BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL

UNDER	The Resource Management Act 1991
AND	
IN THE MATTER	of Hearing of Submissions and Further Submissions on the Wellington City Proposed District Plan - Hearing Stream 9: Infrastructure

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GARY ALAN SCHOLFIELD ON BEHALF OF POWERCO LIMITED

Dated 07 June 2024

INTRODUCTION

[1] My full name is Gary Alan Scholfield.

[2] I am employed as Senior Environmental Planner by Powerco Limited (**Powerco**) and have worked for Powerco since January 2020.

Qualifications and Experience

[3] I hold a Bachelor of Resource and Environmental Planning Degree from Massey University (1999). I have been engaged in the field of resource and environmental management for over 24 years however I wish to note that this evidence is not given as expert evidence, but rather in my capacity as an employee of Powerco. Mr Chris Horne will present expert planning evidence in connection with Powerco's submissions.

[4] In my current role I hold primary responsibility for managing submissions on District and Regional plan changes, bylaws and third-party resource consent applications across the Powerco network footprint[1]. I have also assisted with a number of resource consent applications and Notices of Requirement to designate Powerco projects.

[5] Between October 2010 and April 2017, I worked for Powerco in roles where I held responsibility for securing resource management approvals and property rights for network development and renewal projects. Having worked for Powerco for a number of years, I have a very good working knowledge of the Company's operations, assets and strategic direction, including the gas distribution networks located in Wellington City.

[6] I was involved with the preparation of Powerco's submissions and further submissions on the Wellington City Proposed District Plan (**PDP**).

[1] The Powerco footprint includes 6 regional councils and 29 territorial authorities.

[7] I am authorised to present this evidence on behalf of Powerco.

STRUCTURE OF EVIDENCE

[8] The purpose of my evidence is to:

(a) Provide an overview of Powerco and its networks within Wellington City.

(b) Explain gas customer connections and instances where these may be required in the high hazard area of the Coastal Hazard Overlays.

(c) Include an example of gas networks located over piped awa.

(d) Provide an explanation and example of above ground assets that may be required in Other Overlays.

POWERCO'S BUSINESS AND DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS

Overview of Powerco

[9] Powerco is a New Zealand based energy company which distributes both electricity and natural gas. Powerco was formed following the 1999 electricity industry reforms when it decided to become a "network business" (or lines company). During this time, it sold its generation and retail businesses, and grew its distribution operations.

[10] The Powerco electricity networks can be found in the Coromandel, Bay of Plenty, South Waikato, Taranaki, Wanganui, Manawatu and the Wairarapa. It has gas networks in Taranaki, Manawatu, Hawkes Bay and Wellington.

[11] Our networks deliver electricity and gas around the North Island from the national electricity transmission network owned by

Transpower and the natural gas transmission system owned by First Gas Limited.

[12] Powerco keeps the lights on and gas flowing to around 1.1 million customers, across 452,000 homes, businesses and organisations. Our networks cover more than 30,000km and we support the economy by supplying a safe and reliable supply of energy to some of New Zealand's biggest industries.

The New Zealand Natural Gas System

[13] The natural gas system in New Zealand is an interconnected system that comprises several distinct activities. While the upstream aspects of the system, namely production and transmission seem to be understood at a high level, the understanding and importance of distribution networks is often left wanting. Figure 1 below contains a simplified diagram of the natural gas system in New Zealand.

Figure 1 - The New Zealand Natural Gas System

Supply of Natural Gas to Wellington

[14] When looking at the supply of natural gas to Wellington, various on and offshore production plants in Taranaki produce gas that is processed and injected into the Transmission network owned by First Gas. The Transmission network operates at a high pressure and transports gas to a number of main centres across the North Island, including Wellington.

[15] Powerco takes supply from the transmission network at 'delivery points' which are generally located on the periphery of main cities.

Wellington City is served by one primary delivery point which is located in Tawa. The Powerco networks then transport that gas (dropping pressures along the way) to each customer within Wellington.

[16] It is therefore evident that Powerco's networks are critical to the supply of natural gas to Wellington. This criticality is reflected in the fact that Powerco assets are classified as a "Lifeline Utility" under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002.

[17] Furthermore, our assets are also explicitly recognised in the Wellington Regional Policy Statement as 'Regionally Significant Infrastructure' which includes pipelines for the distribution of natural gas.

CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS

[18] Customer connections are an essential part of our network that provide an individual supply of natural gas to homes, businesses and industries for uses such as hot water, cooking, heating and process heat. A customer connection usually comprises an underground lateral pipe that connects to a gas main located in the road in front of the property.

