

Meridian Energy Limited

Fast-track Referral Application – Waiinu Energy Park

Consultation, Persons Affected and Engagement Summary

1. Introduction

This summary of consultation and engagement has been prepared to support the referral application made by Meridian Energy Limited (**Meridian**) for the Waiinu Energy Park Project in accordance with Section 13 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTA**). In particular, it provides a comprehensive overview of the consultation and engagement that has been undertaken to date, outlines Meridian's responses to that feedback and demonstrates that the requirements of Section 11 and 13(4)(k) of the FTA have been met.

2. Overview

Meridian has been engaging widely on the proposal. Engagement started prior to the land being secured to gather initial feedback on the prospect of a renewable energy project at the site. Meridian's first engagement with mana whenua on the proposal was in August 2021. Engagement with key stakeholders including the Department of Conservation and local councils started in 2022, while local community engagement started in 2024.

The project design has been directly informed through the consultation and engagement undertaken with mana whenua, local community, and stakeholders; in addition to multiple design iterations that have been informed by expert advice to minimise adverse impacts on local communities and the existing environment.

3. Mana Whenua

Waiinu Energy Park (the Project) is located in the rohe of Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi. Meridian Energy is engaging with Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi, as mana whenua and mana moana, through its governance organisation Te Kaahui o Rauru (TKoR). Meridian started engagement with TKoR in relation to the Project in August 2021. Meridian and TKoR have maintained regular engagement in the four years since first discussing the Project and will continue working together through all phases of the Project. Meridian plans to be present in the rohe for decades and aims to develop a genuine, collaborative, long-term partnership with Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi. Meridian has also undertaken direct engagement with Hapuu when requested, and this engagement is ongoing.

Between August 2021 and March 2026, key engagement has taken place at 6 in-person meetings, 3 site visits or hui-a-hapuu, 15 online meetings, through numerous email/phone communication, and sharing of files and information. Meridian and TKoR have engaged at project and executive levels.

3.1 Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi Strategy

During consultation TKoR has shared its vision and goals for Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi generally and as they relate to renewable energy. Meridian understands TKoR is focused on building capacity and capability within rangatahi and uri to benefit from opportunities that arise from the development of renewable energy projects both within the rohe of Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi and across the wider Taranaki region. Meridian understands another focus for TKoR is to develop opportunities for skilled jobs in South Taranaki to retain and attract their people back to the area. Many have left to find better paid work in Australia and other parts of New Zealand.

3.2 Project Information

Meridian has provided an overview of the project concept, timeline, and updates on project development activities to TKoR. This includes maps of the project location, boundary and preliminary layouts of turbine locations.

At a hui on 8 June 2025 at Tauranga Ika Marae, Meridian shared an update and overview of the Waiinu Energy Park, including work done to date, project layouts, ecological surveys, landscape and visual assessment, and archaeological effects.

3.3 Cultural Effects Assessment (CEA)

TKoR is working with the Ngaa Iwi o Taranaki Taiao team to prepare a cultural effects assessment (CEA) in relation to the Waiinu Energy Park project. The CEA process is being led by s 9(2)(a) and s 9(2)(a). A CEA kick-off call was held on 9 April 2025 and a further meeting was held on 8 May 2025 to set the process and expectations for the CEA process. A well-attended hui-a-hapuu to support the CEA process took place at Tauranga Ika Marae on 8 June 2025. Meridian and its experts presented on the project, answered questions from the Iwi and hapuu members in attendance and received feedback on the proposal. The main action from this hui was to organise a visit to key areas of the project site with Iwi and hapuu members which took place on 29 June 2025. This was a further opportunity to share knowledge about the site and gather feedback on the proposal to inform the project design.

Meridian understands the CEA process has continued with weekly hui. Meridian and its experts have attended these weekly hui from time to time when requested, to share more information about the project, including updating key design changes (including changes in response to feedback from consultation), and providing an overview of effects assessments.

