

CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL
APPLICATION FOR RESOURCE CONSENT
RC240065 – HELIOS OTA OP LP
48 RANFURLY – NASEBY ROAD, RANFURLY 9396

MINUTE 4 Post Hearing Directions

- [1] There are a number of matters we ask the applicant to address as part of its written reply. We are happy for whoever is the most appropriate expert (or experts) to address each question. Please state which expert responds to each matter. These matters/questions are set out below.
- [2] **Scale** - How large (in terms of site and capacity) is this proposal compared to the other consented and applied for solar farms by Helios? In answer to a Panel question, Mr Schlichting stated that this proposal is required to be 300MW in order to be viable to connect to the Naseby substation. Is he able to confirm this (including evidence of this claim)?
- [3] **Contamination** – the composition of the panels and potential risk of contamination to ground and/or groundwater was raised by submitters, particularly given the panel failure rates expected by Mr Schlichting (in response to Panel questions he stated he expected failure rate of between 1 and 5%). How and where are potential impacts on soil and groundwater from contamination of solar panels addressed in the application/evidence? We refer to the Beca Hazardous Substances Assessment, dated 2023, which forms an Appendix to the application but does not appear to address the solar panels specifically.
- [4] **Fire Risk** – risk of fire from the solar farm, and the complexities of fighting such a fire was raised by several submitters, e.g. a fire originates in the centre of the solar panels area and which might not be able to be immediately accessed by appliances. Has FENZ considered the complexity of responding to a fire in that scenario, and is it comfortable the risks and complexities can be sufficiently addressed in the Fire Emergency Response Plan? A written response from FENZ on this matter would be preferable.
- [5] **Bond** – Mr Vincent clarified that there was no duplication intended for a bond (landowner and Council), but that it would be appropriate for Council to be party to a bond to assist with its compliance obligations (particularly due to submitter concerns about the perceived experimental nature of a solar farm of this size in this area). Please provide comment on this, including potential condition wording.
- [6] **Mitigation Planting** – several submitters and Dr Wells raise concerns that the proposed mitigation planting may struggle to thrive given the harsh climate, clay soils, and lack of water availability and wind. This is based on their personal experience with planting at their properties and Dr Wells' expertise.
- a. Given the transport assessment relies on successful mitigation planting to avoid yellow glare effects, and the landscape and visual assessment relies on successful mitigation planting to mitigate landscape and visual effects, how can we be confident the mitigation planting will be successful?
 - b. In particular, what water sources are available on the site, or external to the site, to use for irrigation and how viable are the use of water crystals at the very large scale required for the proposed planting if irrigation isn't viable?
 - c. Is there a risk to groundwater or animals from the use of water crystals?

- d. Is wind protection proposed (e.g. by planting exotics rows to protect natives from wind or other screening), and if so, what would this consist of?
 - e. What would be any practical implications of starting to plant sooner than once construction is underway?
 - f. Would there be merit in starting to plant in advance of construction to give more confidence in the success of the planting in terms of mitigation of glint and glare effects, and landscape/visual effects?
 - g. What is the availability of the type and numbers of plants required to give effect to the Landscape Planting and Maintenance Plan in the timeframe committed to in the application (for example, condition 19)?
- [7] Has the applicant discussed specific visual mitigation measures with the **Crossan family (Dwelling 4)**? Is there an opportunity to explore further mitigation planting or other mitigation measures regarding the Crossan property?
- [8] **Community Funding** – as per response to Panel questions, please include the applicant's commitment to community funding in the proposed conditions.
- [9] **Staff transport and accommodation** – as per response to Panel questions, please include the applicant's commitment to assisting with staff transport and accommodation in the proposed conditions.
- [10] **Grazing** – submitters who have experience in managing livestock in the area raise concerns about the practical difficulties in maintaining grazing on the site and/or maintaining grass cover/managing vegetation height which is also an important aspect of the Operational Fire Risk Management Plan. Please can you address this concern.
- [11] **Construction Management Plan** – would the applicant support including considerations to address the potential impact on the health and wellbeing of animals kept on the Real Dog Company's site, such as liaison with the operators as to timing and location of pile driving, and if so, please suggest some appropriate wording.
- [12] **Community Liaison** – please consider a condition requiring communication with the community relating to construction timing and providing a pathway for complaints.
- [13] **National Policy Statement – Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL)** – Please can Ms Banhidi clarify what are the functional need elements; and operational need elements of this proposal in terms of the NPS-HPL? Please respond to Mr Vincent's interpretation of the NPS-HPL.
- [14] The **Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025** is now Law. Does this Act have any implications to the Panel's consideration of this matter?
- [15] Please provide the above information as part of the **applicant's reply** by **5 September 2025**.
- [16] **Conditions** – please provide an updated set of conditions (using the conditions in Attachment A of Ms Banhidi's evidence as a starting point), with agreements/disagreements with Mr Vincent marked, by **29 August 2025**.

Dated this 22nd day of August 2025.

Signed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Taylor', written in a cursive style.

Louise Taylor

Chair – on behalf of the Independent Hearing Panel