Part D

CONTACT ENERGY LIMITED

Southland Wind Farm

Approvals relating to the Wildlife Act 1953

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1. INTRODUCTION

Section 43(3)(h) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 ("**FTAA**" or "**the Act**") sets out that a substantive application must, for a wildlife approval, include the information required by clause 2 of Schedule 7 of the FTAA. This part of the substantive application provides the information required for the wildlife approvals sought by Contact Energy Limited ("**Contact**") to authorise activities for the Southland Wind Farm Project ("**the Project**") that would otherwise be applied for under the Wildlife Act 1953 ("**Wildlife Act**").

Approvals are required for the Project under the Wildlife Act for the intentional disturbance of wildlife (lizards and Helms' stag beetles), including for the purposes of catching, holding and releasing. This will involve searching for lizards and Helms' stag beetles prior to the commencement of vegetation clearance activities in areas that have either confirmed or expected presence of these animals and translocating them to new habitats (including fenced and predator-controlled areas associated with the offsetting and compensation proposed for the Project).

This application is supported by the terrestrial and wetland ecological effects assessment completed by Wildlands (2025), included in **Part H** to these application documents, and the ecology management plans that will be included in the Terrestrial and Wetland Ecological Management Plan, in particular the Lizard Management Plan ("**LMP**") and Stag Beetle Management Plan ("**SBMP**") (which forms part of the Terrestrial Invertebrate Management Plan ("**TIMP**")), included in **Part J** to these application documents. Contact is seeking that these management plans are certified as part of this application.

A description of the Project, including the Project Site, is provided in full in **Part A** to these application documents, which forms part of this application. The figures referenced in this application document are included in **Part G** to these application documents.

2. PROTECTED WILDLIFE SPECIES AT THE WIND FARM SITE

The Wind Farm Site covers approximately 58km^2 of privately owned land, including land which forms part of two sheep and beef farms (Jedburgh Station and Glencoe Station), and Venlaw plantation forest owned by Matariki Forests (refer to **Figure Project Description-2 (Part G)**).

The existing ecological values of the Project Site, including a list of the known wildlife species that have been identified within the Project Site, are described in Wildlands (2025), Kessels and Davidson-Watts (2025) and Ryder and Goldsmith (2025), included in **Part H** to

these application documents.[1] These are also summarised in Section 2 of **Part B** to these application documents and are therefore not repeated here.

Tussock skink, Tautuku gecko, green skink, herbfield skink and Helms' stag beetles are protected under the Wildlife Act and this application document relates to wildlife approvals being sought for activities relating to these species. The sections below describe the existing values of these species present at the Wind Farm Site.

It is noted, however, that the Wind Farm Site is currently used for pastoral farming (Jedburgh Station and Glencoe Station) and plantation forestry (Matariki Forest) activities. The existing ecological values of the Wind Farm Site are significantly affected by pest animals present, including deer and pigs, as well as cattle browsing and trampling. This is particularly negatively affecting processes such as regeneration and forest succession within the Wind Farm Site.

2.1 LIZARDS

Wildland Consultants ("**Wildlands**") undertook initial habitat assessments and surveys for lizards at the Wind Farm Site in 2023. Further and more targeted lizard surveys within potential lizard habitat were subsequently completed in 2024 and 2025.

The methods and results of these surveys are outlined in Wildlands (2025), and in the LMP. The surveys of the Wind Farm Site have confirmed the presence of two lizard species, the tussock skink (*Oligosoma chionochloescens*) and Tautuku gecko (*Mokopirirakau* "southern forest"), both of which are classified as 'At Risk – Declining'.

50 tussock skinks have been detected across all of the surveys completed to date. Tussock skinks have primarily been found within exotic grassland habitats within Jedburgh Station. At Matariki Forest, tussock skinks have been found within copper tussock, pine or mānuka dominated vegetation types near access roads or proposed platforms associated with proposed wind turbines MAT-08, MAT,09, MAT-10 and MAT-11 and in mānuka-gorse/copper tussock shrubland along the proposed access road south of MAT-14 and at MAT-15. The highest densities of tussock skink have been detected along the existing road or accessways within the Wind Farm Site.

Tautuku geckos were found within a patch of mānuka within the footprint of proposed wind turbine JED-21, on the other side of the main gully filled with southern rātā-kamahi forest near JED-34 and along an access track near JED-20 and JED-21. In total, six Tautuku geckos have been detected during the surveys. Wildlands (2025) consider it is likely that Tautuku

[1] Not all of these species are protected wildlife for the purposes of the Wildlife Act.

geckos could be more widespread within forest vegetation (in particular, southern rātā-kamahi forest and mānuka forest and scrub) across the Wind Farm Site, although in low densities.

The locations where tussock skink and Tautuku gecko have been found in all surveys completed to date are identified on **Figures LMP-01a, LMP-01b and LMP-01c (Part G)**. The results of the surveys show that tussock skinks favour disturbed areas such as road edges, while Tautuku gecko have been found in a small 'island' of mānuka scrub, surrounded by farm tracks.

Comprehensive site surveys have been conducted to date, during which no additional lizard species have been identified within the Wind Farm Site. Nevertheless, given the site's location and the types of habitats present, Wildlands (2025) posits that the green skink (*Oligosoma chloronoton*, Threatened – Nationally Critical) may potentially inhabit the copper tussock grassland areas within the Wind Farm Site, in particular near proposed turbines MAT-09 and MAT-10. Similarly, herbfield skink (*Oligosoma aff. Inconspicuum*, At Risk - Declining) may also be present in both the copper tussock grassland and the māunka-gorse/copper tussock grassland habitats within the same site.

Wildlands (2025) consider predation from mice, in particular, is negatively affecting lizard populations within the Wind Farm Site.

