

IN THE MATTER OF

Proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan (pTTPP)

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

A hearing into the above pursuant to the Resource Management Act 1991

DATE OF HEARING

30 October 2023 - 3 November 2023

**WESTPOWER LIMITED SUBMISSIONS AND FURTHER SUBMISSIONS TO
THE PROPOSED TE TAI O POUTINI PLAN**

Evidence of Rodger Griffiths



1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Rodger Griffiths. I am the General Manager — Generation and Technology for Westpower Limited (Westpower). I am giving evidence today to provide background to Westpower’s submissions and further submissions.
- 1.2 I would like first to thank the hearing panel for providing Westpower the opportunity to speak to its submissions and explain why the Proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan (*the pTTPP*) is so important, not only to Westpower but to the community served by Westpower who are the ultimate beneficiaries.

2.0 WESTPOWER

- 2.1 Westpower is an electricity generator and network utility operator undertaking work and activities throughout the West Coast Region, particularly within the Grey and Westland Districts and extending into the Buller District.
- 2.2 Westpower is a 100% West Coast community owned company with its head office in Greymouth. Since 1999, when it was required by legislation to divest itself of a set of generation assets within the West Coast, Westpower had principally been an electricity distribution company, responsible for transporting electricity from the national grid to consumers within the communities it serves on the West Coast.
- 2.3 In the 10 years from the year 2000 Westpower did retain a limited ability to generate electricity which was restricted by regulation to a 5MW cap, although a dispensation had been allowed to increase this to 6MW. Subsequently the government amended the regulations to encourage new investment in renewable hydro-electricity generation, and allowed distribution companies to again undertake hydro-electricity generation.
- 2.4 With the commissioning of the Amethyst Hydro scheme in 2013, and coinciding with a more favourable regulatory framework, Westpower has again become involved with developing local generation capacity to meet the needs of the West Coast communities that it services. Westpower continues to investigate potential renewable energy generation opportunities to benefit, and enhance, the communities and assist with environmental outcomes sought at the national level through the use of renewable

energy, including the current goal of reaching 100% renewable electricity generation by 2030.

2.5 Westpower has network assets throughout the 18,017 square kilometres of the West Coast from Lyell in the north to Paringa in South Westland.

2.6 The following is a summary of the network owned and operated on the West Coast based on the Westpower Asset Management Plan 2023-2033. Further detail, in the form of maps and diagrams of the Westpower network, is provided as Appendix 1 to this evidence.

Description	Quantity
Consumers	14,219
Lines and Cables (circuit km)	2,229
Zone substations	16
Distribution Substations	2,511

3.0 INVOLVEMENT IN PROPOSED TE TAI O POUTINI PLAN PROCESS

3.1 As a locally owned and operated network utility operator, with assets and networks across the West Coast, Westpower has an interest in the pTTPP and resource management policies and plans as they are developed across the region.

3.2 Westpower, in undertaking its activities, seeks to ensure an effective, efficient and secure supply of renewable electricity to the community in a manner that achieves sustainable management outcomes. A factor in this is ensuring resource management documents for the West Coast recognise the importance of electricity generation, transmission and distribution for communities on the West Coast and that a sustainable management framework is established for the West Coast that includes the activities of Westpower for the benefit of these communities.

3.3 Westpower has previously been involved in the comprehensive process to develop the operative West Coast Regional Policy Statement (RPS). This involved a considerable investment of time and cost given the process required to produce the operative RPS.

The RPS is a very detailed document that needs to be given effect to in the pTTPP to ensure balanced outcomes are achieved as agreed for the West Coast.

- 3.4 Westpower seeks an approach to management of natural and physical resources with an emphasis on enabling use and development of these resources for the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of the West Coast community.
- 3.5 Having said that, Westpower does recognise that a balance is required to ensure that natural and physical resources are managed in a sustainable manner for the benefit of both current and future generations. This has led to an involvement by Westpower in this process with the aim of achieving a balanced approach in a manner that meets sustainable management requirements within a framework that is relevant and appropriate to the West Coast, and recognises the West Coast context.
- 3.6 Westpower notes that the proposed plan is considerably more complex than the District Plans it is to replace and seeks to ensure that the new plan is as consistent as possible and appropriately recognises and provides for its activities. Westpower is also concerned that the existence of the network has not been appropriately identified and recognised in the development of the overlays.
- 3.7 Westpower considers that a strategic approach to management of the renewable electricity network across the West Coast is required. A major outcome of the RPS process was recognition of the activities undertaken by Westpower as “Regionally Significant Infrastructure”. This is particularly important where the network is located throughout the many overlays in the plan, all of which can have differing regulatory requirements in terms of the proposed plan provisions.
- 3.8 To this end Westpower has made submissions and further submissions through the process and has actively participated where there has been an opportunity to assist with progressing the matter.

4.0 SUBMISSIONS TO HEARING

- 4.1 As above, Westpower has made both submissions and further submissions in regard to the pTTPP and the issues raised in those submissions remain.

4.2 I will not repeat all of those matters here as they are the subject of expert planning evidence filed on behalf of Westpower in regard to those submissions and further submissions.

5.0 PLANNING EVIDENCE

5.1 To assist the hearing panel Westpower has also submitted further planning evidence in regard to these matters.

5.2 Westpower agrees with the matters raised in that evidence.

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APPENDIX 1: MAPS AND DIAGRAMS OF THE WESTPOWER NETWORK



