

Taupō District Plan Change 38 – Strategic Directions

IN THE MATTER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

A N D

IN THE MATTER Submissions on Plan Change 38 – Strategic Directions

AND Submissions and further submissions lodged by Manawa Energy

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ROMAEE ALICE CALLAND

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

TONKIN & TAYLOR LTD

9 August 2023

INTRODUCTION

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1 My full name is Romae Alice Calland.
- 2 I have held the position Principal Planner with Tonkin & Taylor since 2019. Prior to joining Tonkin & Taylor, I have worked as a planner in consultancy and local authority roles culminating in over 25 years' experience, mainly in New Zealand, but also including Australia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.
- 3 I hold the qualification of Master of Science, am a full member of Te Kōkiringa Taumata (NZPI) and am a certified commissioner under the Making Good Decisions certification programme.
- 4 Over the past four years, I have assisted Manawa Energy Limited (Manawa) with submissions and expert evidence on the Proposed Selwyn District Plan and the Proposed New Plymouth District Plan.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- 5 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the 2023 Environment Court Practice Note and that I agree to comply with it. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions I express. In particular, unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my sphere of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

BACKGROUND

- 6 In preparing my evidence, I have considered the following documents:
 - a The notified version of Plan Change 38;
 - b Submissions and further submissions on Plan Change 38;
 - c The overarching s.42A report prepared by Ms Hilary Samuel on behalf of TDC covering Plan Changes 38 - 43; and
 - d The s.42A report for Plan Change 38 prepared by Mr Rowan Sapsford on behalf of Taupō District Council.
- 7 In addition to considering the aforementioned documents, I have liaised with other renewable electricity generators that operate within the Taupō District and have also submitted on Plan Change 38.

SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF EVIDENCE

- 8 Where Mr Sapsford's corresponding s.42A report has accepted Manawa's amendments, or Manawa is supportive or neutral on the wording of the provisions, including amendments, I have not provided further comment and therefore limit this evidence to those provisions in contention.
- 9 My evidence is limited to the following matters of Plan Change 38 – Strategic Directions:
- a Strategic Direction 4 – Climate Change;
 - b Strategic Direction 5 – Significant and Local Infrastructure; and
 - c Strategic Direction 6 – Natural Environment Values.
- 10 As requested in Minute 5 from the Independent Hearing Panel, I have included a s.32AA evaluation as Appendix A and an amendments version that Manawa seeks be adopted as Appendix B.

ISSUE 1.3 – ENERGY CHAPTER

- 11 While Manawa's submission did not specifically seek the inclusion of an Energy Chapter in the Taupō District Plan, I would support the development of an Energy, Infrastructure and Transport chapter in accordance with the National Planning Standards.
- 12 However, in the absence of such a chapter, it is important that provisions that would normally sit in an Energy Chapter are captured elsewhere within the Taupō District Plan. This requirement is particularly pertinent given the current Resource Management Act Reform and the Transitional Provisions that may prevail under the Natural and Built and Environment Act that is likely to gain Royal Assent imminently.
- 13 Consequently, while I may accept the rationale that some matters sit better within an Energy Chapter, I believe that deferring these matters for an undefined period of time would not lead to good planning outcomes. Instead, I consider that they must be included now and can be replicated in an Energy Chapter at a later date.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4 – CLIMATE CHANGE

- 14 Manawa sought the inclusion of an additional objective and two additional policies. These additional provisions are recommended to elevate and recognise New Zealand's target of fifty percent of total final energy consumption to come

from renewable sources by 2035. Taupō District currently generates 27% of New Zealand's total electricity demand¹ and therefore it is imperative to not only maintain the existing generation activities but to also provide for further REG opportunities.

15 The s.42A report considers that the intent of these additional provisions is adequately covered by other policies. I would contend that the provisions of the Strategic Directions chapter allude to outcomes that could be achieved in the climate change space but do not provide strategic direction regarding the contribution of REG to enable Taupō District to achieve these outcomes.

16 Consequently, I recommend that an additional objective is added to 2.4.2 as follows:

"An increase in the amount of electricity generated from renewable sources within the Taupō District to assist with the decarbonisation of the economy."

17 Likewise, additional policies are required to provide stronger strategic direction to the Taupō District as follows:

"Recognise and provide for the use and development of the District's renewable energy resources to facilitate decarbonization of the economy, including a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, increased electricity generation capacity and improved security of supply including transmission."