Meridian also expects that Te Ihupuku Marae will submit a CEA.

3.4 Fast Track Approvals process

Meridian has aimed to ensure TKoR and hapuu are well informed about the Fast Track Approvals process as it relates to Waiinu Energy Park. Meridian first contacted TKoR in relation to the Fast-Track process in early March 2024. This was followed by emails in April 2024 as more information about the timing of the process was released. Meridian shared the Waiinu Energy Park Fast-Track Submission with TKoR on 16 April 2024 and sought feedback prior to its submission to MfE. The feedback was reflected in the final submission to MfE in May 2024. At a meeting on 8 May 2024, Meridian presented on the topic of renewable energy project consenting through the RMA process and proposed Fast-Track Approvals process. This was further discussed at a hui held at Taranga Ika Marae on 8 June 2025 and in subsequent conversations with TKoR including a Rangatira hui held between Meridian and TKoR leadership in October 2025. A copy of the draft Referral Application was provided to TKoR on 6 October 2025 and invited any direct comments and feedback. Comments were received 27 March 2026 and these were incorporated into the Referral Application.

3.5 Renewable Energy Careers

TKoR and Meridian have discussed working together to develop a capability building programme. As part of this work a co-design capabilities workshop was held between TKoR and Meridian on 8 May 2024. This session was the first step in a workstream to improve the knowledge and understanding of the types of jobs and careers in the renewable energy sector and the training and education pathways into these roles. Meridian provided an overview of the types of jobs that are available during development, construction and operation of a wind or solar farm. Meridian referenced the recent achievements and learnings from the Harapaki wind farm project; including successful initiatives to hire locally. Additionally, Meridian provided an overview of our work developing opportunities for mana whenua in our project areas. Discussions on capability building, training, job opportunities in the electricity industry generally and in relation to the proposed project will continue as part of the Relationship Agreement conversations.

3.6 Local Effects

Meridian's understanding of the local effects of the proposed project in relation to the rohe of Ngaa Rauru Kiihahi has developed through regular hui since the start of our engagement. In May 2024, TKoR generously hosted Meridian on a hiko to significant locations in their rohe. This included travelling to Tauranga Ika Marae so TKoR could show MEL the view from the Marae grounds. The Marae has an expansive view of the coast. A key outcome of this visit was a commitment from Meridian to provide visual simulations of the view from key locations, including the marae, which has now been completed.

Another outcome from the hiko to Waiinu Beach and the coastal area was Meridian's improved understanding of the significance of Herehere I Moana Marae near to Waiinu Beach. The location is used extensively during summer months for camping and fishing. Meridian has responded to this information in its project layout, by specifying this location as a sensitive noise receptor and a sensitive location for visual effects.

Meridian and its landscape architect were hosted on a visit to five marae locations in the rohe on 25 September 2024. A subsequent visit to Te Ihupuku urupaa took place on 25 November 2025. The purpose was to take photographs of key viewpoints which has been used to produce visual simulations of the iterative project layouts, which have been shared with TKoR and Marae where requested.

The hui at Tauranga Ika Marae on 8 June 2025 and site visit on 26 June 2025 were extremely valuable opportunities for Meridian to learn more about the local effects of the proposal. Meridian has continued to develop the project layout through the consent design process in response to feedback from Ngaa Rauru Kiihahi.

TKoR and Meridian have discussed the proximity of the development to Marae and Meridian are committed to continuing engagement through all stages of development with all affected persons. The local effects being assessed include noise, visual, ecology, cultural, archaeology, and construction effects.

3.7 Terms of Engagement

Meridian and TKoR recently signed a Terms of Engagement (ToE) agreement establishing a collaborative, good faith working relationship to support the assessment and management of cultural and environmental effects associated with the Waiinu Energy Park. The agreement sets expectations around engagement principles, protection of maatauranga, resourcing commitments, and governance through a joint leadership group. Overall, the ToE provides a structured framework that enables meaningful iwi participation throughout the project development.

