rules of the Waikato Regional Plan and design considerations listed in the NES-F and the New Zealand Fish Passage Guidelines. Therefore, fish passage will not be impeded, and no approvals are required under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983.
- Indicate whether any fish salvage activities or other complex freshwater fisheries activities are proposed.
Temporary streambed disturbance, damming and diversion is anticipated to be required to facilitate the installation of the culverts. Fish salvage and relocation will be undertaken where necessary during construction of culverts, however the project will not meet the definition of a complex freshwater fisheries activity.

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.

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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.

A change of conditions will be required for the existing TSF (originally approved under the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting) Act 2020 and subsequently amended by way of s.127) in order to integrate the TSF-Ext with the TSF. As set out, this project will rely upon infrastructure within the TSF site including the switching station and operations and maintenance buildings. Once operational, the solar farm extension will primarily be accessed via the TSF.

Internal access road and cable connections will be required between the TSF and TSF-Ext. The list of approved plans and documents for the TSF includes a planting plan showing landscape planting along the entire extent of the southern

boundaries. A change will be required to the approved planting in order to allow for internal roads to penetrate this planting, and there may be other minor consequential changes to conditions required.

Such changes are material to the efficient construction and operation of the project

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.

Not applicable

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.
Not applicable
- Whether any fish salvage activities or other complex freshwater fisheries activities are proposed.
Not applicable

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.
Not applicable
- 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).

Not applicable

- 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.

Not applicable

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. =

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

- 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).

Not applicable

- 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.

Not applicable

- The proposed duration of the permit.

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

- 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.

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

- Information on whether the application will be for a [Tier 1 or Tier 2 permit](#).

Not applicable

- 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.

Not applicable

- An indicative mine plan.

Not applicable

- 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.

Not applicable

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: *Christina Walker*

Date: 16/07/2026

Name: Christina Walker

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