

Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan

Minute of the Hearing Panel

Minute 29

1. On Monday, 21 May, 2018 the MEP Hearing Panel (the Panel) heard submissions and evidence from Marlborough Lines Limited (MLL) in relation to the effect of the definition of 'minor upgrading' as used in rule 2.58.5 of the Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP) which in the notified form of the MEP excluded any increase of voltage in a line. During the course of its presentation, MLL sought the ability to upgrade lines from 33kV to 110kV.
2. The exclusion from the definition of the ability to increase voltage in a line was said by MLL to impose a new and unwarranted restriction on it which it had not previously faced with the Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan or the Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan.
3. On Tuesday, 22 May, 2018 the Panel heard similar submissions and evidence on behalf of Transpower New Zealand Limited (Transpower), albeit in respect of lines with greater voltage capacity. However, a significant difference was emphasised in the evidence provided by Transpower as to the impacts of the increased separation distances required by regulatory provisions under the Electricity Act 1993. That difference was that Transpower informed the Panel that, as a practical matter, no increased risk would occur to land users in the National Grid 'Yard' under their lines from an increase in voltage.
4. The reason stated by Transpower to the Panel as to why no such effect would in practical terms occur, was that in the event that it increased voltage from say 100kV to 220kV, Transpower would lift the lines to ensure no such effect actually occurred to land users below arising from increased regulatory separation distances. That avoidance of effects would occur most commonly through the lines being tightened or otherwise (and the Panel understood less frequently), through the support towers or poles being increased in height.
5. Then on Wednesday, 23 May 2018 Horticulture New Zealand presented in respect of its further submission opposing the relief sought by Transpower and MLL. In response to the evidence provided by Transpower, (which Horticulture New Zealand did not completely accept always actually occurred), it emphasised

that in any event the great majority of lines in Marlborough were those in MLL's control. It was concerned that the same measures as to lifting of lines may not be possible for MLL in the event it decided to increase voltage.

6. The Hearing Panel has been left with a gap in the information it now has before it as to some practicalities in respect of MLL's distribution system and proposed methods of operation if it decided to increase voltage in any of its lines.
7. Those matters on which the Hearing Panel requests further information from MLL by 29 June, 2018, are:
 - i. Is it likely that MLL will increase voltage in lines under its control during the 10 year life of the MEP, and if so, where are the areas where that is likely to occur, and what is the likely purpose of the increase in voltage?
 - ii. If the answer to 7(i) is 'Yes', then would MLL lift the height of the lines in a similar manner to that described by Transpower, meaning there was no practical effect on land users below in terms of any increase in required separation distances?
 - iii. If the answer to 7 (ii) is "Yes", then provide a description of how that lifting of lines would occur, and confirmation it could precede the increase of voltage.

Dated 30 May 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Hook', with a small dot at the end.

Councillor Trevor Hook

Chair of the MEP Hearing Panel