

BEFORE THE PANEL CONVENER

IN THE MATTER

of the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA)

AND

IN THE MATTER

of an application by Far North Solar Farm Limited under section 42 of the FTAA for the construction of a solar farm

APPLICATION NO.

FTAA-2509-1100

**MEMORANDUM FROM TE RŪNANGA O AROWHENUA RESPONDING TO MINUTE TWO OF
THE PANEL CONVENER**

12 November 2025

Ally Crane
General Manager
Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited
1/8A Washdyke Flat Road, Washdyke, Timaru



INTRODUCTION

1. This memorandum is provided on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua (Arowhenua) in response to Minute 2 of the Panel Convener dated 6 November 2025 (Minute), regarding the Far North Solar Farm Limited application for approval for The Point solar array farm.
2. Arowhenua is a principal hapū of Ngāi Tahu, acknowledged in Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996 and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (Settlement Act). The takiwā of the hapū is centred at Arowhenua and extends from the Rakaia River in the north to the Waitaki River in the south, thence inland to the Main Divide sharing an interest with Te Rūnanga o Waihao and Te Rūnanga o Moeraki. Within this area, Arowhenua has maintained noho tūturu (ahi kā), meaning the tribe's 'fires' have been kept burning and that they actively exercise rangatiratanga.
3. Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited (AECL) are mandated to provide advice and act on its behalf in respect of environmental policy, planning and strategy matters. This includes representation on proposals being processed under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. A representative of AECL is available to attend the scheduled conference(s).
4. The Minute seeks participants views prior to a Convener's Conference on Monday 17 November 2025, that will inform decisions of the Convener regarding:
 - a) Appointment of panel members.
 - b) The timing of the panel decision.
 - c) Matters to consider when preparing for conference.

SCHEDULE 1

Issue (a) - Appointment of Panel Members

5. Arowhenua consider it is highly desirable that at least one member of the panel have expertise in Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Ngāi Tahu) tikanga, given the significance of Lake Benmore and the wider Waitaki area to the iwi and the centrality of tikanga to the approach adopted by Arowhenua.

6. AECL and Arowhenua are willing to work with Ngāi Tahu, Aukaha, Environment Canterbury, Mackenzie District Council and the Convenor Panel to identify an appropriate panel candidate.

7. AECL notes:

The application site is situated within the Outstanding Natural Landscape (operative) and within or adjoining six Sites and Areas of Significance to Māori (SASM) (operative) under the Mackenzie District Plan. These include:

- a) SASM4 – Ancient Hakataramea Valley Trail - wāhi tupuna value;
- b) SASM5 – Ancient Hakataramea River Trail – wāhi tupuna value
- c) SASM19 – Lake Benmore (Statutory Acknowledgement Area under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998) – Customary entitlement, wai tapu, wai taonga, wāhi tapu, wāhi taonga and wāhi tupuna values;
- d) SASM35 – Wakatipu / Twizel River – wai taonga and wāhi taonga values;
- e) SASM37 – Pūkaki River – wai taonga, wai tupuna, wāhi taonga and wāhi tupuna values; and
- f) SASM68 – Lake Benmore Nohoanga – customary entitlement

A description of each SASM and their associated values can be found within SASM-SCHED1 and SASM-SCHED2 of the Mackenzie District Council's EPlan. Information outlining the cultural landscape and the historical mapping tools used by Arowhenua and Ngāi Tahu to identify these sites and areas is deemed sensitive information that will need protecting.

Issue (b) – Timing of Panel Decision

8. Arowhenua considers the default time frame is likely to be sufficient, but suggests the Convenor considers the following aspects:

- a) Sufficient time to accommodate additional information requests by the Panel, under section 67 of the FTAA.