2.2 HELMS' STAG BEETLE

Helms' stag beetle (*Geodorcus helmsii*; Not Assessed) is a large (1.7-4.4cm long) black beetle in the stag beetle family Lucanidae. Helms' stag beetle is flightless and slow-moving, and has little defence against introduced mammalian predators, particularly rodents, which are their main threat.

Wildlands have completed preliminary invertebrate surveys, generalised invertebrate surveys and targeted Helms' stag beetle surveys in all potential areas of suitable habitats within the Wind Farm Site. In total, nine Helms' stag beetles have been found in the surveys completed, in mānuka forest and scrub in two locations and in a boggy patch of flax, mountain holly, copper tussock and astelia in one location.

The locations where Helms' stag beetles have been found in all of the surveys completed to date are identified on **Figures SBMP-1a and SBMP-1b (Part G)**. The majority of the Helms' stag beetles have been detected along the boundary between the Catlins Forest Park and the southern side of Jedburgh Station, near proposed wind turbine JED-06. In addition, Helms' stag beetles were found slightly to the north of these, near proposed wind turbines JED-21 and JED-22 and near the access road between proposed wind turbines MAT-15 and MAT-16.

Three of the nine Helms' stag beetles found at the Wind Farm Site were dead and partially eaten which suggests that predators may serve as a limiting factor for the local population. The presence of introduced predators, including feral pigs, is also likely exerting substantial adverse effects on the Helms' stag beetle population within the Wind Farm Site.

3. APPROVALS SOUGHT THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE APPLIED FOR UNDER THE WILDLIFE ACT 1953

Some specific terrestrial invertebrates (including Helms' stag beetles) and most lizards (including tussock skink and Tautuku gecko) are absolutely protected under the Wildlife Act. It is an offence to, among other matters, disturb, capture, or handle protected wildlife unless a Wildlife Act Authorisation ("**WAA**") is obtained from the Department of Conservation ("**DoC**").

As outlined in Section 4 below, the construction of the Southland Wind Farm has the potential to affect lizards (tussock skink and Tautuku gecko) and Helms' stag beetle. Therefore, the proposed management measures for these species include pre-clearance salvage activities and Contact requires a WAA to undertake these activities. As such, Contact is seeking approvals required for the Project that would otherwise be applied for under the Wildlife Act to handle, salvage and relocate lizards (tussock skink and Tautuku gecko) and Helms' stag beetle at the Wind Farm Site. The proposed salvage and relocation activities for these species are described in detail in the LMP and SBMP and summarised in Section 5 below.

In addition, although green skink and herbfield skink have not been identified within the Wind Farm Site in any of the surveys completed, Wildlands (2025) consider that it is possible green skink and herbfield skink may be present within the Wind Farm Site. Therefore, as a precaution, Contact is seeking wildlife approvals to handle, salvage and relocate green skink and herbfield skink in the event they are found within the Wind Farm Site during construction. The LMP includes details of the incidental discovery protocol for salvage and relocation of green skink and herbfield skink in the event they are discovered within the Project Footprint during construction, and these are summarised in Section 5 below.

4. ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF EFFECTS

A complete assessment of the actual and potential effects of the Project on wildlife is provided in Wildlands (2025), Kessels and Davidson-Watts (2025), Ryder and Goldsmith

(2025), and summarised in Section 5 of **Part B** of these application documents.[2] The sections below describe the potential effects of the Project on the species specific to this application for wildlife approvals and the proposed management measures that Contact will implement to avoid, remedy, mitigate, offset and compensate for these effects.

4.1 LIZARDS

4.1.1 Potential Effects of the Project on Lizards

Potential effects of the Project on lizard populations (in particular, tussock skink and Tautuku gecko, which have been identified at the Wind Farm Site) primarily relate to the loss of habitat and reduced habitat connectivity. Wildlands (2025) consider direct effects such as accidental injury and/or death and disturbance from earthworks are likely to have the most significant impact. Other identified effects include:

- Disturbance to lizards during earthworks;
- Loss of indigenous lizard habitat through road widening and construction, and turbine construction;
- Fragmentation of lizard habitats form the creation of new roads and turbine platforms; and
- Ongoing disturbance (vehicle strikes, human activity during turbine maintenance).

Tautuku gecko present in scrub and shrubland will be vulnerable to these effects, however, it is noted that most Tautuku gecko habitat within the Wind Farm Site will be avoided.

Construction activities in rough grassland, such as vehicle use or material storage, may adversely affect tussock skink. Although the total area of vegetation clearance is low compared to the size of indigenous habitat outside of the Project Footprint, loss of habitat or death/injury to lizards may still occur in the absence of the implementation of mitigation measures.

4.1.2 Proposed Avoidance, Remediation and Mitigation Measures

Key measures that have been implemented to avoid impacts on lizards include the refinement of the wind farm footprint to avoid impacts on high value habitat to the greatest extent practicable. In addition, vegetation clearance protocols and seasonal constraints on vegetation clearance activities will be implemented in accordance with the Vegetation Management Plan ("**VMP**"). This requires that vegetation clearance activities can only occur

[2] Not all of these species are protected wildlife for the purposes of the Wildlife Act.

within areas of identified lizard habitat during the lizard's active season (November – April) following the salvage/mitigation activities described below.

Further efforts to reduce the impact of the Project Footprint on tussock skink and Tautuku gecko habitats will be implemented during detailed design to minimise the effects of the Project on the identified habitats of these species where possible. Cut vegetation will be retained and placed on the edges or within existing Tautuku gecko habitat where it is practicable to do so to minimise the effects of fragmentation.

The majority of lizard habitat within the Wind Farm Site will be avoided; however, it is not possible to completely avoid all habitat due to topography and proximity to other proposed wind turbine locations (for example, identified tussock skink habitat near MAT-9 and MAT-10). Therefore, in order to mitigate potential effects on tussock skink and Tautuku gecko at sites where these species have been found, Wildlands (2025) recommend undertaking salvage and transfer of these lizard species to enhanced release sites. Pre-clearance checks will also be undertaken at low density tussock skink sites. In addition, pre-clearance checks and supervised vegetation clearance will be undertaken at sites where Tautuku gecko have been identified. Details of these management methods are set out in the LMP (included in **Part J** to these application documents).