3.8 Relationship Agreement

Meridian is committed to developing a genuine partnership with TKoR, and where requested, relevant hapuu, working collaboratively to support and enable key initiatives to be achieved. As engagement has progressed and the CEA develops Meridian expects to enter into a formal Relationship Agreement or Partnership Agreement to formalise the expectations and goals of the relationship.

3.9 Treaty Settlement

The Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi Claims Settlement Act 2005 and Deed of Settlement with the Crown do not make references directly applicable to the project site. Outside of the project there are sites and features that are important to Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi including Marae, waterbodies and the coastal environment.

4. Community Engagement

The project site is located near to the communities of Waitōtara, Waiinu Beach township, and the dwellings across the farms, local roads, and SH3.

Meridian has been engaging with the local community on the proposal since September 2024. It is noted that this engagement has extended beyond individuals directly affected by the proposal, and has included the wider community who may have an interest in the project, regardless of whether they are directly impacted. In addition to this broader engagement, Meridian has undertaken targeted engagement with landowners directly involved in, or adjacent to, the project footprint. This includes those landowners whose properties host project infrastructure, as well as neighbouring landowners who may experience direct effects. Meridian has entered, or is in the process of entering, into commercial agreements with landowners within the project footprint. These landowners represent a key stakeholder group and have been closely involved in the development of the project.

Several of the involved landowners also hold adjoining or nearby land outside the project footprint, and engagement has therefore extended to consideration of effects across their wider landholdings. In addition, adjacent and nearby landowners who may be affected by visual, noise, traffic, or ecological effects have been identified through technical assessments and engaged directly. This has included property-specific discussions to understand potential effects and to inform the development of mitigation measures.

Meridian's technical assessments (including landscape and visual, noise, and ecological assessments) have informed the identification of those parties most likely to be affected by the proposal. Engagement with these parties is ongoing and will continue to inform the preparation of the Substantive Application and mitigation measures.

In addition to the public engagement outlined below, the project website has been public since September 2024 (<https://www.meridianenergy.co.nz/new-projects/waiinu-energy-park>). The website includes information about the project, frequently asked questions about renewable energy projects, Meridian contact details in relation to the project, and the public newsletters are uploaded to the website.

A significant follow up activity to the community engagement has been meeting members of the local community at their residences to provide more information, answer questions, and assess their individual effects including visual effects.

Key engagement with the community included two community hall open days (26th September 2024 and 9th June 2025) which were each advertised through 1,600+ flyers posted locally, and on radio and Facebook; meeting with the Waiinu Beach Residents & Ratepayers Association; 286 letters sent to project neighbours; regular newsletters sent to those who signed-up (in May 2025, June 2025, September 2025, and December

2025); 42 in-person meetings with individual neighbours to the project, and numerous emails and phone calls.

5. Other Stakeholders

Meridian has been engaging with other stakeholders in relation to the project since 2022. This engagement has included local authorities and relevant administering agencies as required by Section 11 of the FTA, along with other interested government departments and organisations. The engagement is summarised below.

5.1 Local Authorities

Meridian has been engaging with the relevant district councils¹ since early 2023 and regional councils² since 2024 on a range of topics, including updates on the project timeline and consenting route, community engagement, and local effects on roading. A site familiarisation visit with 17 representatives from all Council's was undertaken in January 2026. Following the site visit Meridian provided formal notice of the Proposal to each of the Local Authorities and invited any comments in accordance with Section 11(1)(b) of the FTA.

Comments were subsequently received from all Councils in early March 2026. The referral application was updated to incorporate the relevant comments. This included amending the ecology effects memorandum to include details on significant ecological areas within and near the project site, more detail on wetland types and the assessment of their significance. The landscape and visual effects memorandum was amended to include how the assessment influenced the project design/project shaping. For example, the turbine layout was changed to avoid highly sensitive coastal dunes and the Waitōtara river corridor and locating turbines within inland modified dunes, pastoral and exotic forestry areas. Solar arrays are located in low-lying visually contained inland dune areas which was determined through a “mitigation by design” approach.