- b) Sufficient time to review and comment on draft conditions under section 70(2) of the FTAA. The appropriate period of time to comment on draft conditions will depend on their complexity and the extent to which matters remain in contention.
9. AECL is aware of the Fast Track Approvals Amendment Bill released on 3 November 2025 and the submission closing date of 17 November 2025. AECL is happy to discuss timeframes and draft conditions at the Panel Convener Conference.

SCHEDULE 2

Matters to Consider when Preparing for Conference

Tikanga

10. The tikanga relevant to the application has not been identified in the application prepared by Far North Solar; therefore, Arowhenua and AECL would like to record the following:
- a) The Waitaki lies under the cloak of mana whenua rangatiratanga and is cared for and managed by mana whenua to the greatest extent possible, in a manner consistent with kaitiakitanga. The Waitaki Catchment remains of paramount importance to Ngāi Tahu. As mana whenua, Arowhenua have a responsibility to assess how the proposed solar farm impacts their rights, values and practices.
 - b) Mana whenua firmly believe that the lands and waters of the Waitaki need to be restored, enhanced and protected. Their concern is that a narrow focus on the need to generate renewable energy without considering cumulative effects arising from existing hydro infrastructure and other solar array farm proposals in the Waitaki Catchment, could result in further alienation of Arowhenua from their ancestral lands. Large scale solar farms could also significantly restrict many options for restoration and enhancement of mahika kai resulting in connections with whenua and wai in the catchment as a whole, being lost or limited; and
 - c) Also acknowledging that the approach of mana whenua to this application reflects the desire of Arowhenua to fulfil obligations and responsibilities to the whenua to the extent currently possible given the existence of the adjoining hydro power schemes and the modification of the catchment.

11. Mana whenua are also very conscious of the need to enable future generations to thrive in the catchment.

"Ko tā te Waitaki mahi he manaaki i te motu"

"The generosity of the Waitaki provides for the nation"

12. Tikanga still provides important context for their interest in the catchment and involvement in this application process (along with the importance of the proposed conditions of consent) but Arowhenua ultimately see the separate Kawenata as a key means of giving effect to the matters set out above. The Kawenata itself will not be produced in evidence.

Issues

13. It is noted that the substantive applications filed by Far North Solar Limited sets out a consultation record with relevant Ngāi Tahu rūnaka. To date, very little consultation has taken place between Far North Solar Limited and Arowhenua / AECL. Arowhenua and AECL were not notified by Far North Solar Limited of their intent to have their proposal listed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
14. AECL can confirm that two of its four Cultural Consultants visited the application site on 19 July 2023 with the primary focus being to view the site. In addition to this visit, two online meetings between Far North Solar Limited and representatives of AECL were held on 13 July 2023 and 7 November 2023. On 7 November 2023, the Cultural Consultants employed by AECL informed Far North Solar Limited that the process they had adopted was inappropriate.
15. Far North Solar Limited have not been in contact with Arowhenua or AECL since the last meeting held on 7 November 2023. Far North Solar Limited did not contact Arowhenua or AECL to inform them of their intent to lodge their Fast Track substantive application (application one and two) nor was a copy of the application provided by Far North Solar Limited prior or post lodgement with the EPA. Consequently, Arowhenua and AECL were not offered an opportunity to provide comment on the substantive application(s), draft conditions or technical reports prepared for Far North Solar Limited.
16. Due to the limited consultation to date, AECL have been unable to ascertain the extent of contention or other disputed matters, whether the drafting of proposed consent conditions

are sufficient, and whether cultural, ecological and cumulative effects can be adequately resolved, particularly the impacts on taonga species. In addition to these matters, Arowhenua have not had any discussions with Far North Solar Limited as to how Mātauranga Māori could be incorporated into the proposal.

CONCLUSION

17. The Arowhenua representative (AECL) will be happy to elaborate further on any of the above points at the conference set for Monday 17 November 2025.
18. Arowhenua and AECL confirm their willingness to engage directly with the Applicant and Panel as necessary to advance the progress of the application.

Dated: 12 November 2025



Ally Crane
General Manager
Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited