

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF the proposed Plan Change 34 Flood
Hazards to the Taupō District Plan

AND submissions and further submissions
lodged by **Trustpower Limited**

EVIDENCE OF NICOLA IRENE FORAN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My full name is Nicola Irene Foran.

1.2 I am employed by Trustpower Limited (“**Trustpower**”) as a Lead Environmental Advisor and am based at its head office in Tauranga.

1.3 I am authorised to present this evidence on behalf of Trustpower.

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

2.1 I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Science (Earth Science) from the University of Waikato (2004) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Arts (Planning) from Massey University (2010). I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute and have over 14 years’ experience in the field of environmental and resource management.

2.2 I have been employed by Trustpower since 2013. Prior to joining Trustpower, I worked as an Environmental Planning Consultant in the Hawke’s Bay Region for 5 years, and amongst other roles, as an Environmental Co-ordinator with Genesis Energy for 2.5 years.

2.3 In my position at Trustpower, I am responsible for, amongst other things, resource management regulatory processes which may contribute to or impact on Trustpower’s existing, consented or prospective electricity generation assets and associated infrastructure. These include managing the regulatory monitoring of planning activities across New Zealand, providing input into regional and district planning activities, including Environment Court Appeal processes.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

3.1 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note (2014) and I agree to comply with it. In that regard, I confirm that this evidence is written within my expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this evidence.

4. TRUSTPOWERS BACKGROUND

4.1 Trustpower is a publicly listed company and is predominantly a New Zealand owned company. It grew from the Tauranga Electric Power Board (established in 1924), and

was formed as part of the deregulation of the electricity supply industry in the mid-1990s. Trustpower now employs over 700 full time equivalent staff throughout New Zealand.

4.2 Until 1999, Trustpower was a vertically integrated company (that is, it had generation, local transmission, and retail interests) with a regional focus. Following the 1999 electricity reforms (introduced by the Electricity Industry Reform Act 1998), Trustpower sold its local transmission business and grew its generation and retail operations. In this respect, Trustpower's customer base grew from 50,000 to over 200,000, while its annual generation capacity increased from 300 GWh to 2,803 GWh.

4.3 Trustpower currently generates approximately 11% of New Zealand's total electricity supply and serves approximately 226,000 electricity customers, 32,000 gas customers and 90,000 telecommunications customers.

5. TRUSTPOWER'S INTERESTS IN THE TAUPŌ DISTRICT

5.1 Trustpower owns and operates the following hydro-electric generation schemes ("HEPS") in the Taupō District:

- The Hinemaiaia HEPS is located on the Hinemaiaia River, south-east of Taupō. The scheme consists of three dams, has a total generation capacity of 6.8MW and generates approximately 29.6GWh of electricity per annum. The resource consents for the Hinemaiaia HEPS expire in 2036.
- The Kuratau HEPS is located on the Kuratau River, south-west of Taupō. It has a total generation capacity of 6MW and generates approximately 29GWh of electricity per annum.
- Wheao HEPS – comprises the damming and diversion of the Wheao and Rangitaiki Rivers within the Kaingaroa Forest. The scheme has an installed generation capacity of 26.1 MW and produces approximately 111 GWh of electricity per annum. The resource consents for Wheao HEPS expire in 2026.

5.2 The Hinemaiaia, Kuratau and Wheao HEPS assist in providing the following benefits to the Taupō District and New Zealand:

- Avoiding the need to generate additional electricity from alternative, higher cost generation sources such as thermal generation (with its associated greenhouse gas emissions);
- A contribution to achievement of the New Zealand Energy Strategy's goal of 90% electricity generation from renewable resources by 2025 and addressing the effects of climate change;

- Reduced vulnerability from the loss of electricity supply through transmission line failures;
- Provision of hydro capacity in different climatic regions from the main storage lakes in the South Island – this reduces the risk of correlated dry periods across hydro capacity; and
- Provision and maintenance of areas with high recreational opportunities.

6. TRUSTPOWER’S SUBMISSION

6.1 Trustpower made a submission on the proposed Plan Change 34: Flood Hazards referred to in Council Officers Section 42A Report (“**Officers Report**”) as submission number OS17.

Flood Hazard Maps

6.2 Trustpower sought that the planning map depicting the flood hazard area near the Hinemaiaia B Power Station be amended, so that the tailrace was not part of the flood hazard area.

6.3 I note in the Statement of Evidence of Dr McConchie, that he has recommended the boundary of the flood hazard area be amended, and that it should be shifted downstream as indicted in Figure 12 of his evidence.

6.4 Dr McConchie also explains the reasoning behind why the modelling included this reach of the river, to assist with calibration of the model, and incorporating the hydrology data from below the HB Dam.

6.5 By amending the extent of the flood hazard in this area, it removes the hydro-electric generation infrastructure associated with the Hinemaiaia HEPS from the flood hazard overlay, and therefore, the scheme would no longer be subject to the provisions of this plan change.

6.6 I support the recommendation of Dr McConchie on this matter, and support the Reporting Officers recommendation that this be adopted.

District Wide Rules

6.7 Trustpower submitted on the District Wide rules, seeking clarity on what activities are covered by the permitted activity rule for infrastructure (4e.9.16).

- 6.8 I note the Reporting Officer has recommended amending this rule to include 'operation' and 'replacement'. Together with the existing terms used in this rule, it is clear that for any infrastructure located within a flood hazard area, its operation, maintenance, upgrading of existing along with the replacement or construction of new infrastructure is permitted.
- 6.9 I support these amendments and the recommendation of the Reporting Officer.

Remaining Provisions

- 6.10 Trustpower made submissions in support of Objective 3I.2.3; Policy 3I.2.3(ii); Objective 3I.2.4 and Policy 3I.2.4(i).
- 6.11 Trustpower sought minor amendments to 3I.1(ii) Introduction – Flooding; Policies 3I.2.3 (iii), (iv) and (v); Policy 3I.2.4(iv) and (v).
- 6.12 Trustpower also sought a new definition for 'Infrastructure not vulnerable to flood risk', and 'hydro electricity generation activities'.
- 6.13 As Trustpower's assets are no longer included in the flood hazard area overlay, and the permitted activity rule for infrastructure has been recommended for amendments which provide clarity over the extent of the activities its provides for, I am of the view that the remaining submission points are no longer needed to be pursued by Trustpower.
- 6.14 I have reviewed the Reporting Officers recommendations in relation to these provisions, and I support the changes that have been recommended.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 I support the recommendations of the Reporting Officer and of Dr McConchie with respect to the proposed changes to the Taupō District Plan.
- 7.2 I thank the Hearings Panel for considering my statement of evidence today.



Nicola Irene Foran (BSc, PGDipArts, MNZPI)

11 October 2018