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10 March 2025

Attention: The Hearings Panel

via email: c/- regionalplan@gw.govt.nz

# For the Attention of the Hearings Panel for Proposed Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

Transpower New Zealand Limited ("Transpower") writes in relation to Proposed Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan ("NRP") for the Wellington Region and Hearing Stream 2 - Objectives and Ecosystem health policies, commencing on 17 April 2025.

Given the confined nature of Transpower's interest to the hearing topic, and the favourable nature of the officer recommendations, Transpower does not intend to appear before the panel and provide evidence at this hearing. Rather it respectfully requests that this letter be tabled for the Panel's consideration, to confirm its position in relation to its submission points and the Section 42A Report recommendations.

Transpower confirms it will prepare evidence and attend at the subsequent hearing tranches where its more substantive submission points will be considered. This is particularly relevant given the officer recommended deletion of WH.P2 and P.P2, with the matters relating to unplanned greenfield development to be addressed at Hearing Stream 4 (Stormwater).

The following provides an overview of the original submission points of relevance to this hearing, and response to the S42A Report recommendations.

# Submission points

Specific to this tranche of hearing topics, Transpower lodged five original submission points. A summary of the points is set out below:

#### Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara

S177.018: WH:O1 - Sought recognition that natural character is restored 'to the extent practicable', recognition that restoration of natural character across all freshwater bodies is not a reasonably achievable objective.

S177.020: WH:P2 - Sought deletion of reference to 'unplanned greenfield development' on the basis the term is broad and uncertain and could prohibit maintenance, upgrading and development of regionally significant infrastructure. Concerns also raised with the directive nature of the wording relating to financial contributions.

## Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua

S177.044: P:O1 - Sought recognition that Mauri is restored and waters are in a natural state 'to the extent that this is possible'.

S177.046: P:P2 - Sought deletion of reference to 'unplanned greenfield development' on the basis the term is broad and uncertain and could prohibit maintenance, upgrading and development of regionally significant infrastructure. Concerns also raised with the directive nature of the wording relating to financial contributions.

#### Maps

**S177.079:** Sought amendment of the GIS mapping of riverine environments described in Map 77 to accurately reflect the habitat extents covered by Schedule F1.

## Response to S42A Report recommendations

Transpower has carefully reviewed the S42A Report recommendations and as outlined in the attached table, supports/accepts the S42 Report recommendations on all the Transpower submission points.

## **Hearing appearance**

As noted above, given the confined nature of Transpower's interest to the hearing topic and the nature of the officer recommendations, Transpower does not intend to appear before the panel and provide evidence. Rather it respectfully requests that this letter be tabled for the Panel's consideration, to confirm its position in relation to its submission points and the Section 42A Report recommendations.

A particular issue raised in the Transpower submission was in relation to the general approach taken by PC1 to "unplanned greenfield development". Transpower has concerns the approach is inappropriate because the definition of "unplanned greenfield development" is broad and uncertain. In particular, it is unclear whether all development is prohibited by the approach, or just specific kinds of urban development. As a result, the approach could prohibit works associated with the maintenance, upgrading and development of regionally significant infrastructure (including the National Grid) in areas identified as "unplanned greenfield development areas", where such works are considered to be "greenfield development". If the maintenance, upgrading, or development of the National Grid was caught by the policies and rules that prohibit "unplanned greenfield development", this would clearly be contrary to the objective of the NPSET, which is to facilitate the operation, maintenance and upgrade of the existing transmission network and the establishment of new transmission resources to meet the needs of present and future generations. It would also be contrary to policy 14 of the NPSET, which requires that regional councils include objectives, policies and methods to facilitate long-term planning for investment in transmission infrastructure and its integration with land uses. While Transpower supports the officer recommended deletion of WH.P2 and P.P2 (which relates to unplanned greenfield development), it reserves its position on the wider issue.