Two dedicated release sites will be established for the relocation of tussock skink, one on Jedburgh Station adjacent to the wind farm access road between JED-28 and JED-29, and one on Matariki Forest, within the area referred to as the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area. The Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area is an approximate 8ha area that is part of the broader management of residual effects for the Project (described further below). An ungulate exclusion fence will be constructed around this area and maintained for the life of the Southland Wind Farm (required by Condition EC51).

In addition, one release site will be established for the relocation of Tautuku gecko south of JED-21. A Gecko Soft Release Pen will be constructed at this site, which is also located within the 245ha Jedburgh Station Ecological Enhancement Area (described further below).

The lizard release sites are identified in **Figure LMP-03**. Contact will implement targeted predator control and habitat enhancement at these sites, in accordance with the methods outlined in the LMP and HREP. The proposed salvage and transfer activities are described in more detail in Section 5 below.

Contact will also implement an incidental discovery protocol in accordance with the LMP in the event any lizard (including herbfield skink and green skink) is discovered during vegetation clearance activities. In the event herbfield skink is discovered, salvage and

transfer of herbfield skink will be undertaken in accordance with the protocol outlined in the LMP.

In the event of the discovery of green skink during pre-clearance checks, all works within a 50m buffer zone will cease immediately and Contact will determine whether complete avoidance of green skink habitat is practicable. In the event avoidance of green skink habitat is not possible, Contact will implement the green skink salvage protocol in accordance with the methods outlined in the LMP.

A smaller (approximately 0.5ha), 'leaky' fence will be established within Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area in Matariki Forest for the release of any salvaged herbfield or green skink that may potentially be salvaged at MAT-09 and MAT-10 (the key sites anticipated to have the species due to the habitat present here). If no herbfield or green skinks are detected following the completion of vegetation clearance and salvage activities at MAT-09 and MAT-10, any salvaged tussock skinks may be released into the leaky fence. This is described further in the LMP.

4.1.3 Addressing Residual Effects

Following the implementation of the management measures outlined above, Wildlands (2025) considers residual adverse effects on lizards remain. Residual adverse effects of the Project on lizards will be appropriately offset and compensated for with the comprehensive ecological offsetting and compensation measures Contact is proposing to implement as part of the Project, described in detail in Wildlands (2025) and MacGibbon (2025) (included in **Part H** to these application documents). These measures will primarily be managed in accordance with the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Management Plan ("**HREP**") and are required to be implemented by the proposed consent conditions (refer to **Part I**). Of particular relevance to lizards, this will include:

- The establishment of an approximately 8ha skink enhancement site within Matariki Forest (referred to as the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area and identified on **Figure Terrestrial Ecology-3c (Part G)**). Contact will construct an ungulate exclusion fence around this area to protect skinks from browsing ungulates. Within this area feral deer and pigs will be eradicated, ground-based control of rats and mice and pest plant control will be carried out. This area is currently comprised of degraded copper tussock vegetation and Contact will therefore also undertake enrichment planting within this area;
- The establishment of an approximate 245ha area of mānuka forest and scrub on Jedburgh Station, referred to as 'the Jedburgh Station Ecological Enhancement Area', which will be fenced to eradicate feral deer and pigs and exclude stock (refer to **Figure**

Terrestrial Ecology-3B (Part G)). Enhancement planting and aerial pest control will be undertaken throughout the area to provide floristic diversity and habitat resources for indigenous fauna, including lizards. The temporary Gecko Soft Release Pen will also be established within this area, and this will be subject to targeted control of mice;

- Targeted ground-based predator control (minimum of 2 devices per hectare) across a 55ha area on the Jedburgh Plateau, designated as 'the Plateau Fauna Enhancement Area' for the life of the operation of the Southland Wind Farm, which will provide benefits for fauna, including lizards, present within this area;
- As additional compensation within the release sites that will be used for the relocation of any salvaged skink, Contact will undertake:
    - Targeted control of mice at both sites every three months for the first five years following the commencement of the operation of the Southland Wind Farm. That will complement the broader pest control programme to provide an opportunity for relocated lizards to establish;
    - Pest plant control within the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area for a 10-year period;
    - Habitat enhancement within the release sites through the transfer of woody debris and logs, as well as enhancement planting; and
- To compensate for any residual effects of Tautuku gecko, Contact will provide a research institution or environmental organisation a payment of $30,000 for research or management of Tautuku gecko.

In addition, whilst green skink have not been found within the Wind Farm Site in any of the surveys completed to date, Wildlands (2025) has recommended additional compensation measures in the event one or more green skink is found during construction of the Project. This will trigger the requirement to establish a minimum 2ha Green Skink Protection Area at an appropriate location of a known green skink population, including the construction of a predator exclusion fence and maintenance of the fence for the life of the Project and undertaking predator control within the protection area. This is required by the proposed consent conditions (included in **Part I**).

4.2 HELMS' STAG BEETLE

A summary of the potential effects of the Project on Helms' stag beetle and proposed management measures is provided below.

4.2.1 Potential Effects of the Project on Helms' Stag Beetle

Wildlands (2025) has identified the following potential effects of the Project on Helms' stag beetle:

- Loss of Helms' stag beetle habitat associated with the vegetation clearance required for the construction of the Project;
- Fragmentation of Helms' stag beetle habitat;
- Disturbance, death, injury and displacement during the construction of the Project, including from the clearance of rotting wood, leaf litter, tussock and woody plants, primarily in the forest and tussock where Helms' stag beetle has been found;
- Acute disturbance during development – any work that continues after dark during construction of the Project may disturb active adult Helms' stag beetle. Dust and vibration, including from traffic, may affect behaviour and communication and increase disease and mortality; and
- Increased risk of predation – Helms' stag beetles are highly vulnerable to predation by a range of pest mammals, primarily rats, and, as noted above, predation by introduced mammals is likely having a significant impact on the Helms' stag beetle population within the Wind Farm Site. The construction of roads within the Wind Farm Site has the potential to increase mammal movement, and therefore, increase predation pressure on Helms' stag beetle.

