



31 October 2025

To whom it may concern

### **Clutha Pumped Hydro Consortium – Fast Track Consent Application**

I am currently Mayor of Invercargill, but for some years I was Managing Director of Comalco New Zealand which operates the Tiwai Aluminium Smelter.

During my tenure with Comalco, I had many occasions to debate and discuss the electricity supply system, and particularly its reliability and security of supply to meet the smelter's unique demand.

Over this period, I became very familiar with the hydrology risks that the New Zealand power system was prone to. On one occasion (2001) Meridian Energy had to request the smelter to close a potline at considerable disruption to the aluminium production process.

After my time at the smelter, I became involved in Southland based wind farms.

From a strategic perspective, a reliable and secure (and low cost) electricity supply is fundamental to strong economic growth and to attract foreign direct investment. New Zealand relies upon the Huntly thermal power station and a large stockpile of coal to cover the dry sequences that affect hydro electricity output. It's clear to me that this cannot continue indefinitely as the Huntly power station is reaching the end of its life. There appears to be no obvious alternative solution to the large quantity of electricity required to make up for extreme dry sequences. I understand a shortfall of 15% of annual hydro production can occur over six months during such sequences.

I am also of the view that the pricing to firm or hedge intermittent renewables such as wind and solar is central to the viability of these lower cost new sources of generation. This is currently constrained both by a declining gas supply and by the hydro flexibility being entirely held by the current four major Gentailers who themselves want to build their market share in new renewables. These realities push up the cost of new projects and therefore electricity prices. The volatility also increases risk and costs for all involved.

Southland has many large low-cost wind projects of interest to large global investors associated with economic development opportunities in this area. These investors simply are unable to obtain secure and affordable intermittency support from existing players to enable viability for their billion-dollar investments.

This letter of support is provided with the above context and sharp experience of running a 365 day continuous aluminium smelting operation in the face of uncertain power supply, and the challenges I have encountered in wind power projects.

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Therefore, I strongly support Clutha Pumped Hydro Consortium application for the fast-track consent process to enable the Onslow pumped hydro scheme to be consented. It will be an intergenerational asset with a life well beyond that which can be achieved with fossil fuels. While it may be contentious and costly, the same can be said of many other projects that now are foundational to the New Zealand economy. Many projects like Benmore, Manapouri and Clyde could also be said to be in this category and yet today they are extraordinary assets for the country.

If the Onslow project can replace the proposed import of LNG, retain and preserve New Zealand's electricity sovereignty and provide electricity security this will be an enormous strategic advantage to New Zealand. It will also underpin Invercargill and Southland growth by removing a significant risk factor for investors.

I wholeheartedly support the Consortium to deliver a privately developed project.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Campbell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Campbell  
**Mayor**

10 October 2025

**Re: Clutha Pumped Hydro Consortium's application for a Fast-track consent**

To whom it may concern,

I am Managing Director and a founder of Lodestone Energy Limited. In this capacity, I am a keen advocate for the shift to 100% renewable energy in New Zealand. Lodestone is a privately-funded, New Zealand company who has been the most active participant in utility-scale solar generation development and energy storage solutions since 2019. We are keenly interested in long-term energy storage solutions that protect the economy and increase the probability of a fully renewable energy transition.

This letter of support is informed by a great deal of history. I have been be a participant in the evolution of energy and energy storage solutions in New Zealand, Australian, US and Canada since the 1980s. I have led the development and operation coal, wind, gas, cogeneration and solar power plants. I have been integrally involved in deregulated market rule making in these markets since 1992, and led the development of New Zealand's first two independent, gas-fired power plants (Southdown and TCC), and have just announced our sixth utility-scale solar farm.

Over this time, I have had the opportunity to deeply analyse the interplay between the various energy sources and consumer demand, and while new technology in short-term BESS storage has become viable, long duration storage is still the 'achilles heal' of the market and requires urgent attention. In my view, a long-term pumped storage solution is of equal importance to importation of LNG, and should be pursued at pace.

To that end, please accept this letter of support for Dr. Keith Turner and his efforts to advance pumped hydro at Lake Onslow. I enthusiastically support his efforts, including his application to advance consenting via the Fast-track process.

If you require any further information that could assist in your determination, I would be more than happy to contribute as required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Holden".

Gary Holden

*Managing Director, Lodestone Energy Limited*

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**From:** s 9(2)(a) s 9(2)(a)  
**Date:** 10 September 2025 at 10:22:26 AM NZST  
**To:** Ken Smales s 9(2)(a)  
**Subject:** Re: Letter of support request

To whom it may concern

We have been approached by Ken Smales on behalf of the Clutha Pumped Hydro

Consortium and have had a number of discussions with him.

We have at this stage chosen not to be part of the Consortium. We may revisit

that in the future.

Our farm is affected by the proposed raising of the lake. A substantial part of the

tunnel and the powerhouse and the pond at the Clutha are also proposed to be

located on our land.

Negotiations about those matters are for the future, but we write this letter to

signal our in-principal support for this important project.

Regards

s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a)

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** s 9(2)(a) s 9(2)(a)

**Date:** 20 September 2025 at 8:39:34 PM NZST

**To:** Ken Smale s 9(2)(a) s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a) s 9(2)(a) s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a) s 9(2)(a)

**Subject:** Letter of support

Hi Please find attached

Thanks s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a)



To whom it may concern

We have been approached by Ken Smales on behalf of the Clutha Pumped Hydro Consortium and have had several discussions with him.

Our farm is affected by the proposed raising of the lake.

The large storage Dam and possibly the intakes could also be located on our land.

Negotiations about those matters are ongoing and we write this letter to signal our in-principal support for this important renewable energy project to secure New Zealand's electricity security.

s 9(2)(a)



s 9(2)(a)

