

Highlights Package

Summary of evidence of Dougall Campbell on Submission points by Transpower NZ Ltd Before Waikato District Council

Proposed Waikato District Plan: Hearing 22 – Infrastructure

- 1 My name is Dougall Campbell. I am the Environmental Policy and Planning Group Manager at Transpower NZ Ltd (“Transpower”). I have been employed with Transpower, in various roles, for over 16 years.
- 2 This summary briefly sets out an overview of my Primary Evidence, which stands notwithstanding any other Primary or Rebuttal evidence, including the S42A Reports.

Significance of the National Grid

- 3 As outlined in Primary Evidence, Transpower New Zealand Limited (Transpower) operates the National Grid, which transmits electricity throughout New Zealand. The National Grid is critical to the social and economic wellbeing of the Waikato District and our nation generally. Transpower has a duty to maintain, upgrade and develop the National Grid. In a planning context, the need to operate, maintain, develop and upgrade the electricity transmission network is recognised as a matter of national significance through the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008 (‘NPSET’).

Operation, Maintenance, Upgrade, and Development of the National Grid

- 4 Transpower adopts a thorough and systematic approach to planning for and establishing new National Grid assets. While a resilient National Grid remains at the heart of New Zealand’s energy future, climate change has become a central issue for governments globally and hence for Transpower as a responsible owner and operator of the National Grid on behalf of New Zealanders.
- 5 In order to give effect to the NPSET, the Proposed Waikato District Plan (“PWDP”) must include provisions to:
 - Recognise and provide for the national significance of the National Grid,
 - Manage the effects of the National Grid, and
 - Manage effects of the National Grid.
- 6 The National Grid has operational requirements and engineering constraints that both dictate and constrain the way it is managed. Transpower has a duty to maintain, upgrade and develop the National Grid. To meet that duty, it runs an extensive programme of inspections and maintenance, and actively plans for the future. A such Transpower wishes to see appropriate planning provisions included in the PWDP to ensure Transpower is able to develop, upgrade, operate, and maintain the National Grid to enable a sustainable, secure and reliable supply of electricity to the Waikato District and nationally.
- 7 With regard to managing the effects of land use and development on the National Grid, corridors around the National Grid are necessary to:
 - a) Ensure the network can be efficiently operated, maintained, developed and upgraded by providing the working and access space to do this;

- b) Manage reverse sensitivity effects;
- c) Ensure sensitive activities are generally not provided for in the area directly under lines; and
- d) Protect the safety of both the National Grid and people working or living close to it.

8 Transpower's approach to NPSET implementation is to ensure that it only seeks the minimum district plan restrictions necessary to ensure the NPSET is given effect to. A number of activities have the potential to compromise the operation, maintenance, upgrade and development of the National Grid. The nature of activities can be broadly categorised as land use, subdivision and earthworks. I comment on these in turn:

- **Land Use:** In addition to the health and safety risks of activities occurring near the National Grid assets, activities can also directly compromise the ability for Transpower to operate, maintain and upgrade its assets through restricting access or adverse effects on the Grid assets themselves. Transpower experiences a range of reverse sensitivity effects from those who carry out activities or wish to develop land near its assets. These complaints are, for instance, about visual or noise effects or effects on agricultural operations. A particular focus is also on restricting sensitive activities within proximity of the assets given the increased exposure and electrical hazard risk such activities are subject to and increased risk of harm and incidents. Restriction of sensitive and incompatible development near the lines will reduce the likelihood of reverse sensitivity effects, harm to people, as well ensuring security of supply.
- **Subdivision:** Subdivision sets the framework for land use going forward, and careful regulation of subdivision can prevent the creation of unusable (or severely constrained) lots. Transpower supports the PWDP approach to manage the potential effects of a subdivision on the operation/maintenance and upgrading of the network - including retaining an area for access to the network.
- **Earthworks:** Earthworks can have a range of effects on the National Grid including: undermining of support structures thereby compromising the operation of the Grid and security of supply; safety risks through reducing clearance distance between the ground and conductors; generating dust which can result in the build-up of material on the National Grid lines and increase the wear on the equipment reducing its useable lifespan; and restriction of access which restrict Transpower's ability to access and locate the heavy machinery required to maintain support structures around the lines, and may lead to potential tower failure and significant constraints on the operation of the lines, such as power outages. For these reasons, Transpower seeks controls on earthworks. In my experience, the New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances (NZECP34:2001) does not protect working and access space near National Grid assets and cannot be relied upon to give effect to the NPSET.

9 Transpower values its relationship with councils, the community and landowners and endeavours to work with them to reach the best outcome for all parties concerned. Transpower works with councils around the country prior to, and after notification of proposed plans and plan changes intended to give effect to the NPSET. Transpower continues to engage with councils once operative plan provisions are in place, including involvement in the resource consent process. Overall, I am supportive of the planning framework within the PWDP.

Dougall Campbell, 15 October 2020