

The Grampians Solar Project

Supplementary information to accompany a referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Relevant section of Referral Application form to use for the fast-track process	Response
2.2.1 Provide a description of the project and the activities it involves	<p>The Grampians Solar Project is a 300MWac solar photovoltaic project with co-located energy storage, located on the eastern boundary of the Mackenzie Basin. The project will connect to the National Electricity Grid operated by Transpower via a new 220kv substation connecting to the 220 kV Christchurch–Twizel A (CHH-TWZ-A) line. It will be located on a portion of a merino sheep farm leased by the applicant from Grampians Station Limited.</p> <p>The Project Site's exceptional solar resource is in the 95th percentile of announced solar sites in New Zealand. This means more clean energy generation per solar panel than almost any other location in the country, with the project generating the equivalent amount of clean renewable electricity to power approximately 70,000 average New Zealand households annually. The solar farm will also provide a new source of electricity generation which is highly complementary to New Zealand's nearby hydro generation.</p> <p>Helios has undertaken over two years of comprehensive onsite investigations and fulsome technical assessments to refine the solar farm layout. The Grampians Solar Farm is located on unirrigated, highly modified pastoral farmland comprising less than 4% of the total Grampians Station landholding. It is a unique location within the Mackenzie Basin given the screening provided by well-established shelterbelts on the boundaries of the proposed solar farm site. The solar project has been designed with input from the landowners (multigenerational farmers) to specifically accommodate continued grazing of merino sheep throughout the 35 year lease period.</p> <p>The solar farm will include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 500,000 photovoltaic panels for the purpose of generating clean, renewable electricity to be supplied to the National Grid. • Solar panel mounting structures (including a tracking system), and steel piles. The mounting frames will be located approximately 6m to 8m apart (pole to pole) and the panels will have a maximum operational height of 2.8m. The bifacial solar panels and associated infrastructure will cover approximately 25% of the site. With the exception of the new areas of planting, the remainder of the Site will remain as open grassed areas to enable the grazing of sheep. • Associated components including inverters, transformers and electrical cabling to connect the solar panel arrays to the substation. • An operations and maintenance building, 1-2 spare parts containers, new and upgraded access tracks, parking and storage yard, water tanks, fencing, and a security system. • Energy storage facilities providing approximately 100MWh of storage capacity, located centrally within the site screened by an existing shelterbelt. • A 220kV substation located centrally behind existing shelterbelt, connecting the facility to the National Grid operated by Transpower. • New and infill planting along existing shelterbelts, boundaries and native species enhancement of gullies and intermittent waterways. • Continued use for pastoral farming (sheep grazing) • Carrying out activities that are described in the Project summary and associated with the activities described above. <p>Activities involved in the project may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated construction or upgrade of culverts • Discharge of stormwater • Works within proximity to streams or wetlands • Vegetation removal • Storage of hazardous materials • Signage <p>The exact infrastructure (specifications, numbers of components etc.) will be confirmed as part of the detailed design.</p>

