

Submitter 54 - Susan McKeague
from Susie McKeague

Good Morning Panel,

My submission is in support of the application for the development of the solar farm.

Our reliance on fossil fuels for energy needs has to decrease and the use of renewable energy increase. In the Maniatoto there is already a small hydrogeneration scheme utilising the Taiari River flow and this solar option is a good balance to that supply. When the hydro generation capacity is reduced due to lower in stream flows of summer the solar panels will be producing electricity.

This sentiment and desire to maintain and create more renewable energy was captured as clear objectives in the most recent regional policy document, the Otago Regional Policy Statement.

The Otago Regional Policy Statement captures the high level visions, policies and objectives of Otago's people. As Regional Plans and District Plans are developed they are required to give effect to the Regional Policy Statement.

The most recent RPS includes an Energy chapter with Objectives that state:

- EIT-EN-01 The health and well being of Otago's communities and economy are supported by renewable electricity generation with the region that is safe, secure and resilient.
- EIT-EN-03 Development is located and designed to facilitate the efficient use of energy and to reduce demand if possible, minimising the contribution Otago makes to total greenhouse gas emissions.
- EIT-EN-02 The generation capacity of renewable electricity generation activities in Otago:
 - (1) is protected and maintained and where appropriate increased and
 - (2) Contributes to meeting New Zealand's national target for renewable electricity generation

Relevant policies include:

- EIT-EN-P2 Recognising renewable electricity generation activities in decision making

Decisions on allocation and use of natural and physical resources, including the use of freshwater and development of land:

- (1) Recognise the national significance of renewable electricity generation activities, including the national, regional and local benefits of renewable generation activities,

- (2) Have particular regard to the maintenance of current renewable electricity generation capacity and recognise that the attainment increases in renewable electricity generation will require significant development of renewable electricity generation activities

EIT-EN-P3 The security and installed capacity of renewable electricity supply is maintained or improved in Otago through appropriate provision for the development or upgrading of renewable electricity generation activities and diversification of the type or location of renewable electricity generation activities.

EIT-EN-P4 Identify new sites or resources

Provide for activities associated with the investigation, identification and assessment of potential sites and energy sources for renewable electricity generation.

The Policy Statement has acknowledged that renewable electricity generation is considered Regionally Significant infrastructure and as such is afforded a level of protection in the rules hierarchy.

Regionally significant infrastructure

Means

(1)...Roads

(2) electricity substations, airports etc and.

(3) renewable electricity generation facilities that connect with local distribution network but not including renewable electricity generation facilities designed and operated principally for supplying a single premise or facility

The existing Regional Policy Statement also prioritises Renewable electricity generation

In summary, maintaining and developing further renewable electricity generation has been squarely identified as a vision for Otago and it would be a positive step towards that vision to see this proposal go ahead.

Greater variety of energy sources creates community resilience