[19] This underground pipe will extend up to the building that is being supplied with natural gas, at which point an above ground pipe (or riser) will be installed. This riser will have various fixtures and fittings attached such as pipe supports, shut-off valve, pressure regulator and a meter before pipework extends into the building to connect to various appliances. A cover is typically installed over these fixtures and fittings where they are located on residential and small commercial installations.

[20] The location of the fixtures and fittings associated a customer connection is determined under the requirements of Powerco's Gas Operations Standard (an internal standard). Factors such as the distance to openings and potential sources of ignition along with safety, reliability and operational efficiency will be considered

when positioning such equipment. Generally speaking, Powerco seeks to have the equipment located no more than 3m from the front face of residential buildings.

[21] One important aspect to note that is that Powerco provides customer connections to buildings where requested by a customer. As such, this may mean that our networks need to pass through areas such as Coastal Hazard Overlays or be attached to buildings that have historical and / or cultural values. It is vital that an appropriate consenting pathway is provided for such installations.

[22] Attachment A contains some examples where Powerco assets are located within the Coastal Hazard Overlays (High Hazard Areas). In each example, gas mains run along the road corridors, with lateral pipes (not shown on the GIS maps due to scaling issues) feeding into each customers property. The ability to install new customer connections or undertake maintenance / upgrading of existing infrastructure should be provided for as a permitted activity under INF-NH-P58 regardless of whether it is situated within a Coastal Hazard Overlay. Such infrastructure is, in my view, unlikely to exacerbate any risks from these natural hazards.

PIPED AWA

[23] As noted above, Powerco provides connections where requested by customers. This means that gas mains and customer connections need to be located in a variety of environments. A large majority of our networks are located within road corridors, which can pass over piped awa / streams. An example is provided in Attachment B, where a strategic pipe & local distribution pipelines are located over Waimapihi (DP ref # 144 - Category A - Piped stream – Awa). Given these streams are piped, I am of the view that any works we undertake would not have an effect on the piped awa and should be permitted.

ASSETS IN OTHER OVERLAYS

[24] In addition to providing for customer connections, there is sometimes the need for small above ground structures to be

installed so that we can monitor the operation of our networks, modify pipeline pressures, or provide venting of our equipment. Such components are required to facilitate the safe and efficient operation of our networks. As outlined above, there is the possibility that these assets may be required in 'other overlays'.

[25] Photo 1 below identifies the type of small above ground equipment that we are likely to deploy on our network. The two rectangular shaped cabinets are SCADA cabinets for monitoring our network, while the black pole immediately left of those cabinets is a vent. Below the ground we have an underground district regulator station (DRS) which regulates and controls the flow of gas on our networks. All of these components are necessary for the successful operation of our gas distribution network.

Photo 1: Examples of small above ground equipment

CONCLUSION

[26] For the reasons outlined above, it is clear that the Powerco networks located within Wellington are regionally significant. The requests Powerco has made via its submissions and further submissions are entirely reasonable to ensure continuity of gas supply around Wellington City.

[27] The development of appropriate provisions will ensure the ongoing operation, maintenance and upgrading of the local gas distribution networks. This will have positive benefits to residents, businesses and essential services in Wellington City.