	<p>The Grampians project represents a ~\$450 million capital investment into the region and will create significant employment opportunities during the ~24 month construction period. In excess of 300 jobs are expected during peak construction periods. Helios is committed to establishing a local investment trust associated with the Project. The trust would allow for yearly funding of local projects and initiatives as an enduring contribution to the local community.</p>
<p>2.2.2 Provide a description or map of the whole project area that identifies its boundaries in sufficient detail to enable consideration of the referral application.</p> <p>For example, site address(es), certificate of title(s), shape files</p>	<p>The site is located on 574ha of remote pastoral land to the south of MacKenzie Pass Road and the east of Haldon Road in the Mackenzie District. The project is in the south-eastern corner of the Mackenzie Basin, 21km to the southeast of the town of Tekapo, and 15km to the south and east of State Highway 8. Site location plans have been provided with the referral application</p> <p>The Grampians Solar Project comprises part of four Records of Title totalling 16,769.2466 hectares more or less. The proposed solar farm lease is for 574 hectares of this total area.</p> <p>The four Records of Title and Registered Owner for each Record of Title is set out below with accompanying notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CB22F/781: Freehold Owner is Grampians Station Limited (Grampians Station Limited is Helios' landowner partner pursuant to an Investigation Licence and Option to Lease for Solar Energy and Energy Storage Purposes dated 26 August 2024) • CB22F/783: Freehold Owner is Grampians Station Limited • CB22F/784: Freehold Owner is Grampians Station Limited • CB529/50: Leasehold Owner is Grampians Station Limited, subject to a long term Crown Pastoral Lease - see comments below. <p>Approximately 8% of the Project Site sits within Record of Title CB529/50. While Grampians Station Limited is recorded as the Leasehold Owner, it entered the 'Implementation phase' of freehold transfer for this land (as well as certain other parts of land outside of the project site area) with Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) upon the signing of a Substantive Proposal on 9 February 2021. This implementation process is irrevocable. Final steps for this freehold transfer to Grampians Station Limited are expected to be completed in Q1 2025</p>
<p>2.6 Appropriateness for fast-track approvals process</p> <p>2.6.1 The criteria for accepting a referral application is that the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits. Explain how this project satisfies the criteria</p>	<p>The Grampians Solar Project is one of the largest solar photovoltaic projects proposed in New Zealand (and if constructed today would be the largest by a factor of 4). It will have significant regional and national benefits.</p> <p>Due to the scale of the proposed project and the strategic location (in one of the highest solar irradiance locations in the country) as well as proximity to robust National Grid infrastructure, the ~NZ\$450 million project is expected to generate the equivalent electricity to power approximately 70,000 average kiwi households annually with clean renewable electricity. It will also have significant job creation during the ~24 month construction period. This is expected to be in excess of 300 jobs during peak construction periods.</p> <p>Solar is highly complementary to nearby hydro generation and acts as 'virtual rain' allowing greater storage of water in our southern lakes during daylight hours and summer periods so that it can be utilised to meet demand during evening winter peak periods when solar and other intermittent renewables such as wind are not generating. So, in addition to greater renewable generation to help electrify New Zealand's economy, this will also add significant resilience to New Zealand's electricity generation portfolio.</p> <p>This is further improved via the co-location of battery energy storage within the project which will enable portions of the generation to be stored and discharged during peak periods, as well as providing ancillary services to the National Grid if required.</p> <p>The Grampians Solar Project represents the most compelling solar proposition in the Mackenzie Basin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar resource: In the 95th percentile of announced solar sites in New Zealand. This means more clean energy generation per solar panel than almost any other location in the country. • Suitable land size: Site can host a project which can support the substantial project connection cost while allowing for necessary setbacks and a project design which effectively incorporates solar grazing. The proposed solar project site represents less than 4% of the total Grampians Station area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support: The Mackenzie Basin is one of the most sparsely populated regions of New Zealand. Neighbouring landowners are farmers and runholders who understand the importance of crop diversification in a harsh climate, and recognise the value solar farming can provide. Having informed and/or met with all of the Mackenzie Basin landowners within 10 km of the proposed project site, there have been no objections voiced by the few individuals who will be most affected by this proposal. • Efficient Grid Connection: First ranking, onsite grid connection rights to a robust part of the National Grid - high voltage transmission lines pass directly over the site. • Responsibly located in the remote eastern corner of the Basin: No nearby towns or neighbouring residential properties. Approximately 15km from the state highway between Tekapo and Twizel. Avoids prominent views to the Southern Alps and Aoraki Mount Cook significantly screened from view by existing shelterbelts. • Ecologically low value due to long term pastoral application of this block: validated by ecological assessments carried out over the past four years. • On-site Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and feedback from Mackenzie District Council and mana whenua representatives has resulted in site boundary refinement to avoid more elevated portions of the site.
<p>2.6.2 Explain how referring the project to the fast-track approvals process:</p> <p>2.6.2.1 Would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and</p>	<p>The Helios team has extensive experience developing similar scale projects across North America, Europe and Asia. We take a realistic view of project development and delivery timeframes. We understand that reaching a final investment decision and commencing construction requires successful and timely completion of critical interdependent milestones.</p> <p>In our experience with the interdependent milestones associated with solar farm development, in New Zealand the most variability in terms of both time, cost and project development risk cost is linked to the project resource consent process.</p> <p>If the project were to follow a standard RMA District Council consent process, we would anticipate public notification (under 'special circumstances'), a hearing and Environment Court appeal being likely (noting the local consenting environment and precedents set in the Balmoral Station solar consent application). We would expect these additional stages adding a minimum of 2-3 years to the project timeframe and significant additional costs in consenting and external support cost (more than \$1 million). Consequently, it is considered that the project will progress faster under the Fast-track process than the traditional RMA consenting pathway.</p>
<p>2.6.2.2 Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process</p>	<p>The proposal will not materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process. Helios has been developing the Grampians Station Solar Farm since late 2020 and has undertaken extensive baseline technical assessment to inform the resource consent application, as is evidenced by the technical memos provided with this referral application. The project's connection investigations and preliminary design are already well advanced with Transpower as connection investigations began in 2021. Helios has already invested heavily in this project and provided a well thought out and high quality proposal for consideration by an Expert Panel under the Fast-track Approvals Act.</p> <p>Suitably qualified and experienced technical experts are working on the substantive application to provide all information required to allow for timely decision making. This is a highly capable team with proven large-scale project experience that combines international and local expertise, and other solar specialists and advisers.</p>
<p>2.6.2.3 Has the project been identified as a priority project in a central government, local government, or sector plan or strategy (for example, in a general policy statement or spatial strategy), or a central government infrastructure priority list?</p>	<p>No</p> <p>The proposed project is not specifically identified as a priority project. However, the proposal is aligned with a number of key strategies promoting renewable energy to meet our national targets:</p> <p><u>Central Government Plan or Strategy</u></p> <p>Electrify NZ, National Party, dated March 2023</p> <p>The proposal supports New Zealand's ambitious national commitments of doubling renewable energy generation to accelerate transition to a low-emissions, high-growth</p>