For clarity, Attachment A to this letter outlines the relief sought by Transpower, the S42A recommendations and Transpower's response to those recommendations

Should the Panel see benefit in Transpower appearing before the Panel in relation to this tabled statement, Transpower can readily make itself available. Please contact Rebecca Eng at <a href="mailto:environment.policy@transpower.co.nz">environment.policy@transpower.co.nz</a> or 09 590 7072.

Yours faithfully

Rebecca Eng

Technical Lead – Environmental Policy TRANSPOWER NEW ZEALAND LIMITED

Specific plan provision as notified	Sub Point	Submission – Relief sought and reasoning	S42A Report recommendation	Response to S42A recommendation
Chapter 8: Whaitua Te	Whanganu	i-a-Tara   Section 8.1: Objectives		
Objective WH.O1: The health of all Freshwater bodies and the coastal marine area within Whaitua Te Whanganu i-a-Tara is progressively improved and is waiora by 2100.	\$177.018	Relief sought: Objective WH.O1 The health of all freshwater bodies and the coastal marine area within Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara is progressively improved and is wai ora by 2100.  Note In the wai ora state:  • Āhua (natural character) is restored to the extent that this is possible, and freshwater bodies exhibit their natural quality, rhythms, range of flows, form, hydrology and character • All freshwater bodies have planted margins. • All freshwater bodies have planted margins. • All freshwater bodies and coastal waters have healthy functioning ecosystems and their water conditions and habitat support the presence, abundance, survival and recovery of Atrisk and Threatened species and taonga species. • Mahinga kai and kaimaonan species are healthy, plentiful enough for long term harvest and are safe to harvest and eat or use, including for manuhiri and to exercise manaakitanga • Mana whenua are able to undertake customary practices at a range of places throughout the catchment.  Reasoning: Supports progressive improvement of the health and wai ora of freshwater bodies and the coastal marine area is not a reasonably achievable objective where existing regionally significant infrastructure is located over or within freshwater bodies or the coastal marine area a. Achieving restoration of natural character implies existing regionally significant infrastructure may need to be removed, and new regionally significant infrastructure may be inappropriate.	Recommendation: Accept in part  \$42A Reasoning: 120. I have considered the request of Ara Poutama [\$248.008], who sought that the long-term vision objectives for both whoitua be amended to recognise that restoration of natural character may not be possible in relation to RSI. My understanding is the long-term objectives, being those with the 2100 timeline, are mana whenua's and the community's overall aspirations for freshwater and coastal health beyond 2040. They are not intended to be achieved by the metrics included in the TAS or coastal objectives, albeit these help. The 2100 goals are very broad and can be expected to involve additional interventions and will take longer to achieve. In addition, the policies and rules are not designed to achieve the 2100 outcomes, rather these are aimed at achieving the 2040 outcomes expressed in other objectives. On this basis, the long-term vision objectives would be a misleading test in respect of resource consent applications for RSI and other activities. I understand they may be useful to guide a subsequent plan response, once the immediate (2040) imperatives are achieved. On this basis, I recommend accepting in part this submission as I have proposed amendments to WH.O1 and P.O1 to make the intent of these objectives clearer to plan users. This olternative relief to the submission of Ara Poutama, means it will not be directly applied to RSI consent applications, nor to other resource consent processes.  153. CFG [\$288.038]83 sought clarification of "wai ora state", requesting a caveat that the natural character clause referred to a water body's state in response to a variety of input conditions that are managed to achieve a level of naturalness. Similarly, Horokiwi Quarries [\$2.016] and Winstone Aggregates [\$206.032]84 consider the restoration of Ahua should only occur where natural character has been degraded and Transpower points as it clarifies how this objective work, so these submissions should be accepted in part. I agree that Ahua or natural character should o	Transpower supports the recommendation. The relief sought is granted in that bullet point 1 and 2 are amended  The recognition of benefits within the recommended new clause is also supported, and gives effect to NPS-FM Policy 15.

