Outlook

Invitation to comment on Fast-track referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – FTAA-2606-1255

From Infrastructure Portfolio <Infrastructure.Portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>

Date Mon 10/08/2026 9:11 AM

To Nicola Willis (MIN) <N.Willis@ministers.govt.nz>; Shane Jones (MIN) <S.Jones@ministers.govt.nz>; Nicola Grigg (MIN) <N.Grigg@ministers.govt.nz>; Tama Potaka (MIN) <T.Potaka@ministers.govt.nz>; Paul Goldsmith (MIN) <P.Goldsmith@ministers.govt.nz>; Simeon Brown (MIN) <S.Brown@ministers.govt.nz>; Simon Watts (MIN) <S.Watts@ministers.govt.nz>

Cc FTAreferrals <FTAreferrals@mfe.govt.nz>

1 attachment (56 KB)

Comments Form for Invited Ministers.docx;

To:

- Minister for Economic Growth
- Minister for Regional Development
- Minister for the Environment
- Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti
- Minister for Māori Development
- Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Minister for Energy
- Minister of Climate Change

Dear Ministers,

Hon Chris Bishop, the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister), has asked for me to write to you on his behalf.

The Minister has received an application from Meridian Energy Limited for referral of the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track process (application reference FTAA- 2606-1255).

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

Invitation to comment on referral application

I write in accordance with section 17 of the Act to invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. I have provided summary details of the project below.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received by **return email** within **15 working days** of receipt of this email, being **31 August 2026**. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Any comments submitted will contribute to the Minister's decision on whether to accept the referral application and to refer the project.

If you do not wish to provide comments, please let us know as soon as possible so we can proceed with processing the application without delay.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the Applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Process

The application documents are accessible through the Fast-track portal. Please note that application documents may contain commercially sensitivity information and should not be shared widely. If you haven't used the portal before, you can request access by emailing ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz. Once you are registered and have accepted the terms and conditions, you will receive a link to view the documents. Existing users will be able to see application documents via the request when logging into the portal. Should you need for your agency to provide any supplementary information, a nominated person can be provided access to the portal, access can be requested by emailing ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz.

To submit your comments on the application, you can either provide a letter or complete the attached template for written comments and return it by replying to this email, infrastructure.portfolio@parliament.govt.nz.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this email or need assistance with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz. Further information is available at https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/.

Important Information

Please note that all comments received from Ministers invited to comment will be subject to the Official Information Act 1982. Comments received will be proactively released at the time the Minister for Infrastructure makes a referral decision, unless the Minister providing comments advises the Minister for Infrastructure's office they are to be withheld, at the time they are submitted.

If a Conflict of Interest is identified by the Minister providing comments at any stage of providing comments, please inform my office and the Cabinet Office immediately. The Cabinet Office will provide advice and, if appropriate, initiate a request to the Prime Minister to agree to a transfer of the project/portfolio invite to another Minister (a request to transfer a COI from one Minister to another can take 1-7 days).

Project summary

Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant	Meridian Energy Limited
Location	Kuratau, Waikato
Project description	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares. The project includes: a. a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW);

	b. a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; c. a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; d. sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; e. a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; f. a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; g. associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and h. groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Brett Gliddon
Chief Executive Officer
New Zealand Transport Agency - Waka Kotahi

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Brett

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(5) of the Act. You have been identified as an "any other person" for the purposes of this section, as the as the project includes effects on, and an interface with, State Highway 32. Accordingly, I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

Any written comments you provide, must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame.

Comments received will help inform the Minister and the criteria in Section 22 of the Act will guide the Minister's decision-making on whether to refer the project to the fast-track approvals process.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before

lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Cc:

Waka Kotahi - EnvironmentalPlanning@nzta.govt.nz
Nicola Foran - s 9(2)(a)
Lauren Barnett - s 9(2)(a)
Kate Bonifacio - s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Peter Chrisp
Director-General of Conservation
Department of Conservation (DOC)

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Peter

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(5) of the Act. You have been identified as an "any other person" for the purposes of this section, as the project site includes titles that refer to Part IVA of the Conservation Act 1987, and confirmation is sought as to whether any marginal strips are present within the project area. Accordingly, I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

Any written comments you provide, must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame.