	<p>economy, and net zero carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p><u>Sector Plan or Strategy</u></p> <p>Rautaki Hanganga o Aotearoa, the New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2052 sets out actions New Zealand needs to take to ensure the infrastructure system meets the challenges of a growing population and environmental factors, such as climate change, over the next 30 years.</p> <p>The Infrastructure Action Plan, May 2023, sets out a work programme in response to identified challenges and opportunities in the Strategy around the provision of efficient, equitable, resilient and sustainable infrastructure system. The strategy recognises that electricity generation capacity needs to increase by 170% and that a major energy transition is required to meet net-zero carbon emissions targets. The action plan focuses on accelerating development of new renewable electricity generation across the economy. The Grampians Solar Farm at 300MW will provide a meaningful contribution to the future renewable energy mix of New Zealand and will be quick to deploy and start contributing to these targets.</p>
2.6.2.4 Will the project deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure or enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The Grampians Solar Project is one of the largest solar photovoltaic projects proposed in New Zealand (and if constructed today would be the largest by a factor of 4).</p> <p>Due to the scale of the proposed project and the strategic location (in one of the highest solar irradiance locations in the country) as well as proximity to robust National Grid infrastructure, the ~NZ\$450 million project is expected to generate the equivalent electricity to power approximately 70,000 average kiwi households annually with clean renewable electricity. It will also have significant job creation during the ~24 month construction period. This is expected to be in excess of 300 jobs during peak construction periods.</p> <p>Solar is highly complementary to nearby hydro generation and acts as ‘virtual rain’ allowing greater storage of water in our southern lakes during daylight hours and summer periods so that it can be utilised to meet demand during evening winter peak periods when solar and other intermittent renewables such as wind are not generating. So, in addition to greater renewable generation to help electrify New Zealand’s economy, this will also add significant resilience to the continued functioning of New Zealand’s electricity generation portfolio.</p> <p>This is further improved via the co-location of battery energy storage within the project which will enable portions of the generation to be stored and discharged during peak periods, as well as providing ancillary services to the National Grid if required.</p>
2.6.2.5 Will the project increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020). If yes, explain how the project will achieve this.	No
2.6.2.6 Will the project deliver significant economic benefits, and if so, how?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The Grampians Solar Project represents a ~NZ\$450 million capital investment into the region and will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Significant job creation during the ~24 month construction period. In excess of 300 jobs during peak construction periods. Local roles required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • civil, mechanical and electrical contractors • fencing and planting contractors • semiskilled labourers • ancillary services (freight and logistics, accommodation, hospitality, transport and traffic management)

