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Harapaki wind farm project update

17 July 2023

Meridian Energy has today announced an update on the construction progress of its Harapaki wind farm in Hawke's Bay.

In February 2023, Cyclone Gabrielle caused widespread and extensive damage to East Coast regions of the country. The site experienced damage to access roading and impacts to the civil construction programme. The transmission grid in Hawke's Bay also suffered significant damage and the need for substantial repairs to State Highway 5 have delayed the transport of turbine componentry to site.

Waka Kotahi have advised that completion of the necessary repairs on State Highway 5 mean the transportation of componentry can now begin and Siemens Gamesa expect this to start from 20 July 2023.

Meridian Chief Executive Neal Barclay says the company is excited to reach this important milestone.

"Cyclone Gabrielle created some significant challenges for this project, just as it did other projects, assets and communities. We are thankful for the work of Waka Kotahi in repairing State Highway 5 and Transpower on repairs to the grid enabling substation commissioning, together with our project team and contractors, for getting us in a position to move componentry to site so we can move forward with turbine installation."

"As a result of this remarkable team effort, we have only lost three months and Harapaki is now expected to produce first power in October 2023 and achieve full power in September 2024," says Neal Barclay.

Meridian does not currently expect the delay caused by Cyclone Gabrielle to have any significant impact on the project capital costs of \$448 million and an update will be provided as part of the company's annual results announcement in late August.

Once operational, Harapaki's 41 turbines will produce 176 MW of renewable energy, which is enough to power over 70,000 average households. The project also features a number of sustainability innovations.

Before ground was first broken at the site in 2021, reviews of the wind farm's civil design reduced the amount of concrete and steel to be used by 30 per cent. Meridian estimates a further 10,000 tonnes of CO₂e have since been saved through ongoing actions to drive down carbon emissions during the construction of the wind farm. These include minimising the amount of rock aggregate being imported to the site from Napier and Taupo, adjusting the wind farm's road network to minimise earthworks, using piles instead of concrete foundations for turbines, minimising waste and encouraging the use of car-pooling and electric vehicles on site.

"With the building and construction sector currently accounting for 20% of the country's emissions, reducing the embodied carbon in large-scale projects will be necessary for Aotearoa to achieve its goal of net zero emissions by 2050," says Neal Barclay.

“Aotearoa New Zealand has a huge task in building new renewable energy sources over the next generation. It’s going to be really important that the country works together to keep the carbon produced during construction as low as possible. We’re sharing what we’re learning at Harapaki and we’re hoping it will flow through to the rest of the industry.”

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