5.2 Relevant Administering Agencies

Section 11(1)(b) of the FTA requires notification in writing to be provided to any relevant administering bodies. For the proposed referral, Department of Conservation (**DOC**), Ministry for the Environment (**MfE**) and Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga are administering bodies as Resource Consents, a Wildlife Authority and Archaeological Authority are sought. Meridian sought early engagement with DOC in late 2022. Initial feedback was received in May 2023 which informed the assessment and design process. Meridian engaged further with DOC in May 2025 as part of the pre-application consultation process. Meridian has engaged with Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga and provided the archaeological assessment that has been prepared for the site and initial feedback was received outlining that the information provided by the project archaeologist was extremely useful. Meridian also undertook initial consultation with MfE and a standard response outlining the referral application process was received.

5.3 Transpower (New Zealand) Limited

Meridian has been engaging with Transpower in relation to the Project since 2022 with an application for a Concept Assessment, which was completed in April 2023. Meridian made an application to the Generation Connection Investigation Pipeline in October and entered the queue in November 2023. The Investigations Phase for the project started in July 2025.

¹ South Taranaki District Council and Whanganui District Council

² Taranaki Regional Council and Horizons Regional Council

5.4 Other Stakeholders

Meridian has been engaging with various other stakeholders, including Powerco, New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, KiwiRail, Port Taranaki, relevant Members of Parliament, Venture Taranaki, CAA, Silver Fern Farms, FirstGas, FENZ and Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga.

6. Design Iterations in Response to Consultation

The project design has been directly informed through the consultation and engagement undertaken with mana whenua, local community, and stakeholders. This is in addition to multiple design iterations that were informed by expert advice from our consultants based on extensive field work and studies to minimise adverse impacts on local communities. Ongoing engagement with all stakeholders will continue to inform the preparation of the Substantive Application and mitigation measures.

A summary of the major design iterations from the *direct external engagement* is provided below.

Design Iteration	Design Feedback Summary	Key Design Changes
September 2024: Community Open Day 1	Community feedback largely related to visual effects, potential for noise effects, and ensuring the project infrastructure does not impact public access to the coastal environment. We also heard concerns around traffic and use of public roads.	Further work to maximise generation from the site while maintaining constraints shared with community. Removal of wind turbine closest to Waitōtara. Decision to avoid Waiinu Beach Road for major heavy construction traffic to reduce effects on local road users.
June 2025: Mana Whenua Hui	Feedback through Mana Whenua hui and the CEA process highlighted concerns around visual effects, including request to remove two turbines close to Te Ihupuku marae, concerns around lighting effects at night, ecological effects, impact on archaeological sites, and sustainability of the project during construction, operation and decommissioning.	Review of turbine positions near Te Ihupuku Marae to reduce visual effects and avoid archaeological sites resulting in removal of three turbines. Review of turbine positions to include additional setbacks from ecological habitats recommended by ecologists.
June 2025: Community Open Day 2	Feedback at Community Open Day 2 from Waiinu Beach residents focussed on the proximity of turbines to the township and concerns about the potential for associated visual effects.	Decision to remove the four turbines closest to Waiinu Beach from the layout. This decision was made following consideration of the consistent feedback from Waiinu Beach residents at the open day and subsequent meetings with residents and Landscape Architect to improve understanding of the visual effects. Expert advice from Landscape Architects recommended that material reduction in visual effects on Waiinu

Design Iteration	Design Feedback Summary	Key Design Changes
		Beach residents could be achieved by removal of four turbines.
August 2025 – March 2026: Consent Design (Referral Application)	Revised layout shared with TKoR, local community, local authorities, and other stakeholders. Positive feedback has been received while noting residual concerns around effects of project which will be addressed through the Substantive Application and mitigation measures.	Confirmed project footprint.