Specific plan provision as notified	Sub Point	Submission – Relief sought and reasoning	S42A Report recommendation	Response to S42A recommendation
			Water is able to be used for social and economic use benefits, provided that the health and well-being of	
			waterbodies, freshwater ecosystems and coastal waters is not compromised.	
			Note: Objectives WH.O2 to WH.O9 set out what is needed to achieve progressive implementation of this	
			long-term objective up to 2040. Therefore, resource consent applicants do not need to demonstrate their	
			proposed activities align with this objective.	
Chapter 8: Whaitua Te W	/hanganui-a-T	ara   Section 8.2: Policies		
Policy WH.P2	S177.020	Amend	Recommendation: Accept in part	Transpower
Management of		Relief sought:	S42A Reasoning:	supports the recommendation to
Activities to achieve		Amend as follows:	57. Policies WH.P2 and P.P2 are intended set out how activities are to be managed to achieve the TAS and	delete P2 noting
Target attribute			coastal water objectives. The policies link those activities that do not have explicit links to the TAS and coastal	that the issue of
states and coastal		Policy WH.P2 Management of activities to achieve target attribute states and coastal water	water objectives to the achievement of the TAS and coastal water objectives. A number of submissions have	unplanned
water objectives.		objectives.	been received on these policies including general support, opposition to the direction set in the clauses, and	greenfield
		Target attribute states and coastal water objectives will be achieved by regulating discharges and	concerns about duplication between clauses and with other policies in PC1.	development and
		land use activities in the Plan, and non-regulatory methods, including Freshwater Action Plans, by:		financial
			58. I have reviewed these policies in the context of submissions received, the wider plan change and the	contributions will
		(a) prohibiting unplanned greenfield development and for other greenfield developments minimising	Operative NRP. I have concluded that the policies are unnecessary and should be deleted on the basis they	be addressed at Hearing Stream 4
		the <u>discharge of stormwater</u> contaminants <u>from greenfield development</u> , and <u>where residual adverse</u>	duplicate other policies or rules and schedules in PC1 or the NRP. In many cases, the nuanced nature of the	Treating Stream 4
		effects from the discharge of stormwater contaminants are more than minor, requiring aquatic offsetting or compensation (which may include financial contributions) as to offset adverse effects	more detailed policies are not reflected well in the summary policies of WH.P2 and P.P2. Table 1 sets out	
		from residual stormwater contaminants, and	which provisions the clauses duplicate.	
		<del>Jrom residual <b>stormwater</b> Contaminants</del> , una	60. I acknowledge the wide range of submissions on these policies, seeking specific relief in relation to	
		(b) encouraging redevelopment activities within existing urban areas to reduce the existing urban	specific clauses. I do not address these in detail in this report, other than where I have considered a specific	
		contaminant load, and	response is necessary below under 'other matters', given my recommendation is to delete the policies in their	
		(c) imposing hydrological controls on urban development and stormwater discharges to rivers	entirety. I consider the deletion of the policies will address many of the concerns raised by submitters, or will	
