

Meridian Energy Ltd  
Proposed Ruakaka  
Solar Park

–Hearing Notes–



## CONTENTS

1.	NOTES PRESENTED BEFORE COMMISSIONER TAYLOR AND HILL 6 August 2024 .....	3
2.	LEGAL – MRS APPLEYARD.....	3
3.	DR SARAH FYLNN – WETLAND TYPOLOGY – DUNE SLACK WETLANDS.....	3
4.	MS COOK – FLUCTUATIONS IN NATURAL INLAND WETLAND EXTENT.....	4
5.	MR FULLER & DR SHARPIRO – SITE SUITABILITY OF OFF-SET SITE 3 .....	4
6.	PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS 6 AUGUST 2004.....	4
7.	RESPONSE TO COMMISSIONER HILL REGARDING WETLAND TYPOLOGY.....	5
8.	CONCLUSION.....	5

## 1. NOTES PRESENTED BEFORE COMMISSIONER TAYLOR AND HILL

### 6 August 2024

In the order of the notes, I took yesterday (5 August 2024) I thought I would address the following.

## 2. LEGAL – MRS APPELYARD

In respect of my evidence, and subsequent rebuttal evidence Mrs Appleyard has pinned these as largely repetitive and close minded.

Despite these claims, I have strived to provide a thorough and balanced analysis, when considering the potential effects of proposal.

My intention has always been to highlight important considerations and ensure that all relevant factors are taken into account, especially given the complexity of the project, in this landscape.

I would like to mention that I support the transition to renewable energy generation. I grew up on Aotea/Great Barrier Island and was raised with solar panels, off grid. The reason for providing the rebuttal evidence was that some of my outstanding s92 requests had only now been provided as evidence.

## 3. DR SARAH FYLNN – WETLAND TYPOLOGY – DUNE SLACK WETLANDS

I would like to draw attention to the Manaaki Whenua (Landcare Research) website in relation to the definition of dunes slack wetlands.<sup>1</sup>

Northland Regional Council (NRC) will need to be satisfied, if still relevant with the following.

Dr Fynn in her statement summary of evidence referred to these wetland areas as dune swale wetlands.

I would like to note that the dune slack wetland definition "*In a broader sense these ecosystems include dune hollows, deflation hollows, and swales.*"

In my opinion irrespective of the differences in terminology used between myself and Dr Fynn, the fact remains that dune swale wetlands are a subset of dune slack wetlands.

In my opinion, Dr Flynn has clearly noted the differences between Site 1 and Site 3.

Site 1 – Contains sand and peat or peat over sand

Site 3 – Contains peat with a brackish influence.

NRC will need to be satisfied that a dune slack wetland can be created without sand.

## 4. MS COOK – FLUCTUATIONS IN NATURAL INLAND WETLAND EXTENT

No mutual agreement has been reached on the natural inland wetland extent on Site 1. However, based on the evidence presented by Ms Cook, we can at least agree that the wetland extents are subject to significant variability.

There appears to be no disagreement that the wetland extent on Site 1 during my site visit (which involved GPS survey/rapid assessment) was closer to or closest to the maximum extent out of all the site visits. Unfortunately, even with an open mind I cannot unsee these observations.

My opinion remains that the wetland extent on site 1 can/do fluctuate significantly, covering many hectares more than has been identified by Boffa Miskell Limited (BML).

In relation to a point raised by Commissioner Taylor relating to area size and fluctuations. Site 1 contains a wetland feature(s) over a distance of approximately 1.4km and Site 3 proposes wetland over an area of approximately 600m.

## 5. MR FULLER & DR SHARPIRO – SITE SUITABILITY OF OFF-SET SITE 3

In relation to the evidence presented by Mr Fuller and Dr Shapiro nothing really changes my opinion and if anything introduces many more questions than answers in relation to the specifics around wetland construction and viability of the offset site.

## 6. PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS 6 AUGUST 2004

**Fish & Game**

In relation to the concerns raised by Fish & Games regarding the proposed avifauna management plan as a condition of consent.

My opinion is that the loss of a single bittern associated with the proposed solar farm will result in an incremental impact on the national population, which would be difficult to mitigate against.

### **Patuharakeke & Dr Kepa**

I asked the following question “I am unsure of the aspirations of Patuharakeke and Dr Kepa relating to the proposed offset on Site 3.”

## **7. RESPONSE TO COMMISSIONER HILL REGARDING WETLAND TYPOLOGY**

Mr Hill asked if the definition from the Manaaki Whenua (Landcare Research) website relating to dune slack wetlands had been peer reviewed and is it accepted in the relevant circles.

My opinion in consultation with other experts is that whether the features are specifically dune slack or dune swale, or one is a subset set of the other, they are both afforded the same threat status of Endangered<sup>2</sup>. The website provides the relevant information relating to peer reviews.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

My opinion expressed today and within my evidence remains unchanged.

### **Notes prepared by:**

Jack Warden  
Senior Ecologist  
BAppSci – Maj Biodiversity Management  
Rural Design 1984 Ltd