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Meridian Energy Limited





AUCKLAND UNITARY PLAN  
INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

*Te Paepae Kaiwawao Motuhake o te Mahere Kotahitanga o Tāmaki Makaurau*

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**Report to Auckland Council  
Hearing topic 012**

**Infrastructure, energy and  
transport**

**July 2016**

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Infrastructure, energy and transport**

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# 1. Hearing topic overview

## 1.1. Topic description

Topic 012 addresses the regional policy statement provisions of the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan relating to:

| Topic   | Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan reference   | Independent Hearings Panel reference    |
|---|--|---|
| Topic 012, Infrastructure, energy and transport | B3.2 Significant infrastructure and energy | B3 Infrastructure, transport and energy |
|   | B3.3 Transport                             |   |

Under the Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act 2010, section 144 (8) (c) requires the Panel to set out:

the reasons for accepting or rejecting submissions and, for this purpose, may address the submissions by grouping them according to—

- (i) the provisions of the proposed plan to which they relate; or
- (ii) the matters to which they relate.

This report covers all of the submissions in the Submission Points Pathways report (SPP) for this topic. The Panel has grouped all of the submissions in terms of (c) (i) and (ii) and, while individual submissions and points may not be expressly referred to, all points have nevertheless been taken into account when making the Panel's recommendations.

## 1.2. Summary of the Panel's recommended changes to the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan

The Panel's recommendations under this Topic include:

- i. recast this topic to create a statement of issues, objectives, policies, explanation and principal reasons in one place that can be read as an integrated whole;
- ii. amend the definition of infrastructure to align it with the definition in the Resource Management Act 1991, with a small number of extensions;
- iii. treat social facilities separately from infrastructure (in Section B2.8);
- iv. remove the distinction of infrastructure based on significance and thereby recognise that the efficacy of an infrastructure service almost always depends on all its elements;
- v. recognise that to be effective and efficient infrastructure may need to be located in (including traversing) sensitive areas where there is a functional or operational need for it to do so;

- vi. amend to better give effect to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008 and the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011;
- vii. incorporate Transport into B3 which was previously in the 'Enabling economic well-being' topic; and
- viii. enable renewable energy resources and shift other climate change issues to B10 Environmental risk.

### 1.3. Overview

Infrastructure, energy and transport are critical enablers of the region's economy, the well-being of people and communities, and of growth. A crucial element of any development is the infrastructure to support it, both to enable it and to assist in avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of development.

Consistent with other topics in the regional policy statement, this topic has been comprehensively recast with a focus on the statutory planning framework under the Resource Management Act 1991. Narratives of issue statements which generally repeat the content of the Auckland Plan have been edited to deal only with resource management matters and distributed as lists of specific issues under each topic (Overview, section 8.2.2).

The Panel recommends grouping infrastructure, energy and transport into one topic in the regional policy statement in order to provide a clear focus on these issues. This approach is also followed at the regional and district plan level in relation to infrastructure (Topic 042 Infrastructure).

In this topic and in a number of other topics that involve infrastructure the Panel recommends a change in the definition of infrastructure and by implication a change in the scope of activities treated as infrastructure. The Panel recommends the definition of infrastructure in the Plan be amended to be the same as that in the Resource Management Act 1991, with the addition of bulk storage facilities for gas and petroleum; treatment and discharge facilities for drainage or sewerage systems; water supply storage and treatment facilities; municipal landfills; and defence, air quality and meteorological facilities. On this basis the term infrastructure is used to describe works (in most cases involving physical networks distributed spatially across the region) that enable other activities to occur rather than activities which may be undertaken for their own sake. On that basis social facilities should not be included in infrastructure but are covered under the description of social facilities (Topic 055 Social facilities).

The Panel recommends removing the distinction of infrastructure based on significance. Typically, and especially for inter-connected networks, the whole system or network is essential to provide the infrastructure service. The efficacy of an infrastructure service almost always depends on the functioning of every element of it (e.g. the roading system or the electricity transmission and distribution system). After hearing a number of infrastructure providers and other submitters strive to demonstrate that the significance of their infrastructure is greater than others, the Panel found no resource management reason to differentiate infrastructure on such a basis.

In order to enable infrastructure to be effective and efficient, especially in its network configurations, the Panel considers the regional policy statement should recognise that infrastructure may be located in (including traversing) sensitive areas where there is a functional or operational need for it to do so (and these terms are now defined). In such circumstances there will still be a need for a full assessment of any adverse effects and whether there may be practicable alternative locations.

The value of investment in existing infrastructure is an important element when considering the efficiency and effectiveness of infrastructure, especially physical network infrastructure (e.g. roads, pipes and wires and the head- and tail-works for piped and wired networks).

Infrastructure is an essential component of growth and development and needs to be planned for as part of growth and development in an integrated manner. This is likely to require the proponent of growth or development (be it the Council or a person subdividing and developing land) to be responsible for identifying the availability of necessary infrastructure as part of the planning, subdivision and development processes.

The Panel considers its recommendations better give effect to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008 and the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011.

#### **1.4. Scope**

The Panel considers that the recommendations in 1.2 above and the changes made to the provisions relating to this topic (see 1.1 above) are within scope of submissions.

For an explanation of the Panel's approach to scope see the Panel's Report to Auckland Council – Overview of recommendations July 2016.

#### **1.5. Documents relied on**

Documents relied on by the Panel in making its recommendations are listed below in Section 2 Reference documents.

## **2. Reference documents**

The documents listed below, as well as the submissions and evidence presented to the Panel on this topic, have been relied upon by the Panel in making its recommendations.

The documents can be located on the aupihp website ([www.aupihp.govt.nz](http://www.aupihp.govt.nz)) on the hearings page under the relevant hearing topic number and name.

You can use the links provided below to locate the documents, or you can go to the website and search for the document by name or date loaded.

(The date in brackets after the document link refers to the date the document was loaded onto the aupihp website. Note this may not be the same as the date of the document referred to in the report.)

## **2.1. General topic documents**

### **Panel documents**

012-Submission Point Pathway Report - 17 Oct 2014

012-Parties and Issues Report - 17 Oct 2014

### **Auckland Council closing statement**

Closing Statement (B3.2) (26 November 2014)

### **Panel Interim Guidance**

012 RPS - PAUP Section B3.2 - Significant infrastructure and Energy (PDF 106KB)