Comments received will help inform the Minister and the criteria in Section 22 of the Act will guide the Minister's decision-making on whether to refer the project to the fast-track approvals process.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Cc:

Linda Kirk - s 9(2)(a)
Amelia Taaka - s 9(2)(a)
Grace Masterton - s 9(2)(a)
Team Email - fast-track@doc.govt.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Bella Takiari-Brame
Chair
The Lines Company

Email: info@thelines.co.nz

Dear Bella

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(5) of the Act. You have been identified as an "any other person" for the purposes of this section, as the project identifies existing electricity infrastructure that may require relocation to facilitate the project, and The Lines Company Limited holds an easement affecting the project area. Accordingly, I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

Any written comments you provide, must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame.

Comments received will help inform the Minister and the criteria in Section 22 of the Act will guide the Minister's decision-making on whether to refer the project to the fast-track approvals process.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Jo Mooar
Senior Corporate Counsel
Transpower New Zealand Ltd

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Jo

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(5) of the Act. You have been identified as an "any other person" for the purposes of this section, as the project proposes a connection to the National Grid. Accordingly, I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

Any written comments you provide, must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame.

Comments received will help inform the Minister and the criteria in Section 22 of the Act will guide the Minister's decision-making on whether to refer the project to the fast-track approvals process.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before

lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

CNI Iwi Holdings Trust

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-

track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Hauhungaroa 1C Incorporation
c/o Doyle & Associates

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-

track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Hauhungaroa 1D2 Incorporation
c/o Doyle & Associates

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

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If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery)

Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

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Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Hauhungaroa 2C Incorporation
c/o Asher Group Limited

Email: office@ashergroup.co.nz

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

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Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Matere Mackey-Pasene
Hauhungaroa 7 Trust
c/o Te Tumu Paeroa – Office of the Māori Trustee

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Matere

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

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If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Cc:

Resource.Management@tetumupaeroa.co.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Dean Whiting
CEO
Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

Dear Dean

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. *Section 22* of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(1)(c) of the Act (which requires the Minister to invite written comments on a referral application from the relevant administering agencies). I invite Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as the administering agency for the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

If you wish to provide written comments these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of the specified time frame.

Under section 17(3A) of the Act, any comments made by an administering agency must be **relevant** to the application and the decision on the application that the Minister is required to make under section 21.

Please note that consideration of a referral application is limited to the referral criteria and does not involve the level of detail required at the substantive application stage. Comments should therefore be confined to matters relevant to the referral criteria. Please avoid providing detailed comments on matters that would more appropriately be considered during the substantive application process.

You may have a later opportunity to provide further detail in comments on a substantive application (for example, site specific constraints or conditions), if the project is referred to an independent expert panel.

To this end, please ensure any comments you choose to provide are specific to this particular referral application, and linked to the Minister's decision-making criteria as set out in sections 21 and 22 of the Act. In this regard, we are particularly interested in comments you might have on the following matters:

1. *Whether you consider the project may involve an ineligible activity, and if so, why (as defined in section 5 of the Act)*
2. *Whether you consider any of the reasons to decline a referral application may be applicable to this application, and if so why (under section 21(5) of Act).*

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be disclosed to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete and within scope, an independent expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to *referral@fasttrack.govt.nz* and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email *contact@fasttrack.govt.nz* or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame

Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Cc:

Emma Clifford - s 9(2)(a)
Victoria Trow - s 9(2)(a)
Ben Henson - s 9(2)(a)
Reuben Daube - s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Ngāti Parekaawa

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

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Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Blandina Diamond
Ngāti Te Maunga/Whanganui Marae