	<p>2) In addition to a large number of construction phase roles, the project will create</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approximately 5 FTE for locally based operations and maintenance staff • opportunities for upskilling and/or retraining which can be applied in a new but growing industry across the country <p>3) Helios is also committed to establishing a local investment trust associated with the Project. The trust would allow for yearly funding of local projects and initiatives as an enduring contribution to the local community.</p> <p>4) Current land use of merino sheep grazing will also continue to be co-located with the solar project once operational.</p> <p>5) We also expect there will be economic benefits associated with a 70ha 'no build area' that will have native species planted in key areas as part of the project</p>
2.6.2.7 Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture, and if so, how?	<p>Yes</p> <p>The Grampians Solar Project is expected to provide some support for primary industries. Helios has entered into a lease arrangement with Grampians Station Limited for the duration of the solar farm which provides consistent, stable income to support the wider farming operation which includes sheep grazing and breeding Hereford Angus cows. The solar farm is designed to allow for ongoing sheep grazing of the site allowing for co-agricultural use of the Solar Project.</p>
2.6.2.8 Will the project support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum, and if so, how?	<p>No</p>
2.6.2.9 Will the project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions, and if so, how?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The significant amount of new solar electricity generated by the Grampians Solar Project over its 35 year lifecycle will be highly beneficial and complementary to New Zealand's existing electricity mix. Utilising solar generation combined with onsite energy storage, particularly during daytime hours and especially in the summer months, allows more water to be retained in our hydro lakes for use during peak demand periods. This will reduce our reliance on fossil fuels such as coal and gas to bridge renewable generation shortfall during these peak periods and reduce New Zealand's carbon emissions.</p> <p>Additional solar generation at this scale is also expected to result in downward pressure on electricity prices over the long term, which will incentivise the electrification of energy demand currently powered by fossil fuels. Examples include electrification of process heat (e.g. coal and gas boilers) and electrification of our transport fleet (e.g. electric vehicles). Converting these loads to renewable electricity use is likely to result in a material reduction in the use of fossil fuels (thereby reducing carbon emissions) across our energy mix (outside of just electricity generation).</p> <p>In addition to avoiding greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel based generation and demand summarised above, the proposal includes 70ha of 'no build' areas which will be fenced and planted with native species creating pathways of enhanced ecology. This will assist with removing greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
2.6.2.10 Will the project support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards, and if so, how?	<p>Yes</p> <p>New Zealand's current electricity mix primarily relies on hydroelectric power, supplemented by thermal (coal and gas) and wind energy sources. The addition of solar power at diversified locations across the country will enhance resilience to natural hazards and support recovery efforts in the aftermath of such events.</p> <p>Solar is highly complementary to nearby hydro generation and acts as 'virtual rain' allowing greater storage of water in our southern lakes during daylight hours and summer periods, so that it can be utilised to meet demand during evening winter peak periods when solar and other intermittent renewables such as wind are not generating, contributing to grid stability and reliability.</p> <p>The Grampians Solar Farm is located away from areas of high natural hazard risk. The site is not subject to coastal inundation, flood risk, notable seismic activity or fault lines, enhancing resilience to climate-related hazards. The design and construction of solar farms further contribute to resilience against natural hazards, minimising down time after a significant weather event. Solar panels are elevated approximately 0.7m above the ground and the tracking systems are monitored and can tilt in response to snow, hail or high wind events.</p>

	<p>Additionally, solar farms are not permanent structures with decommissioning at the end of the lease requiring land to be returned to conditions suitable for continued agricultural use. At the end of their operational life, a solar farm offers flexibility for future land use, either repowering, a return to the previous land use or a future use. This versatility ensures that solar farms can adapt to changing energy needs and environmental considerations over time, contributing to sustainable land management practices.</p>
2.6.2.11 Will the project address significant environmental issues, and if so, how?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Projects such as the Grampians Solar Farm which provide a meaningful increase to New Zealand's supply of renewable energy are necessary to both meet growing demand for electricity and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>The Grampians Solar Farm project also includes 70ha of land within an intensive pastoral use environment where the project ecologist has identified a small number of native species. The project will include the fencing and protection of these areas (mainly along gullies and intermittent waterways) to exclude the current use of sheep grazing, and extensive native species planting targeted in these key areas where it can make a tangible difference in enhancing biodiversity.</p>
2.6.2.12 Is the project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies, and if so, how?	<p>Yes</p> <p>The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement Overall, the RPS provides supportive objectives and policies in relation to renewable energy generation and the development of regionally significant infrastructure. The project is consistent with these. The proposed build area also does not contain ecologically significant values under the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (2013) ecological significance criteria.</p> <p>Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan The project will implement appropriate design and construction methodologies to be consistent with the objectives and policies of the LWRP.</p> <p>Mackenzie District Plan The MDP contains provisions that support renewable electricity generation activities, while ensuring that adverse effects on the receiving environment are appropriately managed and mitigated. The District Plan also promotes the restoration, preservation and maintenance of the Outstanding Natural Landscape, indigenous vegetation and biodiversity values. The proposed solar farm is not identified as a Site of Natural Significance in the Mackenzie District Plan and areas of indigenous vegetation have been identified with suitable setbacks and enhancement planting to increase indigenous biodiversity values. The existing shelterbelts on site boundaries provide significant screening of views of the solar farm site from the wider Mackenzie Basin protecting the Outstanding Natural Landscape values of the wider basin.</p>
<p>Section 3: Project details</p> <p>For construction activities, please state the anticipated commencement and completion dates.</p>	<p>The Grampians Solar Project is steadily progressing through pre-construction development stage. Following resource consent approval additional milestones, such as electricity offtaker negotiations, Overseas Investment Office approval (if required), lead contractor appointment, detailed design and other activities required for the project to secure construction capital, will commence (if not progressed concurrently). These are forecasted for completion within a short period after obtaining consent. A summary of the critical ongoing development milestones is provided below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site: Since late 2020, Helios has been working with Grampians Station Limited to identify and validate a high quality large-scale solar project on pastoral farmland. The Project Site has some of the highest solar resource in the country, and direct on-site connection access to a robust part of the National Grid. A Solar Licence Agreement was executed between Helios and Grampians Station Limited in Q3 2024. • Connection: Helios has been exploring a project connection at this location with Transpower since 2021 and the project was accepted directly into the Investigation stage of the Transpower Connection Management Framework when it was first published in December 2022. The project holds a first ranking position to connect to the 220kV lines crossing the Project Site (Transpower commits any local spare connection capacity on a first ready first served basis. Helios' grid connection request at Grampians successfully secured the first ranking position, meaning the first 300MW of spare capacity at this location is reserved for Helios). The connection investigations are well advanced and ongoing with the Transpower Works Agreement to be executed shortly after resource consent is secured for the project.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmission Easements: none are required for the project due to the on-site point of connection. • Consenting and Approvals: Helios has completed more than 2 years of solar specific site assessment, in addition to ecology work which has been undertaken over the last four years to validate the ecology present onsite. With all baseline seasonal survey work already completed, a consenting application will be prepared over the coming nine months with completion in Q3 2025. Helios has experience obtaining Overseas Investment Office approval for farm land advertising exemptions across the wider portfolio and has been working with a specialist barrister and engaging with Overseas Investment Office staff since 2001. Helios will be progressing the approvals required for the Grampians Solar Project concurrently with the resource consent process. <p>The Grampians Solar Project will then enter construction stage once financial close has occurred. Construction is forecast to commence in Q4 2027, progressing over a ~2 year timeframe and will include electrical commissioning and connection to the National Grid. There is no staging of the construction phase.</p> <p>Upon completion of construction and commissioning, the Grampians Solar Project enters the operational stage, scheduled for Q4 2029. The facility has an expected operational life of 35 years.</p> <p>At the end of the project lifecycle, the Grampians Solar Project enters the decommissioning stage - the infrastructure is dismantled and removed from the Project Site which is then reinstated to the condition it was in prior to construction commencing, estimated timeframe for completion of this stage is 6 months.</p>
3.1.13 Are there any other types of consents, certificates, designations, concessions, and other legal authorisations (other than contractual authorisations or the proposed approvals) and you consider are needed to authorise the project (including any that may be needed by someone other than you as the applicant(s)). Provide details on whether these have been obtained.	<p>Yes</p> <p>The connection of the solar farm to the Transpower owned and operated 220kV transmission line necessitates adding an additional transmission tower to the Christchurch–Twizel A (CHH-TWZ-A) line which will require approval under the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009. Transpower have confirmed consent under the NESETA will be sought separately following the signing of the Transpower Works Agreement. We are confident of this obtaining approval within the project timelines.</p> <p>Overseas Investment Office Depending upon the ultimate composition of the project financing and ownership, OIO consent may be required. The Applicant anticipates investment from both domestic and offshore capital source. Helios has successfully obtained Overseas Investment Office approval for farm land advertising exemptions across the wider portfolio and has been working with a specialist barrister and engaging with Overseas Investment Office staff since 2001. Helios will be progressing the approvals required for the Grampians Solar Project concurrently with the resource consent process.</p>
<p>3.4 Adverse effects</p> <p>3.4.1 Describe any anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment.</p>	<p>Construction of the proposed solar farm in this environment has the potential to give rise to a limited range of adverse effects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape and visual effects • Ecology effects • Glint and Glare effects • Acoustic effects • Construction effects; and • Cultural effects. <p>Helios acknowledges the unique character of the Mackenzie Basin, and as a result has undertaken over two years of comprehensive onsite investigations and fulsome technical assessments conducted by leading sector experts to refine the solar farm layout and support a resource consent process. This is supported by further ecology work which has been undertaken on the site since 2020. Given the importance of landscape and ecology within this environment technical memos are provided to outline the work undertaken to date to validate the suitability of the project site.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological Assessment - a technical memo is provided outlining the extensive onsite work which has shaped this proposal and concludes the project fully avoids construction works within (and impacts to) indigenous vegetation and habitats including wetlands and waterways. • Landscape Assessment- a technical memo is provided and concludes this project could be absorbed into the landscape in this location near the edge of the Mackenzie Basin. <p>All other potential effects are capable of management through standard conditions. A substantive application will also include an assessment of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Assessment • Acoustic Assessment • Glint and Glare Assessment • Geotechnical and Natural Hazard Assessment • Construction Management Plan <p>Helios is confident a comprehensive suite of baseline onsite surveying has taken place to demonstrate the proposed solar farm is an appropriate activity on this site. All potential effects of the proposal can be avoided, remedied or mitigated to an appropriate level.</p>
3.4.2 Provide a statement of any activities involved in the project that are prohibited activities under the Resource Management Act 1991, and identify the relevant prohibited activity provision.	The project does not include any prohibited activities under the Resource Management Act 1991
<p>3.5 Persons affected</p> <p>3.5.1 Provide a list of the persons, groups and/or entities who you consider are likely to be affected by the project. The list should include, as relevant, local authorities, relevant Māori groups (as set out at section 13(4)(j)(ii)-(vii) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024), persons with a registered interest in land that may need to be acquired under the Public Works Act 198; and if the project includes a land exchange, the holder of an interest in the land that is to be exchanged by the Crown (see Consultation requirements for referral application).</p>	<p>Relevant Local Authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mackenzie District Council • Canterbury Regional Council <p>Relevant administering agency (s11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry for the Environment as administering agency of the RMA <p>Iwi Authorities</p> <p>Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu (also relevant Treaty settlement entity) has confirmed consultation is most appropriate at the rūnanga level, therefore the persons affected are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua • Te Rūnanga o Moeraki • Te Rūnanga o Waihao <p>There are no customary marine rights or customary marine title groups affected by this proposal. The project is not within the rohe of Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou. There are no relevant applicant groups under the Marine and Coastal (Takutai Moana) Act affected by this proposal. There is also no land to be acquired under the Public Works Act.</p>
3.5.2 Provide a summary of any consultation undertaken with the above persons and/or groups who you consider are likely to be affected by the project, and any other groups required to be consulted with under section 11 of the Act, and how the consultation has informed the project	<p>Local Authorities and administering agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mackenzie District Council have been engaged on the project since mid 2022, representatives have visited the site and the Council are regularly kept updated as the project progresses. As a result of early consultation between Council and landscape consultants on behalf of Helios, the site boundary was refined to sit entirely on the low lying land below the Dalgety Range. • Environment Canterbury have been engaged in pre-application discussions to confirm consent requirements. • The Ministry for the Environment as administers of the Fast-Track Approval Bill were notified of the proposal via email on 3 February 2025 and responded on 5 February 2025. <p>Iwi Authorities</p> <p>Helios informed all rūnanga of the proposal in 2022 and has provided updates at key milestones.</p>

	<p>To date Te Rūnanga o Waihao and Te Rūnanga o Moeraki have not provided feedback on the proposal. Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua representatives attended a site visit with Helios representatives and the District Council, and accompanied Boffa Miskell to site for a bird survey. Following the ecology surveys and feedback from Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua promoting the concept of ecological corridors through the site, the project layout was updated to include ~70 hectares of 'no build' areas which will be fenced and planted with native species creating pathways of enhanced ecology in an integrated fashion. Preliminary feedback has been provided that Arowhenua are largely supportive of solar and have confirmed in writing there are no specific recorded wāhi tapu or wāhi taonga on the site. Helios continues to discuss the proposal with mana whenua and is committed to providing technical reports, workshopping queries and continuing to develop working relationships as the project progresses.</p> <p>Nearby Landowners Helios informed and/or met with all of the Mackenzie Basin landowners within 10 km of the proposed project site in Q4 2024, with project information distributed to all neighbouring landowners. There have been no objections voiced by the few individuals who will be most affected by this proposal.</p> <p>Local Stakeholders Discussions with Fire and Emergency NZ are ongoing with meetings held throughout 2023 to confirm preliminary design requirements for fire safety measures which have been integrated into the layout. Further work with FENZ will take place through detailed design.</p> <p>Meetings with the current and previous MP for the Waitaki electorate who are supportive of renewable energy development and understand why the Basin is a desirable location.</p>
3.5.3 List any Treaty settlements that apply to the project area and provide a summary of the relevant principles and provisions in those settlements.	<p>The Crown and Ngāi Tahu entered a deed of settlement executed on 21 November 1997. The Deed of Settlement records an apology by the then Prime Minister the Right Honourable James Brendan Bolger, for the Crown. That apology acknowledged that Ngāi Tahu suffered grave injustices which significantly impaired Ngāi Tahu's economic, social and cultural development. The Deed of Settlement recorded the matters required to give effect to a settlement of all of Ngāi Tahu's historical claims.</p> <p>The Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 is an Act— (a) to record the apology given by the Crown to Ngāi Tahu in the deed of settlement executed on 21 November 1997 by the then Prime Minister the Right Honourable James Brendan Bolger, for the Crown, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu; and (b) to give effect to certain provisions of that deed of settlement, being a deed that settles the Ngāi Tahu claims.</p>
3.7.4 Provide a description of whether and how the project would be affected by climate change and natural hazards:	<p>No.</p> <p>The Grampians Solar Farm is located away from areas of high natural hazard risk. The site is not subject to coastal inundation, flood risk, notable seismic activity or fault lines, enhancing resilience to climate-related hazards. The design and construction of solar farms further contribute to resilience against natural hazards, minimising down time after a significant weather event. Solar panels are elevated approximately 0.7m above the ground and the tracking systems are monitored and can tilt in response to snow, hail or high wind events.</p>
<p>3.8 Specific proposed approvals</p> <p>3.8.1 Approvals under the Resource Management Act 1991</p> <p>3.8.1.1 Resource consents If your application is seeking a consent for an activity that would otherwise be applied for under the Resource Management Act 1991, including an activity that is prohibited under the Act, provide the information below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of the project against any relevant national policy statement, any relevant national environmental standards and, if relevant, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. 	<p>National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 (NPS-REG 2011)</p> <p>The NPS-REG 2011 applies to renewable electricity generation activities at all scales, and covers the construction, operation, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing structures associated with renewable electricity generation.</p> <p>The proposal meets the objectives and policies of the NRP-REG as it provides a new renewable electricity generation activity which will assist in meeting the Government's national targets as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal supports New Zealand's national commitments of doubling renewable energy generation to accelerate transition to a low-emissions, high-growth economy, and net zero carbon emissions by 2050. • The proposal would generate clean, renewable electricity to power the equivalent of 70,000 typical New Zealand homes annually. This increased resilience in power supply is significant, especially given New Zealand is forecast to need 70% more power by 2050 given the continuing electrification in private vehicles, transport and industry sectors. • Increasing New Zealand's solar energy resource will support the national economy during periods when power from other renewable energy sources is not sufficient to meet demand. For example, during periods of low rainfall in the headwaters of the country's hydroelectric schemes or periods of low wind speeds impacting wind farms.

There is a need to locate the renewable electricity generation activity where the renewable energy resource is available. The proposed site has some of the highest solar resource in the country, and direct on-site connection access to a robust part of the National Grid.

The selection of the site prioritises locations where adverse effects on natural resources and cultural values are minimised. Noting the proposed activity is unlikely to result in reverse sensitivity effects, and can be operational concurrently with a primary land production activity of sheep grazing on the Site. In summary, the proposed solar farm contributes to renewable energy generation and also demonstrates a commitment to sustainability, environmental stewardship, and community well-being, aligning with the overarching objectives and policies of the NPS-REG 2011.

National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS FM 2020)

The NPS FM 2020 sets a national policy framework for managing freshwater quality and quantity. It seeks to prioritise the well-being of water bodies and freshwater systems, health and needs of people, and the well-being of communities now and in the future. The policies, relevant to this proposal, seek to ensure there is no further loss of extent of natural inland wetlands, their values are protected, and their restoration is promoted, habitats of indigenous freshwater species and freshwater values are improved.

The ecology memo accompanying the referral application outlines the identification of wetlands and intermittent streams within the site. The solar farm layout as presented in this application avoids all wetlands and intermittent waterways, with at least 10 m setbacks. The setback areas within the site (approximately 70ha) currently support generally sparse / patchy indigenous species. Enhancement actions (to be detailed in future reporting) represent positive opportunities to improve existing conditions in these areas. For these reasons the proposal will not be inconsistent with the NPS FM 2020.

National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (NPS-HPL 2022 (Amended 2024))

The NPS-HPL seeks to protect highly productive land for use in land-based primary production both now and for future generations. The majority of the site is mapped as LUC Class 3 on the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory maps

The NPS-HPL provides a framework that protects highly productive land from inappropriate subdivision, land use and development. The NPS-HPL now includes a specific reference to an exemption for the "development" and "construction" of specified infrastructure on highly productive land. The proposal is for the construction and operation of a solar farm which is considered to be 'specified infrastructure'. Helios is considered to be a lifeline utility being an entity that will generate electricity for distribution through a network or distribute electricity through a network. Therefore the proposal is considered to be consistent with the objective of the NPS-HPL.