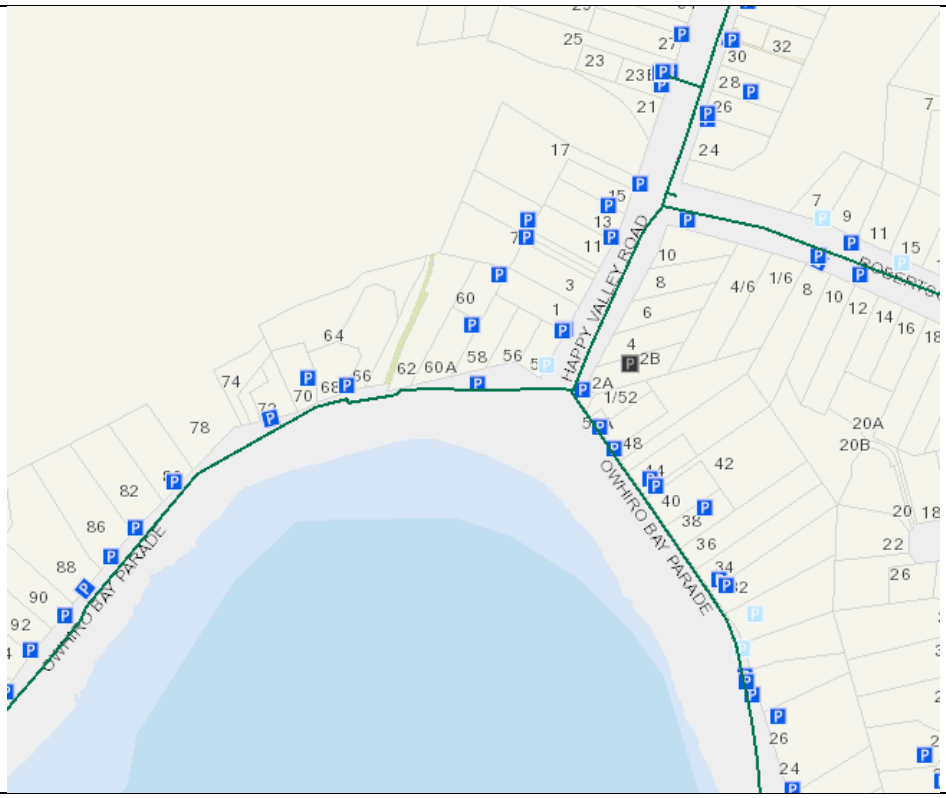
Gary Alan Scholfield
07 June 2024

Attachment A

Examples of Powerco Assets in High Hazard Areas

Example One – Owhiro Bay Parade / Happy Valley Road

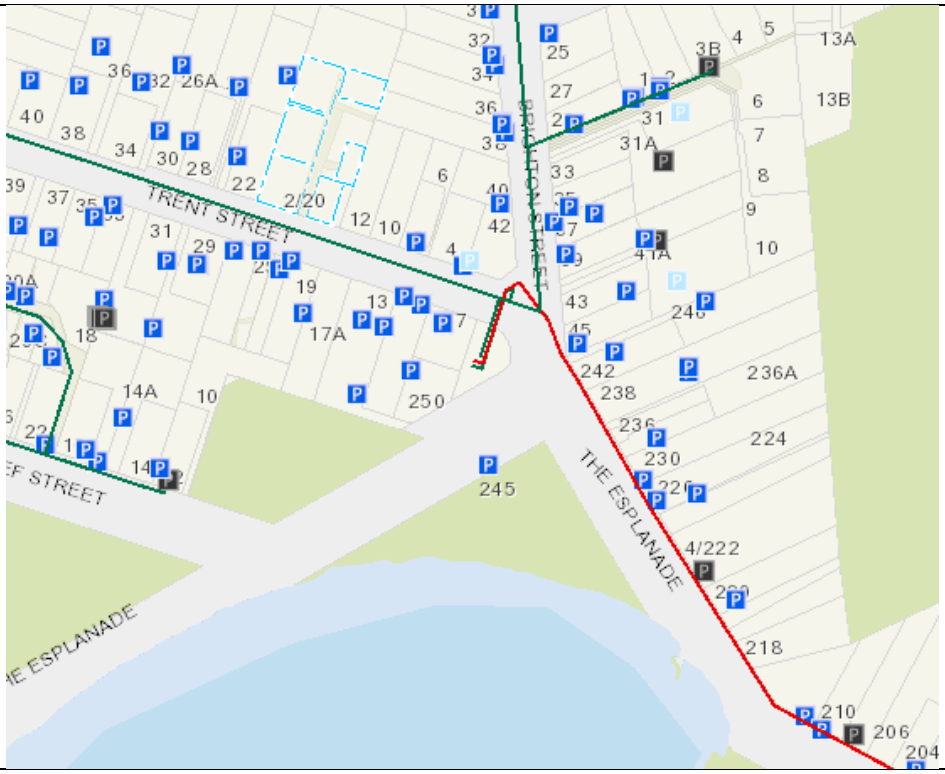
Screen snip of WCC PDP, with Coastal Inundation and Tsunami Hazard Overlays turned on (High Hazard Areas)



Screen Snip from Powerco GIS. The gas main and numerous customer connections (each 'P' represents a customer connection) sit within the High Hazard Areas

Example Two – The Esplanade / Brighton Street

Screen snip of WCC PDP, with Coastal Inundation and Tsunami Hazard Overlays turned on (High Hazard Areas)



Screen Snip from Powerco GIS. The gas mains and numerous customer connections (each 'P' represents a customer connection) sit within the High Hazard Areas

Attachment B

Example of Powerco Assets Crossing Piped Awa

Screen snip of WCC PDP, with SASM Lines layer turned on – Aro Street

Screen Snip from Powerco GIS. The blue line represents a Strategic gas main, while the two green lines on either side of the road are gas mains that connect to local customers