Invest NZ Submission – Tararua Enabling Renewables MCP (Long List Consultation)

Overview
Invest NZ supports Transpower's investigation and the case for coordinated, anticipatory transmission investment to unlock the Tararua/Wairarapa region's renewable potential and avoid inefficient, piecemeal development

Market signals
While Invest NZ does not develop projects directly, we work closely with investors and have visibility of market activity. We note:

- A strong pipeline of wind, solar and battery storage projects, consistent with Transpower's identified generation outlook
- Variability in timing and commitment, reinforcing the need for scalable infrastructure
- Emerging large-scale demand, including data centres, which is increasingly being considered alongside generation

This demand is important as it can improve utilisation of transmission assets, reduce curtailment risk, and strengthen the overall investment case.

Support for coordinated, regional development
Invest NZ strongly supports a coordinated regional transmission approach, including 220 kV options where justified.

From an investor perspective, this approach:
- Provides greater certainty on access to grid capacity and timing
- Enables larger, more efficient developments
- Supports clustering of complementary infrastructure, including generation, storage and demand

We are seeing increasing interest in "energy park" models, where generation, storage and demand are developed together. This aligns with Invest NZ's NZ Energy Hubs work (with Aurecon), which highlights the role of integrated energy precincts in unlocking investment, improving system efficiency, and attracting capital.

Timing and certainty
Clear signals on timing, staging and access to capacity are critical to investor decision-making. We encourage Transpower to maintain close engagement with developers to refine assumptions on project timing and connection pathways.

Investment framing
Given the enabling nature of this investment, we encourage consideration of broader benefits where material, including:

- Attraction of foreign direct investment

- Regional economic development
- Enabling electrification and long-term system resilience
- Option value from future projects

Conclusion

Invest NZ supports the proposed approach and would welcome continued engagement with Transpower to provide market insights and facilitate investor connections where appropriate.