

UNDER: the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**Act**)

IN THE MATTER: an application for approvals for the Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage
and Dam Resilience Works

BY: **MERIDIAN ENERGY LIMITED**
Applicant

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF AMY LOUISE CALLAGHAN ON BEHALF OF
MERIDIAN ENERGY LIMITED**

Planning

Dated: 19 June 2026

Counsel acting:
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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Amy Louise Callaghan
2. My planning experience and qualifications are set out in my statement of evidence dated 15 April 2026.
3. I have been asked by Meridian Energy Limited to provide a response to the matter of Consent Duration, following the release of Draft Conditions by the Panel on 04 June 2026.

CODE OF CONDUCT

4. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses as contained in section 9 of the Environment Court Practice Note (2023), and have complied with it in preparing this evidence. I confirm the issues addressed in this evidence are within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my evidence.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

5. Meridian have applied for approvals under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) for eased access which would enable them to operate Lake Pūkaki below 518 m RL without a Security of Supply or Official Conservation Campaign being triggered by the System Operator. Meridian have also sought approval to undertake rock armouring on the face of the existing dam.
6. A draft decision to grant the approvals sought along with draft conditions was issued by the Panel on 04 June 2026. The conditions for CRC26254 (Consent to take, use, dam or divert water) include a condition stating that the consent will expire on 1 September 2028 unless surrendered or cancelled at an earlier date.
7. The Referral Application lodged in April 2025 sought approval to allow Meridian to operate between 518 m RL and 513 m RL over the next three years in winters 2025, 2026 and 2027 but included the proviso that Meridian sought the flexibility to confirm the duration sought during the substantive application process with the reason being states as *“based on current timeframes it is possible that the consent may not be in place for the winter of 2025, thus subject to the decision makers approval Meridian may seek to*

amend the duration to be the three consecutive winters following the granting of this consent”.

8. In developing the Substantive Application further modelling of likely lake levels was completed. The modelling identified that ‘winter’ was not the right terminology and instead in section 3 of the Substantive Application it was stated that Meridian sought to remove the current triggers over the next three years to 31 December 2028. This was reiterated in section 3.1 where it was stated that Meridian seeks to lower the lake in the calendar years 2026-2028. The associated modelling and impact assessments were carried out on this basis and specifically considered the impacts of the eased access up to 31 December 2028.
9. On 26 November 2025, a letter was received from the EPA confirming that the application complied with all requirements of section 46 of the FTAA. Section 46 of the FTAA includes an assessment as to whether the activity is within scope. On this basis, given that the Substantive Application had explicitly referred to the removal of the triggers through until 31 December 2028, I considered that this duration was determined to be within the scope of the referral application.
10. On the basis of the information set out above, and in the absence of any discussion of this matter in the draft decision, I consider the draft 1 September 2028 expiry date may be an error which should be amended prior to the final decision being issued.
11. If the draft expiry date is intentional there is nothing in the draft decision explaining that intent, any adverse environmental effects that would warrant its imposition, or considering the practical effect of the 1 September 2028 expiry date on Meridian’s ability to operate Lake Pūkaki below 518 m RL in 2028.

Dated: 19 June 2026



Amy Callaghan