4.2.2 Proposed Avoidance, Remediation and Mitigation Measures

Avoidance and minimisation of the potential effects of the Project on Helms' stag beetles has primarily been achieved through the redesign of the Project Footprint. Compared with the larger area of the Wind Farm Site, the relatively small Project Footprint means that habitat throughout much of the Wind Farm Site will remain intact. The wind farm layout has been re-designed to avoid high-quality Helms' stag beetle habitat to the greatest extent practicable, including by restricting much of the development to the existing farm tracks, circumnavigating forest habitat, instead of creating new tracks through it. This has reduced the amount of vegetation that will need to be cleared for the construction of the Project, and therefore, minimised the resulting loss and fragmentation of habitat. The width of the proposed access roads has also been minimised to retain large patches of contiguous habitat to the extent practicable.

Where clearance of habitat cannot be avoided in areas where Helms' stag beetle have been confirmed within the Wind Farm Site, the vegetation clearance protocols set out in the VMP will be implemented to further mitigate any potential effects on this habitat to the greatest

extent practicable during construction. Where woody vegetation or fallen wood is to be cleared, the debris will be stacked within the release sites (the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area and the Jedburgh Station Ecological Enhancement Area), where practicable, to allow Helms' stag beetle to transfer to the new habitat. This is a type of relocation, and as entire micro-communities associated with the vegetation are involved and moved together.

In areas where Helms' stag beetle populations have been identified and where vegetation is scheduled to be cleared (based on the results of the surveys completed, described above), reasonable efforts will be undertaken to salvage adult Helms' stag beetles prior to clearance and relocate them to suitable habitat within the release sites. This will be undertaken by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person in accordance with the WAA for which approval is being sought in this application and the SBMP. The salvage and relocation protocols are described further in Section 5 below.

4.2.3 Addressing Residual Effects

It is anticipated that following the implementation of the avoidance, remediation and mitigation measures outlined above, there may be residual effects of the Southland Wind Farm Project on Helms' stag beetle. In order to address these effects, Contact is proposing to implement offsetting and compensation measures. As noted above, these proposed measures form part of the wider ecological offsetting and compensation package that Contact is proposing to implement to address the residual ecological effects associated with the Project and this is described in detail in Wildlands (2025) and MacGibbon (2025). These areas and outcomes will be secured and implemented through the proposed conditions of consent (included in **Part I** of these application documents) and associated ecological management plans, in particular the TIMP (including SBMP) and HREP (a draft version of which is included in **Part J** of these application documents). The measures that will benefit Helms' stag beetles and will include:

- Approximately 8.7ha of farm tracks will be revegetated within 'mānuka forest and scrub' inside the fenced Jedburgh Station Ecological Enhancement Area. This action will increase overall habitat for invertebrates, as well as enhance connectivity between populations;
- The establishment of an approximate 245ha area of mānuka forest and scrub on Jedburgh Station, referred to as 'the Jedburgh Station Ecological Enhancement Area' which will be fenced to eradicate feral deer and pigs and exclude stock (refer to **Figure Terrestrial Ecology-3b (Part G)**). Enhancement planting and aerial pest control will be undertaken throughout the area to provide floristic diversity and habitat resources for

indigenous fauna. These actions, combined with pest animal control, will benefit many notable species including Helms' stag beetle;

- Aerial control of introduced mammalian predators, including rats and possums, across indigenous vegetation and habitats on 1,400ha of Jedburgh Station, referred to as 'the Jedburgh Station Pest Control Area', no less than every three years from the commencement of the construction of the Southland Wind Farm. Ground-based predator control alongside all wind farm roads within this area will also be undertaken for the duration of the operation of the Southland Wind Farm. This will increase the carrying capacity of the available habitat for Helms' stag beetle populations within the Wind Farm Site. Reducing predator numbers will also reduce overall Helms' stag beetle mortality and injury from predation;
- Planting will be carried out using a mixture of copper tussock and divaricating shrub species adjacent to roads and wind turbines on the Jedburgh Plateau. These eight relatively small, discrete planting areas (total area of approximately 1.6ha) will provide habitat and connectivity for invertebrates (including Helms' stag beetle) between existing areas of indigenous shrubland;
- Stacking woody vegetation in appropriate roadside habitat on-site; and
- To compensate for any residual adverse effects on notable invertebrates (including Helms' stag beetles), a one-off payment of $30,000 will be made by Contact to a research institution to support a grant for research into developing best practices for translocating notable indigenous invertebrates.

5. SALVAGE AND TRANSFER ACTIVITIES

As outlined in Section 3, Contact is seeking wildlife approvals to handle, salvage and relocate lizards (tussock skink and Tautuku gecko, and if discovered during the pre-clearance checks, green skink and herbfield skink) and Helms' stag beetle at the Wind Farm Site in order to implement the proposed management measures for these species. The proposed salvage and transfer activities for which these approvals relate to are described in detail in the LMP and SBMP and summarised below.

5.1 TUSSOCK SKINK

Salvage and relocation operations of tussock skink will be undertaken by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person in accordance with the LMP at the sites identified in the LMP. Pre-clearance checks will also be undertaken at additional sites where low tussock skink numbers have been identified, as set out in the LMP and identified in **Figures LMP-2a and LMP-2b (Part G)**.

Live-capture lizard traps will be placed throughout the identified areas of tussock skink habitat at each impact site prior to the commencement of vegetation clearance activities within the identified areas. Traps will be a mix of funnel or pitfall traps. Once active, the traps will be checked daily for a minimum of seven consecutive days.

All captured tussock skink will be temporarily placed in clean individual lizard cloth bags, and stored in ventilated, hard-sided containers, in full shade. A small amount of damp leaf litter or vegetation from the capture site will be placed inside the cloth bags with the tussock skink to provide cover and prevent dehydration. Any tussock skink captured will be handled and held in accordance with best practice and released as soon as practical to the pre-selected tussock skink release areas. Tussock skinks will be released within five hours of capture into the pre-selected release sites. Tussock skinks will be released into woody debris, or under rocks within these areas.

As noted above, two release sites have been identified for tussock skinks, one at Matariki Forest (within the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area) and one on Jedburgh Station (identified on **Figure LMP-3 (Part G)**). These release sites have been chosen based on habitat quality, existing tussock skink values, and the ability to improve the sites to increase capacity for transferred lizards within the release area. These sites were identified in accordance with the guidance provided by DoC.[3] The Jedburgh Station release site is adjacent to the road access between JED-28 and JED-29, where tussock skinks have been previously captured. The Matariki Forest release site will be situated in the copper tussock-dominant scrub between MAT-9 and MAT-10, also where tussock skinks have been identified in the surveys completed.

The release site areas will be managed in accordance with the measures set out in the LMP and HREP. This will include the removal of livestock from the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area, ungulate control, control of pest plant species and undertaking targeted control of mice. Pest control within the release sites will commence prior to the relocation of skinks within the release sites.

The release sites will be monitored in accordance with the methods set out in the LMP. A baseline population survey at the release sites will be undertaken prior to release.

5.2 TAUTUKU GECKO

Pre-clearance checks will be undertaken at sites where Tautuku gecko have been identified and in areas of identified Tautuku gecko habitat in accordance with the methods set out in

[3] Department of Conservation 2019: Key Principles for Lizard Salvage and Transfer in New Zealand. Lizard Technical Advisory Group. Department of Conservation, Wellington.

the LMP. Salvage and relocation of any Tautuku gecko found will be undertaken by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person. These methods are summarised below.

Additional tree-mounted Artificial Cover Objects ("**TACOs**") will be installed on trees which have sufficient sunlight and/or with proximity to contiguous canopy cover at the sites where pre-clearance checks are required (as identified in **Figures LMP-2a and LMP-2b (Part G)**) to ensure that all representative habitats receive sufficient search effort during pre-clearance checks. These will be installed a minimum of three months prior to the commencement of pre-clearance checks to allow any geckos sufficient time to habituate to the covers. The installed TACOs will be checked six times between three and six weeks prior to the commencement of vegetation clearance. Manual searches of trees will also be undertaken concurrently, where cavities and loose bark will be checked and stripped from mānuka trees proposed for clearance. Tautuku gecko salvaged will be transported in the same way as tussock skinks, described above.

In addition, at sites where Tautuku geckos have been detected (during previous surveys or pre-clearance checks), manual clearance of Tautuku gecko habitat will occur. This will involve searching all felled tree branches and trunks and foliage for Tautuku geckos. Where possible, loose branches with foliage attached will be hung in or placed in trees outside of the impact area to allow for any lizards to move freely between habitats. All other woody material will be stacked and left to provide additional refugia for geckos in the surrounding area. All felled material will be placed outside of the Project Footprint to prevent lizards dispersing back into the construction area during works. Any Tautuku geckos captured will be released into the Gecko Soft Release Pen following the completion of vegetation clearance for the day.

As mentioned in Section 4, a Gecko Soft Release Pen will be constructed within mānuka forest and scrub south of JED-21, prior to the commencement of vegetation clearance activities. This site is located within the 245ha Jedburgh Station Ecological Enhancement Area. TACOs will be set up within the soft release pen for safe release of Tautuku gecko. The soft release pen will be constructed 6-12 months prior to salvage and relocation of lizards. Pest control will be undertaken in the Gecko Soft Release Pen prior to the relocation of Tautuku geckos into this area in accordance with the methods outlined in the LMP.

If more than 20 Tautuku gecko are salvaged, monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with the methods outlined in the LMP.

5.3 HERBFIELD SKINK AND GREEN SKINK

In the event herbfield skink is discovered during pre-clearance checks, salvage or vegetation clearance activities, salvage and transfer of herbfield skink will be undertaken in

accordance with the tussock skink salvage and relocation protocol, outlined above. Herbfield skink will be released into the leaky fence area within the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area in Matariki Forest.

In the event green skink is discovered within the Project Footprint during pre-clearance checks or salvage, every effort will be made by Contact to avoid the identified areas of green skink habitat. Salvage and transfer of green skink will only be considered if it is not possible to completely avoid green skink habitat, and following consultation with DoC. If it is not possible to completely avoid green skink habitat, green skink will be salvaged and transferred into the leaky fence area in the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area in Matariki Forest in accordance with the protocols outlined in the LMP. The leaky fence area will remain in place for the life of the Project if any green skink are salvaged and released into this area.

5.4 HELMS' STAG BEETLE

The pre-clearance salvage and relocation protocol is outlined in the SBMP (included in the TIMP included in **Part J** to these application documents). This will be undertaken by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person. These measures have been prepared in accordance with best practice and will occur at the sites where Helms' stag beetles have been identified during the baseline surveys (refer to **Figures SBMP-2a and SBMP-2b (Part G)**) as follows:

- Near JED-05 and JED-06, which contains the largest known on-site population;
- Between JED-21 and JED-22, where a dead Helms' stag beetle was found; and
- Between MAT-15 and MAT-16, identified as most optimal habitat in recent surveys.

This will involve the use of live-capture pitfall traps and night searching at these sites. Pitfall traps will be checked daily for a minimum of seven consecutive days. Night searches will also be conducted in each salvage area. Each area will be walked through after dusk, using headlamps to spot and salvage any active Helms' stag beetles.

Vegetation clearance activities can commence immediately or up to 10 days following the completion of the pre-clearance salvage activities. Supervision of vegetation clearance is only required where:

- Cleared vegetation is removed from areas where stag beetle populations have been confirmed; and

> The vegetation is not to be stacked in other suitable Helms' stag beetle habitat (such as the Jedburgh Station Ecological Enhancement Area and Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area).

All captured Helms' stag beetles will be temporarily placed in clean individual containers, in cool, full shade. A small amount of damp leaf litter or vegetation from the capture site will be placed inside the containers with the beetles to provide cover and prevent dehydration. Any beetles captured will be handled and held carefully and as little as possible. All individuals salvaged will be released as soon as practicable (and within 12 hours) to the pre-selected species-specific release area.

Two Helms' stag beetle release sites have been identified, one within Jedburgh Station, within the Jedburgh Station Ecological Enhancement Area, and one with Matariki Forest, within the Copper Tussock Enhancement and Skink Protection Area (identified on **Figures SBMP-2a and SBMP-2b (Part G)**). These release sites will be enhanced so that their carrying capacity for Helms' stag beetle will be increased (primarily by predator control, ungulate exclusion, and planting to restore indigenous forest diversity).

In addition, Contact will implement an incidental discovery protocol in accordance with the methods set out in the SBMP.

If more than 20 Helms' stag beetles are salvaged and translocated, monitoring of relocated Helms' stag beetles will be undertaken in accordance with the methods outlined in the TIMP (refer to Part C).

6. CONDITIONS

Clause 6(1) of Schedule 7 of the FTAA outlines that a Panel may set any conditions on a wildlife approval that the Panel considers necessary to manage the effects of the activity on protected wildlife. However:

> The conditions must be no more onerous than necessary to address the purpose for which they are set; and

> The Panel must give greatest weight to the purpose of the FTAA.

Clause 6(2) of Schedule 7 of the FTAA states that in setting any condition, the Panel must:

> Consider whether the condition would avoid, minimise, or remedy any impacts on protected wildlife that is to be covered by the approval;

- Where more than minor residual impacts on protected wildlife cannot be avoided, minimised, or remedied, ensure that they are offset or compensated for where possible and appropriate; and
- Take into account, as the case may be, the New Zealand Threat Classification System or any relevant international conservation agreement that may apply in respect of the protected wildlife that is to be covered by the approval.

The proposed conditions for the approvals sought are included in **Part I** to these application documents. Contact has prepared a set of proposed conditions for the wildlife approvals sought in this application document (included in **Part I** to these application documents). These conditions include the standard terms of WAAs, as well as conditions specific to the activities relevant to this application.

In addition, Contact has prepared a robust set of consent conditions that will appropriately implement the proposed effects management measures outlined above, including the measures to avoid, remedy, mitigate, offset and compensate for effects of the Project on lizards and invertebrates (including Helms' stag beetle). These conditions have been prepared in consultation with DoC. The conditions have been drafted in accordance with best practice principles, such that they are enforceable and avoid any subsequent delegation of decision-making functions. Where management plans are required to give effect to conditions, the relevant conditions include a clear statement of the objectives that are required to be met by those plans. The conditions include set targets, including in relation to the proposed predator control measures, and this will ensure the habitat restoration and enhancement measures will be achieved.

7. CONSULTATION

A summary of the consultation undertaken in respect of this application for wildlife approvals is provided below.

7.1 DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Contact had previously applied for WAAs for lizards and Helms' stag beetle from DoC during the Covid Fast-track consenting process. This application largely reflects the previous application made, including the advice received from DoC in regard to the information required in the application. The previous application made is still being processed by DoC and will be withdrawn following the lodgement of this substantive application. Contact has also consulted with DoC specifically in relation to this application for wildlife approvals being made under the FTAA, including prior to lodging the referral application for this Project in accordance with section 11 of the FTAA.

7.2 MANA WHENUA

Contact has been consulting closely with representatives of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Papatipu Rūnaka ki Murihiku in relation to the Project, including via Te Ao Marama Incorporated ("**TAMI**") (who represents Murihiku Rūnaka by providing resource management engagement, taiao and cultural advice in RMA and other processes) in relation to this application for wildlife approvals. At a substantive level, Contact has a long history of engagement with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Papatipu Rūnaka ki Murihiku on the Southland Wind Farm Project throughout Covid Fast-track consenting process. This engagement has informed the Project, including the proposed management of effects and consent conditions. In addition, this engagement resulted in agreement between Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Papatipu Rūnaka ki Murihiku and Contact, both in relation to conditions for the Project, and (via a confidential agreement) in relation to matters that cannot be mitigated by way of consent conditions. TAMI on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Papatipu Rūnaka ki Murihiku have confirmed that the wildlife approvals sought are appropriate and they did not raise any issues in regard to the proposed activities that are the subject of this application. They are supportive of the further fauna surveys that have taken place on site which have enabled the management measures to be refined by identifying where the fauna have been, or are likely to be found, including Helms' stag beetle and Tautuku gecko.

8. STATUTORY ASSESSMENT

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In assessing applications, Panels are to give the greatest weight to the purpose of the FTAA, which is "*to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional and national benefits*". Section 81(4) of the FTAA states that, when taking into account the purpose of the FTAA, the Panel must consider the extent of the Project's regional or national benefits. Where a substantive application is made the approval process set out in the FTAA applies instead of the processes provided for under other legislation.[4]

An assessment of the provisions relevant to this application for a wildlife approval is provided in the sections below.

[4] Section 40 of the FTAA.