"Enable the upgrading and maintenance of existing and development of new renewable electricity generation activities and transmission, including where contributing to one of the following:

- adaptation required to mitigate risks from climate change*
- provides for increased electricity output, or greater efficiency*
- continued safe, efficient and secure operation"*

18 These objectives and policies are considered to be enabling and will be more likely lead to positive outcomes.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5 – SIGNIFICANT AND LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

19 Manawa's submission sought to amend Policy 2.5.3.2 as follows:

¹ S42A report, para 215.

“Recognise and provide for the functional and operational needs associated with the use and development of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure.”

- 20 The s.42A offices report did not accept this change, stating that while renewable electricity generation (REG) has an elevated status through the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation (NPS-REG), that status is not automatically afforded to all nationally and regionally significant infrastructure. While that may be the case, I do not consider it an appropriate reason to reject the proposed change. Indeed, I would argue that to enable a well-functioning District, nationally and regionally significant infrastructure should be recognised and provided for.
- 21 Recognition on its own is not sufficient and Taupō District should provide for the operational needs, use and development of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 6 – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT VALUES

- 22 Again, in the absence of an energy chapter and an update to the Natural Values chapter of the Taupō District Plan, it is important that renewable energy generation is adequately addressed in the Strategic Directions such that adequate guidance is provided in the interim.
- 23 I acknowledge that Mr Sapsford completed his report prior to the gazette of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB). Nonetheless, it is important to note that the NPS-IB states - *Nothing in this National Policy Statement applies to the development, operation, maintenance or upgrade of renewable electricity generation assets and activities and electricity transmission network assets and activities.*²
- 24 As currently drafted, Strategic Direction 6 focuses on the protection, enhancement and restoration of indigenous biodiversity. While that is an important goal for the District, there is no guidance for the reader or decision maker as to the hierarchy of objectives or policies, nor is there subsequent guidance provided in an energy chapter or updated Natural Values chapter.
- 25 To address the lack of guidance, Manawa’s submission sought the inclusion of a new policy as follows:

² NPS-IB s1.3 (3)

"Recognise the benefits of offset measures and compensation and provide for their use as feasible alternatives to manage significant residual adverse effects of renewable electricity generation activities and regionally significant infrastructure."

- 26 This policy appreciates that in many cases it may not be possible to protect, enhance and restore, and that offsetting and compensation may be appropriate means to address adverse environment effects. This approach replicates that of Policy C2 in the NPS-REG that states:

When considering any residual environmental effects of renewable electricity generation activities that cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated, decision-makers shall have regard to offsetting measures or environmental compensation including measures or compensation which benefit the local environment and community affected.

CONCLUSION

- 27 In the absence of an energy chapter, I consider it imperative to set aside a purist planning approach to the Strategic Directions of the Taupō District Plan. This may not lead to the most succinct Strategic Directions or reflect how they would be drafted if the whole plan was being written or reviewed.
- 28 However, I considered that it is necessary to cater for the here and now and that a pragmatic approach must be adopted. I also note that there is the opportunity to include changes to the Strategic Directions in the development of an energy chapter or review of the Natural Values chapter.
- 29 In summary, it is my opinion that the amendment sought by Manawa (as outlined in this evidence) are appropriate and will assist in improving the consistency, usability and interpretation of provisions within the Strategic Directions chapter of the Taupō District Plan, including how provisions are implemented by both plan users and Council alike.
- 30 I consider that the amended provisions will be efficient and effective in achieving the purpose of the RMA, the relevant objectives of this plan and other relevant statutory documents.