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Blandina

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Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Nireaha Pirika
RMA contact

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Nireaha

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

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Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

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Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Poukura Marae

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-

track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Kataraina Hodge,
Chair
Raukawa Settlement Trust

Email: info@raukawa.org.nz

Tēnā koe Kataraina

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Cc:

Dr Andrea Julian - environment@raukawa.org.nz
Anaru Begbie - s 9(2)(a)
Cliff Kelly - s 9(2)(a)
Aniwa Morgan - s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Julie Gardyne
Chief Executive
Taupō District Council

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Julie

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A of this letter.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. *Section 22* of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

Under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(1)(a) of the Act, I invite Taupō District Council to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

Written comments must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and a copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame.

Under section 17(3) of the Act, a relevant local authority **must** provide comments advising on the following matters:

1. *Any applications that have been lodged with the Council that would be a competing application or applications if a substantive application for the project were lodged. If no such applications exist, please provide written confirmation.*

In addition, under section 17(3)(b), a relevant local authority **may** also provide other comments, but only if those comments are **relevant** to the application and the decision on the application that the Minister is required to make under section 21.

Please note that consideration of a referral application is limited to the referral criteria and does not involve the level of detail required at the substantive application stage. Comments should therefore be confined to matters relevant to the referral criteria. Please avoid providing detailed comments on matters that would more appropriately be considered during the substantive application process.

You may have a later opportunity to provide further detail in comments on a substantive application (for example, site specific constraints or conditions), if the project is referred to an independent expert panel.

To this end, please ensure any comments you choose to provide are specific to this particular referral application, and linked to the Minister's decision-making criteria as set out in sections 21 and 22 of the Act. In this regard, we are particularly interested in comments you might have on the following matters:

2. *Whether you consider the project may involve an ineligible activity, and if so, why (as defined in section 5 of the Act)*
3. *Whether you consider any of the reasons to decline a referral application may be applicable to this application, and if so why (under section 21(5) of Act).*

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be disclosed to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete and within scope, an independent expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to *referral@fasttrack.govt.nz* and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft. For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email *contact@fasttrack.govt.nz* or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details
Cc:

Steph Alker - s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Te Kōpua Kānapanapa
c/o Taupō District Council

Email: info@taupo.govt.nz

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery)

Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

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For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Cc:

Julie Gardyne s 9(2)(a)
Steph Alker - s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Wiari Ruhina
Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Wiari

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

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Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

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Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Te Whiringa Kākaho o Ngāti Hāua

Email: info@ngatihaua.iwi.nz

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-

track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Hauhungaroa 1D3B Incorporation
c/o Doyle & Associates

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(e) of the Act (the owners of Māori land in the project area). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-

track website here: Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Cher Mohi
Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Cher

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery)

Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Cc:

General mailbox - notifications@tuwharetoa.co.nz
John Bishara - info@tuwharetoa.co.nz
Aania Wall - s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Sean Te Heuheu,
GM
Tūwharetoa Settlement Trust

Email: info@tst.maori.nz

Tēnā koe Sean

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be forwarded to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete, an expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft.

For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Chris McLay
Chief Executive Officer
Waikato Regional Council

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Chris

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A of this letter.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. *Section 22* of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

Under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(1)(a) of the Act, I invite Waikato Regional Council to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

Written comments must be received within **15 working days** of receipt of this letter and a copy of the application (refer to the due date above). The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame.

Under section 17(3) of the Act, a relevant local authority **must** provide comments advising on the following matters:

1. *Any applications that have been lodged with the Council that would be a competing application or applications if a substantive application for the project were lodged. If no such applications exist, please provide written confirmation.*
2. *In relation to projects seeking approval of a resource consent under section 42(4)(a) of the Act, whether there any existing resource consents issued where sections 124C(1)(c) or 165ZI of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) could apply, if the project were to be applied for as a resource consent under the RMA. If no such consents exist, please provide written confirmation.*

In addition, under section 17(3)(b), a relevant local authority **may** also provide other comments, but only if those comments are **relevant** to the application and the decision on the application that the Minister is required to make under section 21.