8.2 PURPOSE OF THE FTAA

In accordance with clause 5(a) of Schedule 7 of the FTAA, assessment of this application for wildlife approvals must take into account, and give the greatest weight to, the purpose of the FTAA. The alignment of the Project with the purpose of the FTAA is discussed in detail in Section 4 of **Part A** of these application documents. However, for completeness, it is noted that the Project is an infrastructure project that will have significant regional and national benefits. The Southland Wind Farm will provide a nationally significant source of renewable electricity and will contribute to achieving New Zealand's decarbonisation goals.

The Project will involve the unavoidable clearance of vegetation, some of which has been identified as habitat (or potential habitat) for Helms' stag beetles, tussock skink and Tautuku gecko. The wildlife approvals sought in this application document are required to enable the implementation of the mitigation measures recommended by Wildlands (2025), in particular, the proposed salvage and relocation measures to minimise the potential effects of the Project on these species associated with vegetation clearance. As such, the wildlife approvals sought will enable these activities to be carried out and ensure these activities are undertaken in an appropriate way, in accordance with best practice and the proposed management plans and conditions of the WAA. This will contribute to enabling the construction of the Project, and therefore, enable the significant benefits of the Project to be realised, and as such, is consistent with the purpose of the FTAA.

8.3 PURPOSE OF THE WILDLIFE ACT

Clause 5(b) of Schedule 7 of the FTAA requires the Panel to take into account the purpose of the Wildlife Act and the effects of the Project on the protected wildlife that is to be covered by the approval. The Wildlife Act has a protective purpose. Protection is a part of the Wildlife Act's overarching purpose of regulating human interactions with wildlife. The Wildlife Act protects most native and introduced species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, and regulates many human interactions with these species. The Wildlife Act's protective purpose is not absolute. Recent legislative amendments have clarified that a section 53 authority may, in certain circumstances, be granted for killing of wildlife that is incidental (i.e. not directly intended, but unavoidable and foreseeable) to carrying out an otherwise lawful activity. Those circumstances are where the overall effect of the authority would be consistent with the protection of populations of wildlife and individual wildlife. The focus is on protecting individual wildlife and the viability of populations of wildlife as far as practicable.[5]

[5] Sections 53A-53C, Wildlife Act 1953.

As set out throughout this application document, Contact is proposing to translocate native fauna (Helms' stag beetles, tussock skink and Tautuku gecko) from identified areas of habitat that will be affected by vegetation / habitat clearance required for the construction of the Project and relocate them to areas outside the Project Footprint. Salvage will be undertaken in accordance with the methods set out in the associated management plans by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person. These management measures are in accordance with the recommendations outlined in Wildlands (2025) and are being proposed to mitigate the potential effects of the Project on these species. Salvage and relocation will mitigate against the potential for incidental injury or death. Individual Helms' stag beetles, tussock skink and Tautuku gecko, and the viability of their populations, will be protected as far as practicable.

In addition, Contact is proposing to significantly improve the habitat values of those areas to be utilised as host locations for those animals that are relocated through the implementation of a number of habitat restoration and enhancement measures, as well as predator control (as summarised in Section 4 of this application document). Given these measures it is considered that the required translocation of fauna is consistent with the intent of the Wildlife Act.

8.4 INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO THE PROTECTED WILDLIFE THAT IS TO BE COVERED BY THE APPROVAL

Clause 5(c) of Schedule 7 of the FTAA requires the Panel to take into account information and requirements relating to the protected wildlife that is to be covered by the approval (including, as the case may be, in the New Zealand Threat Classification System or any relevant international conservation agreement).

The protected wildlife species that are to be covered by the wildlife approval sought in this application are tussock skink (At Risk – Declining), Tautuku gecko (At Risk – Declining), green skink (Threatened – Nationally Critical), herbfield skink (At Risk – Declining) and Helms' stag beetles. None of these species are subject to international conservation agreements. Section 3 of the application document identifies the activities involving the protected wildlife. The methods proposed are set out in Section 5 of the application. This is also addressed in the relevant management plans included in **Part J** to these application documents.

8.5 REQUIREMENTS FOR A SUBSTANTIVE APPLICATION FOR A WILDLIFE APPROVAL

Schedule 7 (clause 2) of the FTAA sets out the information requirements for wildlife approvals. Applications for a wildlife approval must:

> Specify the purpose of the proposed activity:

The Project is fully described in Section 7 of **Part A** to these application documents. Approvals are required under the Wildlife Act to handle, salvage and relocate Helms' stag beetle and lizards during the construction of the Project, to mitigate the effects of the Project on these species. This is described in detail in Section 3, 4 and 5 of this application document.

> Identify the actions the applicant wishes to carry out involving protected wildlife and where they will be carried out (whether on or off public conservation land):

As discussed in Section 4 (assessment of effects) and Section 5 (salvage and transfer activities) of this application document, and in Wildlands (2025), Contact is proposing fauna (protected wildlife) salvage and relocation as part of the Project where vegetation / habitat clearance is required. The location of where this occurs is identified in the LMP and SBMP. This will occur within the Wind Farm Site, which is privately owned land (refer to **Part L** of these application documents) and will not be located on public conservation land.

> Include an assessment of the activity and its impacts against the purpose of the Wildlife Act:

Section 7 of **Part A** to these application documents provides a description of the Project, Section 5 of **Part B** to these application documents presents an assessment of the effects of the Project on biodiversity (including protected wildlife), and Section 5 and 6 of **Part B** to these application documents sets out the measures proposed by Contact to manage the effects of the Project on native fauna.

Of relevance to the proposed wildlife approvals sought, Section 4 of this application provides an assessment of effects of the Project on lizards and Helms' stag beetles and Section 5 of this application document sets out the proposed salvage and relocation activities required for the Project.

Section 8.3 of this application document provides an assessment of the proposed activity and its impacts against the purpose of the Wildlife Act.

