

PNCET
PO Box 1271
Palmerston North
pncet.info@gmail.com

23 February, 2009

SUBMISSION TO: Ministry for the Environment

CC: Mighty River Power Ltd.

RE: Submission on Turitea Wind Farm Proposal

Submitter: Palmerston North City Environmental Trust
P.O. Box 1271
Palmerston North 4410
HYPERLINK "mailto:pncet.info@gmail.com" pncet.info@gmail.com
HYPERLINK "http://www.environmentnetwork.org.nz/37.html"
<http://www.environmentnetwork.org.nz/37.html>

Contact person: Brent Barrett, Chair
021 793 361
HYPERLINK
"mailto:Brent.Barrett@agresearch.co.nz" Brent.Barrett@agresearch.co.nz

We wish to be heard in support of this submission.

The Palmerston North City Environmental Trust (PNCET) was established 18 years ago by the Palmerston North City Council (PNCC), by renaming the then Palmerston North Civic Trust. The rationale for this change was recognition that environmental issues were becoming very prominent, and many civic functions were well supported by other organisations. Environmental concerns are even more important today, and the PNCET continues to have a key role to play for the protection and enhancement of the environment in Palmerston North.

The PNCET aims to contribute to Palmerston North becoming a more environmentally sustainable and vibrant city through stimulating and supporting projects that will achieve this aim. We work with other like-minded groups and the community to provide principled and strong advocacy for the environment.

The PNCET has up to 12 members serving for 3-year terms. The current members and their brief bios are attached to this submission.

The Palmerston North City Environmental Trust opposes the proposed Turitea wind farm on the basis that there is inadequate information and guidance at both national and regional levels both on the need for additional electrical generation and on the siting and development of wind farms and other renewable electricity generation facilities, once the need is demonstrated.

On the need for additional electrical generation, the PNCET believes that conservation measures have not been adequately explored or exploited. Currently as a nation, our per capita electricity use continues to increase. This is unacceptable given the advances in clean technologies and energy efficient appliances, and given the serious climate change implications. Our national population growth is reasonably low, so with only modest reductions in per capita energy consumption, we should not need a lot of additional electricity generation. We should only need to replace inefficient non-renewable and worn-out facilities. Therefore, some modest new renewable electricity generation may be necessary, but this strategy, with a strong conservation foundation, needs discussion at the national level.

The other discussion that needs to be had nationally is on the location and development of wind generation, once the need for it is established. Until such a discussion takes place and some strategy formulated, additional wind farms should not be approved.

The Trust is particularly concerned with the placement of wind turbines within the confines of natural reserves, including Turitea Scenic Reserve. Any human endeavour will have adverse environmental impacts, and wind farms are no exception. In the case of the proposed Turitea wind farm, the effects are complicated by the fact that the proposed location is a natural reserve. We believe that this fact alone would put this proposed development quite low on the priority list for new renewable power generations facilities.

The policy framework around wind farms in NZ is under-developed relative to the development pressure that wind farms are putting on communities and the environment. At this time, no policy exists regarding the number and placement of wind turbines. We recognise and support the idea of wind farms and other alternative energy projects, when there is a need, but suggest national and regional government authorities need to set clear guidelines and regulations to address possible loss of remaining biodiversity found in New Zealand's conservation areas before any further projects are endorsed. Until such time that this happens and until adequate and reasonable justification is made, the PNCET opposes the development of any wind farm in the Turitea Reserve.

PNCET suggests the Board of Inquiry decline this application for consent of the proposed Wind Farm Project by Mighty River Power Ltd., or at least for the 62 proposed turbines located within the Turitea Scenic Reserve.