

Submission from Tararua District Council

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on Transpower's proposed major capital investment programme affecting the Tararua District and neighbouring areas.

The Tararua District is experiencing significant interest and investment in electricity generation projects, with several renewable energy developments already consented or under construction, and additional projects being actively explored by private sector developers. Council's role in relation to these projects is as a regulator under the Resource Management Act and relevant planning frameworks. Decisions regarding whether projects proceed sit with project proponents, investors, and consent authorities through the applicable statutory processes.

Notwithstanding this distinction, the level of generation activity proposed within the district highlights the importance of ensuring that the transmission network is capable of accommodating future connections and supporting broader changes in electricity generation and demand. We recognise the strategic importance of strengthening the East-West corridor and improving connectivity between Woodville and Bunnythorpe.

The scale and long-term nature of this investment makes early, meaningful, and ongoing engagement with affected communities particularly important. Infrastructure of this significance succeeds when local knowledge, community aspirations, and stakeholder relationships are integrated into planning and delivery from the outset. Equally important is ensuring that communities hosting nationally significant infrastructure can see and understand the positive outcomes that result from that investment, whether through improved resilience, economic opportunities, local partnerships, environmental enhancement, or other community benefits.

Tararua District Council has extensive experience working alongside communities, iwi, landowners, businesses, and infrastructure providers on projects that require careful consideration of environmental, cultural, social, and economic outcomes. We understand the importance of building trust, maintaining open communication, and ensuring communities have genuine opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them. In our experience, engagement is most effective when it occurs early, is transparent, and demonstrates how community feedback has informed project development and outcomes.

As a regulatory authority, Council regularly manages complex resource management processes and appoints independent commissioners to assess consent applications under the Resource Management Act. With our new District Plan nearing completion, we are well placed to assist Transpower in understanding local planning frameworks, community expectations, and opportunities to support positive outcomes alongside major infrastructure investment.

We believe Council can play a constructive role in helping Transpower navigate a range of matters associated with the programme, including:

- Engagement with local communities, iwi, hapū, landowners, and key stakeholders.
- Understanding local environmental, cultural, and social values.
- Natural hazard considerations, including earthquakes, landslides, flooding, severe weather events, and wildfire risk.
- Asset concentration and corridor resilience.
- Consenting pathways and local planning requirements.
- Delivery challenges such as land access, supply chain constraints, and cost pressures.
- Managing uncertainty around future generation and demand growth while maintaining community confidence in long-term infrastructure investment.

While the need for transmission upgrades is driven by changing patterns of electricity generation, increasing demand, and the need for a resilient national grid, we consider the success of these investments will depend equally on the strength of relationships established with the communities they serve. Communities that host critical infrastructure should be recognised as key partners in its successful delivery and operation.

Council is committed to working collaboratively with Transpower throughout the planning and delivery process. We welcome the opportunity to share our understanding of the district, assist with stakeholder engagement, and help ensure that these investments are planned and delivered in a way that reflects local values, responds to

community concerns, and provides lasting benefits for our communities alongside the wider benefits delivered to New Zealand's electricity system.

We look forward to continuing the conversation and supporting the successful development of this important infrastructure programme.

Ngā mihi

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