

BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL

UNDER

The Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

of Hearing of Submissions and Further
Submissions on the Hutt City Proposed District
Plan - Hearing Stream 6: Infrastructure

**SPEAKING NOTES OF GARY ALAN SCHOLFIELD
ON BEHALF OF POWERCO LIMITED**

Dated

23 September 2026

INTRODUCTION

- [1] My name is Gary Scholfield, and I am a Senior Environmental Planner with Powerco. Powerco owns and operates the gas distribution networks within Hutt City.
- [2] My focus today is on those submission points made by Powerco that the s42A author has recommended be rejected.

Definition – Infrastructure and Network Utility Operator

- [3] Powerco still seeks to add the term ‘biogas’ with clause (a) of the definitions of ‘infrastructure’ and ‘network utility operator’. Adding the term biogas will ensure there is no question whether we can inject biogas into our distribution networks. My concern is that District Plans have a long life span and the staff currently administering the plan may change over time – and different staff can take differing interpretations of terms. Biogas is not necessarily natural, nor manufactured – it is a by-product of anaerobic digestion. Hence why we are seeking its insertion. A concern would be a situation where a project requires a resource consent (e.g. anaerobic digester that injects gas into our networks). Powerco wants to avoid a situation where it is questioned whether we have a right to distribute that gas in our networks.

INF-P4

- [4] Powerco seeks that the words ‘*and have low emissions*’ is deleted from NF-P4.3 as recommended by Mr McDonald at paragraph 254 of his s42A report:

3. Facilitate a transition to renewable electricity and other energy sources which are renewable ~~and have low emissions~~, or

- [5] I am still of the view the suggested amendments go beyond the scope of Clarus’ submission. If Council seeks such an outcome, it should notify a plan variation.

INF-P6

- [6] Powerco supports the recommendations of Mr McDonald to change clauses 2 and 3 of this Policy (para 274 of his s42A report). I still believe a significance qualifier needs to be added to the consideration of adverse effects in clause 4 as any adverse effect that cannot be avoided, regardless of how small or large, would need to be minimised. In practice this is likely to be very problematic as minimising the design or operation of infrastructure to address adverse effects (regardless of scale) could mean a significant change to the proposal.

INF-P7(3)(b)

- [7] Mr McDonald has recommended some changes to INF-P7(3)(b) in Appendix 1 to his rebuttal evidence, which Powerco supports.

INF-P9

- [8] Powerco supported INF-P9 as drafted within the PDP. I see Mr McDonald has now recommended clause INF-P9.2 be deleted in his rebuttal evidence, which Powerco supports.

INF-P14

- [9] Powerco sought the deletion of clause INF-P14.4 within its submission and opposed the insertion of the new advice note under INF-P14 as recommended by Mr McDonald in his s42A report (para 322). I see the s42A author has now recommended clause INF-P14.4 and the advice note be deleted in his rebuttal evidence (para 5.81), which Powerco supports.

INF-S2

- [10] Powerco supported INF-S2 as drafted within the PDP. Mr McDonald has recommended some changes to clause 9(a) of this policy to ensure consistent usage of terminology within the plan (para 492 of his s42A report). Powerco does not support the changes

recommended as it would significantly limit the ability of infrastructure providers to upgrade infrastructure – essentially limiting footprint increases to 5%. The medium and high flood hazard area applies to a significant area of Hutt City and will unnecessarily restrict the ability to upgrade infrastructure.

- [11] Powerco seeks that the originally notified provision of INF-S2 9(a) is retained or modified to allow footprint increases of 30% in all areas.

INF Table 1 – Street Trees

- [12] Powerco still seeks an increase of the minimum horizontal setback distances from underground infrastructure for street trees. Such setbacks are required to protect underground services from tree-root damage and minimise costs associated with installing or accessing underground assets that may be within the dripline of a tree.

- [13] I note the s42A Officer's report has been released for Hearing 7 in relation to notable trees. At paragraph 62 of this report, the Officer details the current practice around excavation activities within the dripline / root protection area of trees (all trees not just notable):

- All excavations are supervised by a suitably qualified arborist and must be pre-approved by HCC,
- Any exposed roots must be covered with wet sacking material or similar, directly after excavation, and tree roots must be kept moist (at all times) while the excavated area is exposed,
- Any approved root pruning requirements are to be undertaken by the approved HCC arborist,
- Photos taken before, during and after excavation and provided to HCC upon completion of works, and
- Approval is sought to undertake any root pruning over 35 mm in diameter.

- [14] It is these types of requirements that lead to increased costs for network utility operators – and ultimately why we are seeking setbacks of street trees from our assets. Powerco is not opposed to trees but seeks the right tree(s) in the right location to avoid unnecessary conflicts and costs.

Gary Alan Scholfield

23 September 2026