			address their concerns in part, as they relate to this policy. I also note several of these submissions raise	
		(d) requiring a reduction in contaminant loads from urban wastewater and stormwater networks, and	matters that will be addressed in subsequent hearing streams, including: • Prohibited activity rules for	
		(e) stabilising stream banks by excluding livestock from waterbodies and planting riparian margins	unplanned greenfield development (Hearing Stream 4 – Stormwater)	
			Recommended amendments:	
		(f) requiring the active management of earthworks, forestry, cultivation, and vegetation clearance	Policy WH.P2 Management of activities to achieve target attribute states and coastal water objectives	
		activities, and	Target attribute states and coastal water objectives will be achieved by regulating discharges and land use	
			activities in the Plan, and non-regulatory methods, including Freshwater Action Plans, by:	
		(g) soil conservation treatment, including revegetation with woody vegetation, of land with high		
			(a) prohibiting unplanned greenfield development and for other greenfield developments minimising the	
		(h) requiring farm environment plans (including Freshwater Farm Plans) to improve farm practices	contaminants and requiring financial contributions as to offset adverse effects from residual stormwater	
		that impact on freshwater.	contaminants, and (b) encouraging redevelopment activities within existing urban areas to reduce the existing urban	
			contaminant load, and	
		Reasoning:	(c) imposing hydrological controls on urban development and stormwater discharges to rivers	
		Considers policy is inappropriate because definition of "unplanned greenfield development" is broad, uncertain, and could prohibit maintenance, upgrading and development of regionally significant	(d) requiring a reduction in contaminant loads from urban wastewater and stormwater networks, and	
		infrastructure. Considers prohibition on unplanned greenfield development is inappropriate and must	(e) <b>stabilising</b> stream banks by excluding <b>livestock</b> from waterbodies and planting riparian margins with	
		be removed. If relief sought by submitter on the definition of "unplanned greenfield development" is	indigenous vegetation, and	
		granted in full, submitter would adopt a neutral position on this aspect of policy.	(f) requiring the active management of earthworks, forestry, cultivation, and vegetation clearance	
			activities, and	
		Considers amendment to policy is necessary to ensure it is consistent with effects management	(g) soil conservation treatment, including revegetation with woody vegetation, of land with high erosion	
		hierarchy set out in NPS-FM. Aquatic offsetting is only necessary where residual adverse effects are	risk, and	
		more than minor, and resource consent applicants should be encouraged to minimise residual	(h) requiring farm environment plans (including Freshwater Farm Plans) to improve farm practices that	
		adverse effects so they are no more than minor (in which case aquatic offsetting is not required).	impact on freshwater.	
		Considers if aquatic offsetting is required, financial contributions as proposed by PC1 should be		
		available as a discretionary option for achieving offsetting, but not a mandatory requirement. If		
		applicants can provide alternative effective methods of aquatic offsetting as part of proposal in		
		accordance with Appendix 6 of NPS-FM, then financial contributions should not be required.		