Please note that consideration of a referral application is limited to the referral criteria and does not involve the level of detail required at the substantive application stage. Comments should therefore be confined to matters relevant to the referral criteria. Please avoid providing detailed comments on matters that would more appropriately be considered during the substantive application process.

You may have a later opportunity to provide further detail in comments on a substantive application (for example, site specific constraints or conditions), if the project is referred to an independent expert panel.

To this end, please ensure any comments you choose to provide are specific to this particular referral application, and linked to the Minister's decision-making criteria as set out in sections 21 and 22 of the Act. In this regard, we are particularly interested in comments you might have on the following matters:

3. *Whether you consider the project may involve an ineligible activity, and if so, why (as defined in section 5 of the Act)*
4. *Whether you consider any of the reasons to decline a referral application may be applicable to this application, and if so why (under section 21(5) of Act).*

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for inviting written comments under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in-confidence and may be commercially sensitive. It should not be disclosed to, and comments should not be sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project to the fast-track approvals process, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps under the Act before lodging a substantive application. If the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) deems the substantive application complete and within scope, an independent expert panel will be appointed to make a final decision on the required approvals.

Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

Alternatively, if you wish to email your feedback or have any queries about this letter, please email to *referral@fasttrack.govt.nz* and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft. For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email *contact@fasttrack.govt.nz* or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Cc:

Tracey May - s 9(2)(a)
Brent Sinclair - s 9(2)(a)
Miffy Foley - s 9(2)(a)
Hugh Keane - s 9(2)(a)
Teresa Gibbison - s 9(2)(a)
Sheryl Roa - s 9(2)(a)
Brian Richmond - s 9(2)(a)
Ana Maria d'Aubert - s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Fast-track

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

10/08/2026

FTAA-2606-1255

Whakarawa Trust
c/o Wiari Rauhina

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Invitation to provide written comments on the referral application for the Western Bays Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Note: Comments must be received by **31/08/2026, 11.59PM.**

A referral application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Meridian Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Western Bays Solar Farm project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act). Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. Section 22 of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application, a copy of which is available to you via the portal.

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If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of $2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For general information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fast-

track webpage on Cost recovery for agencies. The process for applying for a contribution fee payment as a Māori consultation group is outlined here: Applying for a contribution fee payment.

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Before the due date, please upload any comments to the application portal feedback page using the template for written comments (attached) or similar format/document.

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For assistance with the application portal or to update your account details, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2606-1255
Project name	Western Bays Solar Farm
Applicant name	Meridian Energy Limited
Project summary details	The project is for the development, operation and maintenance of a solar farm and battery energy storage system occupying approximately 620 hectares near Kuratau, in the Waikato region. The project includes: • a solar farm comprising solar photovoltaic panels, inverters and power conversion units, with a generation capacity of up to 420 megawatts (MW); • a battery energy storage system (BESS), with a storage capacity of approximately 250 MW / 2,000 megawatt-hours (MWh), for the storage and supply of electricity to support grid stability and security of supply; • a 33 kilovolt (kV) underground electricity network, a 33/220 kV onsite substation, operational facilities, buildings, perimeter fencing and mitigation planting; • sheep grazing beneath the solar panels; • a 220 kV double-circuit transmission line approximately 9.7 kilometres long, supported by towers up to 60 metres high, connecting the solar farm substation to the Grid Injection Point; • a 220 kV Grid Injection Point (GIP) connecting the project to Transpower's Bunnythorpe–Whakamaru A and B 220 kV transmission lines; • associated construction activities, including earthworks, vegetation clearance, laydown areas, access works, road widening and supporting infrastructure; and • groundwater take and use from an existing bore during construction and operation. The project will require the proposed approvals: • consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 • an archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014