# WAIKOKOWAI WIND FARM UPDATE

February 2026

Mercury

# LIVING WITH A WIND FARM IN THE COMMUNITY

For over a year we have been talking and listening with local communities about the possibility of constructing a wind farm west of Huntly.

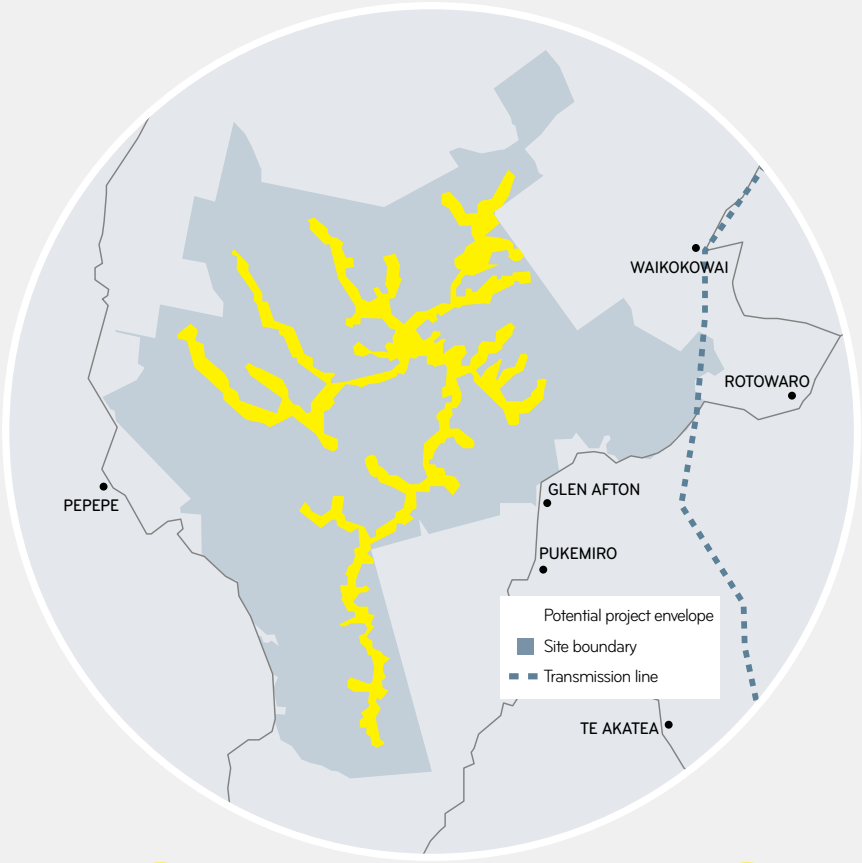
We're learning a lot, and we are working towards having a final concept and design to share with you later this year (including the 'envelope' where turbines and other infrastructure will be located).

Thank you to everyone who has attended our drop in sessions, joined our email distribution list, and reached out to arrange a phone call or visit to discuss what we are thinking of doing.

Waipipi Wind Farm

# FINDING THE BEST LOCATION

The area we are considering is a large section of hill country between Highway 22, Rotowaro Road and Hetherington Road.




**2024**

Environmental baseline assessments and technical assessments, engagement with community

**2025**

Design of project evolves

**2026**

Final concept ready for consent application (target)

**2027**

Construction begins (target)

# WILL THIS SITE WORK FOR A WIND FARM?

We've asked the Beca team to work on engineering requirements and construction environmental aspects of the wind farm. This is what they've done so far.


**Transport assessments**

- how will large pieces of equipment get to site, including reviewing bridge clearance and structural capacity, and road geometry.
- Reviewing project traffic volumes on local roads and suitability of construction access entrances.

**Geotechnical investigations**

- The soil and underlying geology.
- Confirming aggregate volumes required for roads and turbine foundations.

**Civil engineering assessment**

- Reviewing the site topography and developing the access track network.
- Reviewing and refining the design to optimise volumes and avoid site ecological constraints.
- Layout for laydowns, concrete batching plants, substations, construction village etc.

**Our journey so far includes:**

- Around 3000 hectares of land assessed so far (project envelope and 100m buffer).
- 50 km of ridges and slopes assessed for geotechnical constraints.
- Physical investigations in eleven boreholes and 12 test pits.
- 100s of kms of roads reviewed, with bridges and tunnels checked for strength and clearance.
- 3 design iterations developed, including 60 km of access tracks.
- More than 100 catchment areas studied to understand effective site drainage.
- Identification of sources of water needed for construction.

**But before we see a turbine at the site we still need to:**

- Make sure big equipment can safely reach the site by reviewing bridges and roads.
- Review local traffic and plan safe entrances for construction and turbine delivery.
- Studying the ground to make sure it's right for building through detailed geotechnical investigations.
- Investigate ways to manage rainwater and protect local wetlands and streams, both through the construction and into the operation.
- Refine our strategy for controlling dust and noise during construction.
- Making sure we get the right aggregate materials for roads and turbine foundations, and identify where these could be sourced from.

# GETTING TO UNDERSTAND THE LAND BETTER

We've brought in experts from SLR Consulting and Boffa Miskell to help us understand the land better, and the birds and fauna living here.

**Around 3000ha**
of land assessed.

**1700+**
wetlands mapped, covering approximately 40 hectare within the current civil works envelope. We're working to avoid these areas where possible

**1800+**
habitat fragments mapped within the current civil works envelope.

**40km+**
of streams. We collect water samples from streams throughout the area and pass them through a special filter to capture trace amounts of DNA left by fish and other organisms. In the lab, we analyse the DNA and match it to known species profiles to confirm who is living in the stream. We've found shortfin and longfin eels and five other species in streams across the site.

