

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act 1991 ("**RMA**")

AND

IN THE MATTER

of the Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement
2021 (Non-freshwater parts) ("**PORPS**")

**SRMR TOPIC: SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUE FOR
INFRASTRUCTURE**

JOINT WITNESS STATEMENT FROM THE PLANNING EXPERTS

22 MARCH 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The expert planners involved:

- Chris Horne (CHo) for Chorus New Zealand Limited, Spark New Zealand Trading Limited and Vodafone New Zealand Limited
- Megan Justice (MJ) for PowerNet Limited, Network Waitaki Limited and Aurora Energy Limited
- Ainsley McLeod (AM) for Transpower New Zealand Limited
- Claire Hunter (CHu) for Contact Energy
- Stephanie Styles (SS) for Manawa Energy
- Susan Ruston (SR) for Meridian Energy
- Mike Freeman (MF) for Otago Regional Water Users Group, Federated Farmers and DairyNZ
- Ben Farrell (BF) for NZSki and Real Group Limited
- Sarah Ho (SH) for Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency

1.2 Planners who made enquiries about the scope and nature of the caucusing but elected not to directly participate:

- Elizabeth Soal for Waitaki Irrigators Collective
- Kirsty O'Sullivan for Queenstown Airport Corporation

1.3 Expert caucusing was undertaken in response to Hearing Minute 6 to explore if the experts can agree on a Significant Resource Management issue for infrastructure. A caucusing session was undertaken with all interested participants outlined in Paragraph 1 of this statement on 7 March 2023. A provisional version of an issue statement was pre circulated to the group. As a result of the caucusing session, some broad outcomes were agreed and an updated draft version of an issue statement and supported text circulated for further inputs from the group with an agreement to come back together to finalise points of agreement and disagreement on 21 March 2023.

2. BROAD MATTERS AGREED AT 7 MARCH 2023 MEETING

2.1 The following matters were agreed by the participants:

- Caucusing of the experts should be undertaken in accordance with the the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023.
- The issue should cover *Infrastructure* in general, as defined in the RPS and s2 of the Resource Management Act 1991, and not *Regionally Significant Infrastructure* given that the scope of the latter is yet to be determined, and any distinction can be addressed at objectives and policies level in the RPS.
- The purpose of an infrastructure issue is to acknowledge that because of functional needs and operational needs, it may not be possible to avoid sensitive environments in both rural and urban contexts, and it was important at an issue level to acknowledge this. Means to resolve any apparent conflicts between provision of infrastructure and protecting the values and attributes of sensitive environments by the community can be addressed via the objectives and policies.
- The group acknowledges that infrastructure can both benefit and adversely affect Māori. The group did not consider it appropriate to provide any specific drafting on opportunities and/or effects on Kāi Tahu from infrastructure under either the “Social” sub-hearing or a new “Cultural” sub-heading. It is noted from Minute 8 that any drafting resulting from this caucusing will be circulated to Kāi Tahu for comment. The group considered that Kāi Tahu is most appropriately placed to identify how infrastructure may affect their well-being and aspirations should they wish to do so, and that the Hearing Panel can take any such response into any final drafting in their decision.

2.2 The group discussed the provisional issue statement and explanatory text wording and agreed to provide further comments to enable a revised version to be circulated and further discussed on 21 March 2023.

3. WORDING OF ISSUE STATEMENT AND SUPPORTING TEXT

3.1 Following a meeting on 21 March 2021 to discuss updated wording integrating comments of the various participants, the following Significant Resource Management Issue for Infrastructure was agreed by the planners with any points of disagreement by specific planners noted (paragraph numbering has been added for ease of reference but is not intended to be included in the PORPS):

1. **SRMR-IX - The social, economic and cultural well-being of people and communities, and their health and safety, relies on infrastructure. However, infrastructure operation and development can conflict with the achievement of some environmental objectives.**

Statement

2. *Infrastructure is essential for people, communities and the economy to thrive. Without connections enabled by transport networks (land, sea and air), water networks (water supply, wastewater and stormwater reticulation), energy generation, transmission and distribution networks, (electricity, gas and liquid fuels) and telecommunication networks (wired and wireless), communities would be isolated from each other, people's health and wellbeing would suffer, and opportunities for growth and development would be limited. Infrastructure also provides environmental benefits, for example renewable electricity generation reducing New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions. Some infrastructure in Otago is regionally or nationally significant.*
3. *Infrastructure is a significant physical resource that often crosses local authority boundaries and different zones, and can impact on sensitive environments such as coastal areas, significant natural areas, outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes, heritage sites and areas of significance to Kāi Tahu. In many cases some adverse effects cannot be avoided because of functional needs and operational needs. There is a need to recognise the importance of infrastructure to the wellbeing of communities and to enable appropriate provision of new infrastructure, as well as the upgrading, operation and maintenance of existing infrastructure.*