Appendix A: s32AA evaluation

Amendment	S32AA assessment
Strategic Direction 4 – Climate Change	
<p>New Objective</p> <p><u>An increase in the amount of electricity generated from renewable sources within the Taupō District to assist with the decarbonisation of the economy.</u></p>	<p>Effectiveness & efficiency – See my evidence paragraphs 14 to 18 for reasoning as to why the recommended objective should be included.</p> <p>Costs & benefits – There is no cost to the proposed amendment to the provisions notified, and will provide a benefit to both plan users due to increased certainty as to the desired outcome.</p> <p>Risk of acting or not acting – There is a risk that not acting could result in a lack of provision for renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Conclusion as to the most appropriate action – The recommended Strategic Objective is considered to be the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act as it will assist the community to provide for their wellbeing through decarbonisation of the economy.</p>
<p>New Policy</p> <p><u>Recognise and provide for the use and development of the District's renewable energy resources to facilitate decarbonization of the economy, including a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, increased electricity generation capacity and improved security of supply including transmission.</u></p>	<p>Effectiveness & efficiency – See my evidence paragraphs 14 to 18 for reasoning as to why the recommended policy should be included.</p> <p>Costs & benefits – There is no cost to the proposed amendment to the provisions notified, and will provide a benefit to both plan users due to increased certainty as to the desired outcome.</p> <p>Risk of acting or not acting – There is a risk that not acting could result in a lack of provision for renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Conclusion as to the most appropriate action – The recommended Strategic Policy is considered to be the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act as it will assist the community to provide for their wellbeing through decarbonisation of the economy.</p>
<p>New Policy</p> <p><u>Enable the upgrading and maintenance of existing and development of new renewable electricity generation activities and transmission, including where contributing to one of the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>adaptation required to mitigate risks from climate change</u> 	<p>Effectiveness & efficiency – See my evidence paragraphs 14 to 18 for reasoning as to why the recommended policy should be included.</p> <p>Costs & benefits – There is no cost to the proposed amendment to the provisions notified, and will provide a benefit to both plan users due to increased certainty as to the desired outcome.</p>

Amendment	S32AA assessment
Strategic Direction 4 – Climate Change	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>provides for increased electricity output, or greater efficiency</u> • <u>continued safe, efficient and secure operation</u> 	<p>Risk of acting or not acting – There is a risk that not acting could result in a lack of provision for renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Conclusion as to the most appropriate action – The recommended Strategic Policy is considered to be the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act and provides consistency with higher order planning instruments, namely the NPS-REG.</p>
Strategic Direction 5 – Significant and Local Infrastructure	
<p>Amend Policy 2.5.3.2 <i>Recognise and provide for the functional and operational needs associated with the use and development of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure.</i></p>	<p>No s.32AA assessment is deemed necessary given that the extent of the amendment is inherently already part of the Strategic Policy.</p>
Strategic Direction 6 – Natural Environmental Values	
<p>New Policy <u>Recognise the benefits of offset measures and compensation and provide for their use as feasible alternatives to manage significant residual adverse effects of renewable electricity generation activities and regionally significant infrastructure</u></p>	<p>Effectiveness & efficiency – See my evidence paragraphs 22 to 26 for reasoning as to why the recommended policy should be included.</p> <p>Costs & benefits – There is no cost to the proposed amendment to the provisions notified, and will provide a benefit to both plan users due to increased certainty as to the desired outcome.</p> <p>Risk of acting or not acting – There is a risk that not acting could result in a lack of provision for renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Conclusion as to the most appropriate action – The recommended Strategic Policy is considered to be the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act and provides consistency with higher order planning instruments, namely the NPS-REG and NPS-IB.</p>

Appendix B: Amendments version

Black Text – Original wording of Proposed District Plan or as amended in the s.42A report

Red Text - Additional changes proposed by Manawa.

Strategic Direction 4 – Climate Change	
New Objective 2.4.2	<u>2. An increase in the amount of electricity generated from renewable sources within the Taupō District to assist with the decarbonisation of the economy.</u>
New Policy 2.4.3	<u>2. Recognise and provide for the use and development of the District's renewable energy resources to facilitate decarbonization of the economy, including a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, increased electricity generation capacity and improved security of supply including transmission.</u>
New Policy 2.4.3.3	<u>3. Enable the upgrading and maintenance of existing and development of new renewable electricity generation activities and transmission, including where contributing to one of the following:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>adaptation required to mitigate risks from climate change</u> • <u>provides for increased electricity output, or greater efficiency</u> • <u>continued safe, efficient and secure operation.</u>
Strategic Direction 5 – Significant and local infrastructure	
Amend Policy 2.5.3	2. Recognise <u>and provide for</u> the functional and operational needs associated with the use and development of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure.
Strategic Direction 6 – Natural environmental values	
New Policy 2.6.3	<u>7. Recognise the benefits of offset measures and compensation and provide for their use as feasible alternatives to manage significant residual adverse effects of renewable electricity generation activities and regionally significant infrastructure.</u>