Specific plan provision as notified	Sub Point	Submission – Relief sought and reasoning	S42A Report recommendation	Response to S42A recommendation		
Objective P.O1: The health of Te Awarua- Porirua's groundwater, rivers, lakes, natural wetlands, estuaries, harbours and coastal marine area is progressively improved and is waiora by 2100.	\$177.044	Relief sought: Amend objective as follows: Objective P.O1 The health of Te Awarua-o-Porirua's groundwater, rivers, lakes, natural wetlands, estuaries, harbours and coastal marine area is progressively improved and is wai ora by 2100. Note In the wai ora state:  • Te Awarua-o-Porirua is a taonga of Ngāti Toa Rangatira and must be respected by others • Mauri is restored and waters are in a natural state, to the extent that this is possible. • Ecological health is excellent in freshwater and coastal water environments. • Rivers flow naturally, with ripples and the river beds are stony. • Mahinga kai, taonga, mahinga ika and kaimoana species are healthy, abundant, diverse, present across all stages of life, sizeable, and able to be culturally harvested by mana whenua. • Mahinga kai, taonga, mahinga ika and kai moana species are safe to harvest and eat or use, including for mana whenua to exercise manaakitanga • Mana whenua and communities are able to undertake a full range of activities • Mana whenua are able to undertake cultural activities and practices Reasoning: Supports progressive improvement of the health and wai ora of freshwater bodies and the coastal marine area is not a reasonably achievable objective where existing regionally significant infrastructure is located over or within freshwater bodies or the coastal marine area. Achieving restoration of natural character implies existing regionally significant infrastructure may need to be removed, and new regionally significant infrastructure may be inappropriate.  Considers the objective should acknowledge complete restoration of character may not be possible in all instances, particularly as it relates to regionally significant infrastructure. Considers that clause 3.3(2) of NPS-FM requires long-term visions for freshwater to be ambitious but reasonable (that is, difficult to achieve but not impossible), and considers objective needs to be amended to recognise this.	Recommendation: Accept in part  S42A Reasoning:  167. Several submissions seek the deletion of or amendment to the second bullet point to moderate the 'natural state' outcome for 'waters'. I agree with the PCC submission, that 'natural state' outcome is unrealistic within this highly urban whaitua, even over a long period of time. Accordingly, I recommend accepting or accepting in part the submissions which commented on this matter and note the modification to the drafting of this clause in Appendix 4 by adding a caveat of 'where possible' on the basis that it may be possible to achieve this in some parts of the whaitua.  Recommended amendments:  Objective P.O1  The health of Te Awarua-o-Porirua's groundwater, rivers, lakes, natural wetlands, estuaries, harbours and coastal marine area is progressively improved and is wai ora by 2100.  Note  In the wai ora state:  The values of Naāti Toa Rangatira are upheld by way of revitalising and protecting Naāti Toa Rangatira practices and tikanga associated with Te Awarua-o-Porirua is a taonga-of-Naāti Toa Rangatira and must be respected by others.  Mauri is restored and waters are in a natural state, where possible  Ecological health is excellent in freshwater and coastal water environments  Rivers flow naturally, with ripples riffles, runs and pools, and the river beds are stony  Mahinga kai, taonga, mahinga ika and kaimoana species are healthy, abundant, diverse, present across all stages of life, sizeable, and able to be culturally harvested by mana whenua  Mahinga kai, taonga, mahinga ika and kaimoana species are safe to harvest and eat or use, including for mana whenua and communities are able to undertake a full range of activities  Mana whenua are able to undertake cultural activities and practices  Water is able to be used for social and economic use benefits, provided that the health and well-being of waterbodies, freshwater ecosystems and coastal waters is not compromised.  Note: Objectives P.O.2 to P.O.6 set out what is needed to achieve progressive implement	Transpower supports the recommendation. The relief sought is granted in that bullet point 2 is amended  The recognition of benefits within the recommended new clause is also supported, and gives effect to NPS-FM Policy 15.		
Chapter 9: Te Awarua	Chapter 9: Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua   Section 9.2: Policies					
Policy P.P2: Management of Activities to achieve Target attribute states and coastal water objectives.	\$177.046	Amend Relief sought: Amend policy as follows: Policy P.P2 Management of activities to achieve target attribute states and coastal water objectives Target attribute states and coastal water objectives will be achieved by regulating discharges and	Recommendation: Accept in part  S42A Reasoning: Refer reasoning for S177.020.  Recommended amendments: Policy P.P2 Management of activities to achieve target attribute states and coastal water objectives	Transpower supports the recommendation to delete P2 noting that the issue of unplanned greenfield		