> List protected wildlife species known or predicted to be in the area and, where possible, the numbers of wildlife present and numbers likely to be impacted:

This information is contained in Wildlands (2025) (in particular in Appendix 4 of this report) and Kessels and Davidson-Watts (2025) (long-tailed bats) and summarised in Section 2 of **Part B** to these application documents.

Specifically in relation to the approvals being sought in this application, tussock skink, Tautuku gecko, green skink, herbfield skink and Helms' stag beetle are protected under the Wildlife Act.

> Outline impacts on threatened, data deficient, and at-risk wildlife species (as defined in the New Zealand Threat Classification System):

This information is contained in Wildlands (2025) and Kessels and Davidson-Watts (2025) and Ryder and Goldsmith (2025). In addition, Section 5 of **Part B** to these application documents contains an assessment of effects on native fauna / wildlife species, based on the information contained in these reports.

> State how the methods proposed to be used to carry out the actions the applicant wishes to carry out involving protected wildlife that will ensure that best practice standards are met:

This information is summarised in Section 5 of this application document and described in detail in Wildlands (2025), as well as the draft Terrestrial Ecology Management Plans, in particular the LMP and TIMP (including SBMP) that are most relevant to this application for wildlife approvals, contained in **Part J** to these application documents.

> Describe the methods to be used to safely, efficiently, and humanely catch, hold, or kill the animals and identify relevant animal ethics processes:

This information is summarised in Section 5 of this application document and described in detail in Wildlands (2025), as well as the draft Terrestrial Ecology Management Plans (including the LMP and TIMP (including SBMP)) contained in **Part J** to these application documents.

> State the location or locations in which the activity will be carried out, including a map (and GPS co-ordinates if available):

This information is summarised in Section 5 of this application document and described in detail Wildlands (2025), as well as the draft Terrestrial Ecology Management Plans (including the LMP and TIMP (including SBMP)) contained in **Part J** to these application documents. **Figures LMP-2a, LMP-2b, SBMP-2a and SBMP-2b (Part G)** also identify the locations of the proposed salvage and relocation sites.

> State whether authorisation is sought to temporarily hold or relocate wildlife:

The wildlife approvals sought in this application involve the salvage (including temporarily hold) and relocation of wildlife (lizards and Helms' Stag Beetle), the methods of which are summarised in Section 5 of this application document and

described in the LMP and TIMP (including SBMP)) contained in **Part J** to these application documents.

> List all actual and potential wildlife effects (adverse or positive) of the proposed activity, including effects on the target species, other indigenous species, and the ecosystems at the site:

Section 4 of this application document contains a detailed description of the actual and potential effects of the proposed activity on wildlife (and their habitats). This is based on the information contained in Wildlands (2025).

In addition, Section 5 of **Part B** to these application documents provides a description of the actual and potential effects of the Project on wildlife, and their habitats, and this is informed by Wildlands (2025), Kessels and Davidson-Watts (2025) and Ryder and Goldsmith (2025).

> Where adverse effects are identified, state what methods will be used to avoid and minimise those effects, and any offsetting or compensation proposed to address unmitigated adverse effects (including steps taken before the project begins, such as surveying, salvaging, and relocating protected wildlife):

Section 4 of this application, the draft Terrestrial Ecology Management plans included in **Part J** to these application documents, as well as the proposed conditions contained in **Part I** to these application documents, detail how Contact is proposing to manage the actual and potential effects of the Project on wildlife. This is also addressed in Wildlands (2025) and MacGibbon (2025).

> State whether the applicant or any company director, trustee, partner, or anyone else involved with the application has been convicted of any offence under the Wildlife Act:

No company director, trustee, partner, or anyone else involved with the application has been convicted of any offence under the Wildlife Act.

> State whether the applicant or any of the company director, trustee, partner, or anyone else involved with the application has any current criminal charges under the Wildlife Act pending before a court:

The Applicant, (including the company director, trustees, partners, or anyone else involved with the application) does not have any current criminal charges pending under the Wildlife Act.

> Provide proof and details of all consultation, including with hapū or iwi, on the application specific to wildlife impacts:

Section 7 of this application document contains details of the consultation undertaken associated with the approvals sought in this application document.

> Provide any additional written expert views, advice, or opinions the applicant has obtained concerning their proposal:

Contact has commissioned several expert reports to assess the effects of the Project and to set out measures to manage the effects on wildlife, including Wildlands (2025), (included in **Part H** of these application documents).

8.6 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION FOR WILDLIFE APPROVAL

For the purposes of section 81 of the FTAA, when considering an application for a wildlife approval, including conditions, the panel must take into account, giving the greatest weight to the purpose of the FTAA:

> The purpose of the FTAA:

This is addressed in Section 8.2 of this application document.

> The purpose of the Wildlife Act 1953 and the effects of the project on the protected wildlife that is to be covered by the approval:

This is addressed in Section 8.3 of this application document.

> Information and requirements relating to the protected wildlife that is to be covered by the approval (including, as the case may be, in the New Zealand Threat Classification System or any relevant international conservation agreement):

This is addressed in Sections 2 and 8.4 of this application document and in Wildlands (2025).

9. CONCLUSION

Contact is seeking wildlife approvals to provide for the necessary salvage and relocation activities of lizards and Helms' stag beetles within the Wind Farm Site during construction of the Southland Wind Farm Project. This application document provides a description of the existing values of these species within the Wind Farm Site and identifies the potential effects of the Project on these values. In accordance with the recommendations of Wildlands (2025), Contact is proposing to salvage and relocate lizards and Helms' stag beetles at identified areas of habitat within the Wind Farm Site to mitigate the effects of the Project on these species. Contact will engage a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person to implement salvage and relocation activities in accordance with the methods outlined in the

LMP and SBMP (included in the TIMP). The proposed activities have been assessed as being consistent with the purpose of the FTAA and Wildlife Act, noting that the proposed activities for which wildlife approvals are sought will enable the development of the nationally significant Southland Wind Farm.