Context

4. *Otago's infrastructure provides communication, electricity generation and conveyance, transportation including airports, as well as the provision of essential services such as water supply and wastewater management. Much of this infrastructure is classified as lifeline utility infrastructure, which needs to be able to function during emergencies and recover quickly following major events including natural disasters.*
5. *Infrastructure has a number of challenges for example:*
 - *demographic change and economic growth – infrastructure must remain fit for purpose to serve a growing and changing population and economy;*
 - *improving infrastructure quality – such as reducing carbon emissions, providing safe drinking water, and lifting environmental quality, as well as adapting to new technologies;*
 - *adapting to climate change – such as recognising the role of renewable electricity in reducing fossil fuel use and responding to national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets;*
 - *responding to natural hazards – providing resilience including through rebuilding, strengthening or relocating existing infrastructure;*
 - *responsibility to operate, maintain and renew infrastructure – ongoing costs and replacement of aging infrastructure and ensuring safety and resilience; and*
 - *cost pressures - infrastructure investment is long term and involves large up-front costs to develop and upgrade, and funding often needs to be planned years in advance meaning that certainty is important to investment.*
6. *There is significant pressure on many infrastructure providers to meet national emission reduction targets and associated strategies or plans. For example:*

- *For the transport sector, there is a focus on reducing reliance on cars and supporting people to walk, cycle and use public transport; rapidly adopt low-emission vehicles; and begin work to decarbonise heavy transport and freight.*
 - *For the electricity sector, there is a need to develop considerable new renewable electricity generation capacity throughout New Zealand, and then to transmit and distribute that electricity to end users; reduce reliance on fossil fuels and exposure to volatile global fuel markets; and reduce emissions and energy use.*
7. *National policy statements provide directions for enabling the development and operation of infrastructure and the protection of infrastructure from the effects of other activities (NPSREG, NPSET, NPSUD); and the protection of sensitive environments and natural resources (NZCPS, NPSFM, NPSHPL). Tensions between these directions need to be resolved to enable appropriate ongoing provision of infrastructure for social, economic and cultural wellbeing and the health and safety of communities.*

Impact Snapshot

Environmental

8. *Infrastructure providers have a huge role to play in enabling net-zero carbon emissions through development of renewable electricity generation and reducing carbon emissions. Infrastructure can also support work from home solutions reducing demand for travel (e.g., providing quality broadband connections).*
9. *Infrastructure can have adverse effects on the environment, which needs to be appropriately managed. However, infrastructure operation, maintenance, upgrading and development is frequently limited by functional needs and operational needs that impose locational and design constraints and can limit the extent to which it is feasible to avoid or mitigate some adverse effects on the environment.*
10. *There are sensitive environments that are vulnerable to change from infrastructure development and growth. In some instances, it may be unavoidable to locate infrastructure in these areas.*
11. *Incompatible activities in close proximity to infrastructure can have direct adverse effects and reverse sensitivity effects on the operation, maintenance, upgrade and development of infrastructure.*

Economic

12. *Infrastructure supports economic growth and development. Within Otago, and particularly for the larger towns and cities and international tourism destinations like Queenstown, well-functioning infrastructure is essential. Efficient and effective transport infrastructure including airports, communications, water, wastewater and stormwater, as well as resilient electricity generation and conveyance, is critical to support tourism and the wider economic success of the region.*
13. *Inter-regional links such as transport, electricity and communication networks traversing or originating from the Otago Region also supports the economy of other regions and New Zealand generally.*
14. *Electricity generation, transmission and distribution networks are critical to the economic wellbeing of people, industry, and communities. Impacts on electricity assets and networks arising from natural hazards, climate change and incompatible activities may compromise*

the ability to operate, maintain or develop the networks; increase the risk of network faults; or reduced supply not meeting demand.

15. *There has been, and is likely to continue to be, significant changes in the way our communities work and live, with many now working remotely or from home. Reliable and efficient infrastructure is essential to supporting these changes. Failing to proactively manage incompatible activities in proximity to the infrastructure and a lack of integrated management and long-term strategic planning for land-use activities can impact negatively on the ability for providers to provide secure and reliable services.*

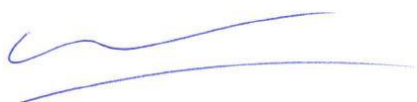
Social

16. *The ability to access reliable infrastructure networks is part of our way of life. When these services are not available there are direct impacts on the health and wellbeing of families and communities, such as schools closing, lack of healthcare, reduced access to recreation, an inability to communicate with others and disruptions to supply networks for basic goods and services such as drinking water and food supply. There is a community expectation that day to day infrastructure will be provided at all times.*
17. *Infrastructure needs to be safe. Roads for example need to be fit for purpose to avoid serious injury or loss of life.*

4. ANY SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE ISSUE WORDING BY THE PARTICIPANTS

- 4.1 BF considers par 9 should be amended as follows: *“Infrastructure can have adverse effects on the environment, which needs to be appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated ~~managed~~.”*

Jointly Signed on 22 March 2023 by:



Chris Horne



Megan Justice



Ainsley McLeod



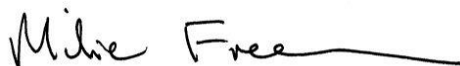
Claire Hunter



Stephanie Styles



Susan Ruston



Mike Freeman



Ben Farrell



Sarah Ho