



Ruakākā Energy Park

March 2025 Update | EDITION #3

Kia ora koutou,

I hope you've all had a relaxing summer and have managed to get in a few weeks' break.

At the Ruakākā Energy Park, we're coming to the end of construction on our battery site and are gearing up for work to begin on the solar farm.

Construction update – battery energy storage system (BESS)

We're busily working to wrap up construction next month on the 100MW BESS at the corner of SH15 and Rama Road.

The bulk of the work – the battery equipment, the switching station and interconnecting cables with associated ancillary plant – is essentially complete.

Testing and commissioning has been underway for some time. To do this we step through increasing energy loads to ensure equipment and the control systems function as they should.

Our operations and maintenance building is structurally complete, and work is well advanced on the fire protection and mechanical, security and communication services in the building.

The final stages of the civil works are now underway, including finishing of an access road, carparking areas, road lighting and a stormwater retention pond.

Planting on the road perimeter is looking great and will no doubt start to come away through the autumn and spring.

Introducing BESS Site Owner Bradley Stuart

Bradley Stuart has been on board for a couple of months as Site Owner for the BESS, meaning he'll manage the on-site crew and the general operation of the facility once it's fully operational.

Originally from Invercargill, Bradley had only visited Northland once before being offered the job, so he jumped at the chance to move here and explore the region.

"I've been amazed at how friendly and welcoming the people are here," Bradley says. "I love getting outdoors in my free time, whether on land or sea, and this area has been fantastic for that."



BESS Site Owner Bradley Stuart

Electric digger

United Civil Construction, our main civil works contractor, started using an electric digger on site early this month and will be using it for the remainder of the civil works.

Diesel is a large part of our carbon footprint on construction projects so we're looking for ways to electrify. We hope some projects can be fully electrified in the not-too-distant future, potentially significantly reducing emissions.

[Watch the e-digger in action](#)



United Civil's e-digger at work on site

Solar farm update

Construction will begin later this year on the 130MW solar farm that is stage two of the Ruakākā Energy Park project, with early site works likely to get underway in the coming month or two.

The farm will be capable of producing about 230GWh of electricity per year – enough to power more than half the homes in Northland.

[Meridian's Board](#) approved the project's \$227m budget today, and we've awarded the contract for the build to renewable energy experts Ethical Power.

Ethical Power specialises in solar and battery energy storage systems. They have an extensive track record of delivering major renewable energy projects in the UK, where they are headquartered. They also have a growing presence in Spain, Italy and, as of 2022, New Zealand.

We've made some adjustments to our plans for habitat restoration, in consultation with Forest and Bird, so that we're retaining an additional 10ha of existing wetland on site 1. We'll now enhance and protect 18ha of the existing wetland, which is currently significantly degraded after many years of cattle grazing. We'll also create a new native habitat area of around 11.7ha on site 3, including a new 5ha wetland.

These will provide habitats for taonga bird species such as bittern and dabchick ducks. The new wetland will help cleanse stormwater before it flows into the Ruakākā River, delivering significant environmental benefits.



Ruakākā Energy Park revised site map

Investing for New Zealand

Low hydro lake levels and an acute shortage of gas last winter highlighted the need for New Zealand to quickly bring more renewable developments online to help shore up our energy security.

Besides recently completed or soon-to-be completed projects, such as the 176MW Harapaki Wind Farm and Ruakākā BESS, Meridian has a large pipeline of new

developments underway that will deliver additional generation capacity for many years to come. This will see us commit around \$1 billion to future developments this year, and at least \$3 billion by the end of the decade.

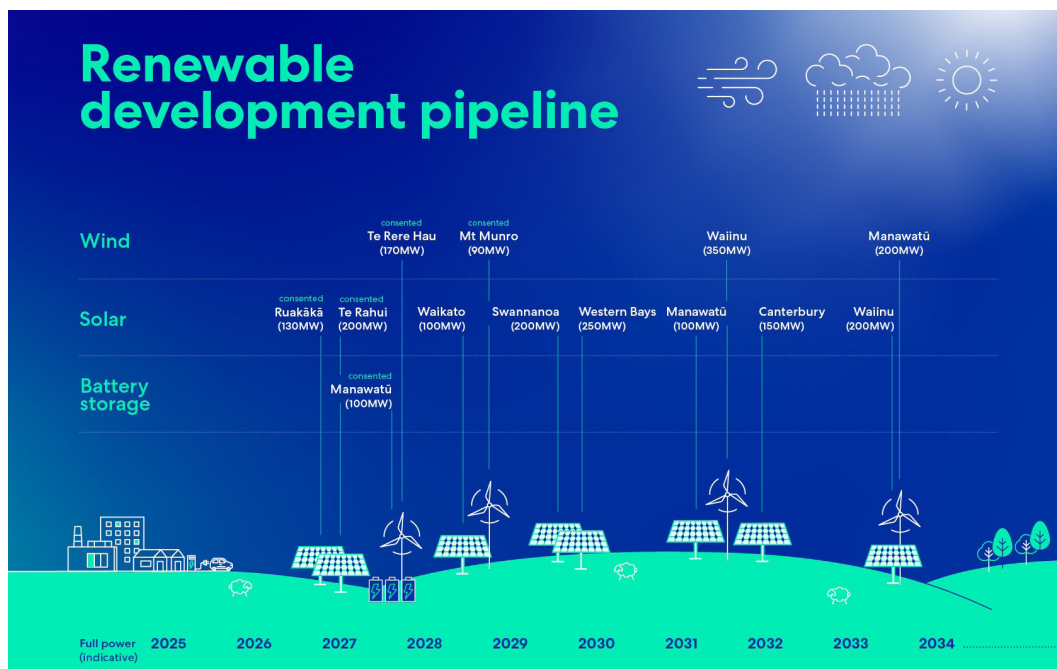
We recently announced:

- Consent for our 90MW [Mt Munro Wind Farm](#) near Eketāhuna
- A power purchase agreement with Harmony Energy / First Renewables in respect of their joint venture to build the 150MW [Tauhei Solar Farm](#) in the Waikato
- A 50-50 joint venture with Nova Energy to build the 400MW [Te Rahui solar farm](#) at Rangitāiki near Taupō.

In addition, we're working on the repowering of Te Rere Hau Wind Farm near Palmerston North – a project that will replace the original turbines with much more efficient ones that'll generate a lot more power.

We also have a considerable pipeline of future development options. This is important because we estimate that for Meridian to deliver our share of the country's renewable energy needs, we'll need to build the equivalent of 20 [Harapaki Wind Farm](#)-sized renewable generation assets by 2050.

It's a huge and exciting challenge for our business, but it's critical if we're to make sure New Zealand continues to have all the electricity it needs and that this is available to homes and businesses at affordable prices.



Any questions?

If you have questions about the Ruakākā Energy Park, check out our website at www.meridianenergy.co.nz/ruakaka-energy-park, or email us at ruakaka@meridian.co.nz.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in the progress of the project, please ask them to subscribe to this newsletter by emailing us at the address above.

Ngā mihi,

Alan de Lima
Project Director
Ruakākā BESS