51/7.046	Amend
\$177.046	Relief sought: Amend policy as follows:  Policy P.P2 Management of activities to achieve target attribute states and coastal water objectives  Target attribute states and coastal water objectives will be achieved by regulating discharges and land-use activities in the Plan, and non-regulatory methods, including Freshwater Action Plans, by:  (a) prohibiting unplanned greenfield development and for other greenfield developments minimising the discharge of stormwater contaminants from greenfield development, and where residual adverse
	effects from the discharge of stormwater contaminants are more than minor, requiring aquatic offsetting or compensation (which may include financial contributions) as to offset adverse effects from residual stormwater contaminants, and  (b) encouraging redevelopment activities within existing urban areas to reduce the existing urban
	contaminant load, and  (c) imposing hydrological controls on urban development and stormwater discharges to rivers, and
	\$177.046

Policy P.P2 Management of activities to achieve target attribute states and coastal water objectives <u>Target attribute states and coastal water objectives will be achieved by regulating discharges and land-use</u> activities in the Plan, and non-regulatory methods, including Freshwater Action Plans, by:

- (a) prohibiting **unplanned greenfield development** and for other greenfield developments **minimising** the contaminants and requiring financial contributions as to offset adverse effects from residual stormwater contaminants, and
- $\underline{\text{(b)}} \quad \underline{\text{encouraging } \textit{redevelopment} \text{ activities within existing } \textit{urban areas to reduce the existing urban}}$
- (c) imposing hydrological controls on urban development and stormwater discharges to rivers, and (d) requiring a reduction in contaminant loads from urban wastewater and stormwater networks, and

development and

contributions will

be addressed at Hearing Stream 4.

financial

Specific plan provision as notified	Sub Point	Submission – Relief sought and reasoning	S42A Report recommendation	Response to S42A recommendation
		(d) requiring a reduction in contaminant loads from urban wastewater and stormwater networks, and (e) stabilising stream banks by excluding livestock from waterbodies and planting riparian margins with indigenous vegetation, and (f) requiring the active management of earthworks, forestry, cultivation, and vegetation clearance activities, and (g) soil conservation treatment, including revegetation with woody vegetation, of land with high erosion risk, and requiring farm environment plans (including Freshwater Farm Plans) to improve farm practices that impact on Freshwater  Reasoning: Considers policy is inappropriate because definition of "unplanned greenfield development" is broad, uncertain, and could prohibit maintenance, upgrading and development of regionally significant infrastructure (including the National Grid) and considers that the prohibition on unplanned greenfield development is inappropriate and must be removed. If relief sought by submitter on the definition of "unplanned greenfield development" is granted in full, submitter would adopt a neutral position on this aspect of policy.  Considers amendment to policy is necessary to ensure it is consistent with effects management hierarchy set out in NPS-FM. Aquatic offsetting is only necessary where residual adverse effects are more than minor, and resource consent applicants should be encouraged to minimise residual adverse effects so they are no more than minor (in which case aquatic offsetting is not required). Further, if aquatic offsetting is required, financial contributions as proposed by PC1 should be available as a discretionary option for achieving offsetting, but not a mandatory requirement. If applicants can provide alternative effective methods of aquatic offsetting as part of proposal in accordance with Appendix 6.	stabilising stream banks by excluding livestock from waterbodies and planting riparian margins with indigenous vegetation, and   requiring the active management of earthworks, forestry, cultivation, and vegetation clearance activities, and   soil conservation treatment, including revegetation with woody vegetation, of land with high erosion risk, and   requiring farm environment plans (including Freshwater Farm Plans) to improve farm practices that impact on freshwater.	
Chapter 13: Maps				
Map 77: Habitats of nationally threatened freshwater species - Te Awarua-o Porirua and Te Whanganu i-a-Tara (Schedule F1).	\$177.079	Relief sought: Amend GIS mapping of riverine environments described in Map 77 to accurately reflect the habitat extents covered by Schedule F1.  Reasoning: Considers GIS mapping of riverine habitats described in Map 77 and Schedule F1 does not appear to accurately align with actual river extents. Refers to GIS mapping of riverine habitat adjacent to Pauatahanui Substation. Plan users will rely on the mapping of scheduled riverine habitats to interpret spatial application of Schedule F1. To ensure certainty with respect to application of the rules that relate to scheduled riverine habitats, habitats to which rules apply to should be accurately mapped.	S42A Reasoning: 356. In relation to the relief sought by Transpower [S177.079]237 and Ara Poutama [S248.080] to amend the riverine environments in Map 77 to reflect the habitat extents described in Schedule F1, a review of Map 77 by the Council has been requested but at the time of writing this has not been completed. Accordingly, I am unable to provide a recommendation at this point, but I will endeavour to update the Hearing Panels on this matter at the hearing.	Transpower appreciates the officer exploring the matter.  It is noted that Schedule F1 and map layer 77 are operative. The issue from Transpower's perspective is that PC1 introduces new rules and policies for these areas. As such the correct identification is relevant and of importance.

Specific plan provision as notified	Sub Point	Submission – Relief sought and reasoning	S42A Report recommendation	Response to S42A recommendation
		Total in the Control of Control o		
		Figure 4: Riverine habitat mapping in relation to Pauatahanui substation		