**1000km+**
walked by members of our team of eight (that's the distance of Kaitaia to Wellington).

**12+**
months of surveys looking at what birds are using the site.

**120+**
person hours of wetland surveys with acoustic recorders and a range of tools to determine presence and habitat use, observing a wide variety of bird activity at 22 wetland areas across the project site.

**124+**
person hours using acoustic recorders deployed for a month to look for domestic migrants. In New Zealand we have several species of birds that move between the South Island where they breed and the North Island where they spend summer and autumn months.

**4**
surveys completed in 3 different seasons to look for evidence of bats (Autumn and Spring 2024 and Summer 2025).

**3,000+**
hours of acoustic monitoring for bats over 12 months of surveys.

Acoustic recorders are placed around forest habitat, forest edge habitat and open pasture. Despite this, we only detected limited sign of bats in the south of the site.

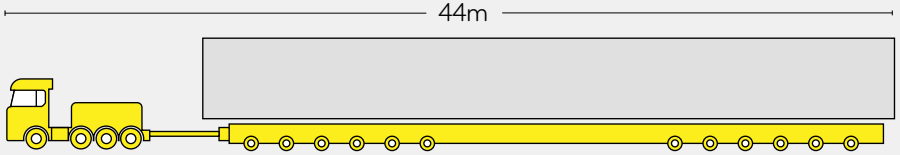

Images courtesy of Boffa Miskell

# GETTING TO THE SITE

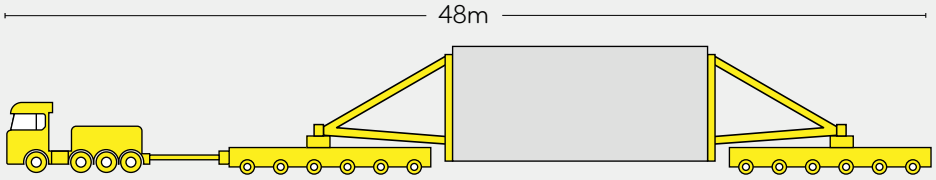
The chosen route isn't always the most direct one. Truck and trailer loads are required to carry the heavy and long wind turbine parts to the wind farm site. Being physically able to get from port to site is a key consideration.

This means fitting around corners – can tight ones be made wider to accommodate long loads, and analysing bridges to see if they'll take the load of trucks going over them. Or are they tall and wide enough if the road goes under them.

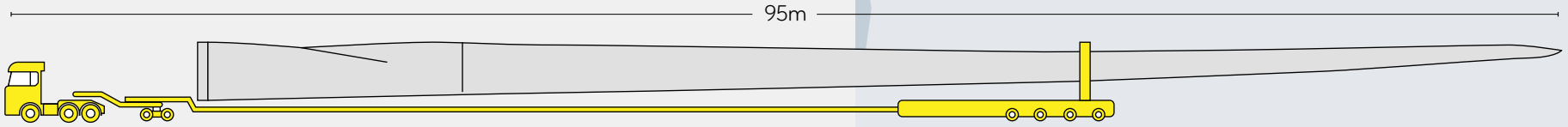
**Tower transporter**



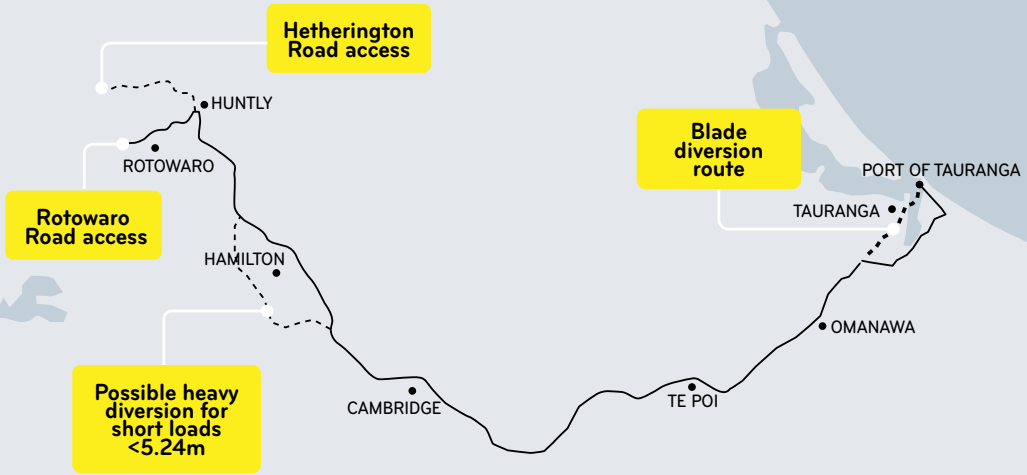

**Large diameter tower transporter**




**Blade transporter**




**Transporting the wind turbines from the port to the site**



# THANK YOU

Thank you for your interest in this proposed project, and for considering its potential impact on your community.

If you have any concerns or would like to provide local insights into the development of this project please contact us. We want to get this right. We're aiming to have a final concept to share with you later this year.

**How to get in touch or find out more:**

Email us with questions or concerns or to request a member of our team speak to you directly at waikokowaiwindfarm@mercury.co.nz

Sign up for updates by emailing us at waikokowaiwindfarm@mercury.co.nz

Visit our website:
mercury.co.nz/waikokowai-wind-farm