

# Memo

**To:** Meridian Energy Ltd (Meridian)

**From:** Damwatch Engineering Ltd (Damwatch)

**CC:** File

**Date:** 10 April 2025

**Subject:** **Background on Waitaki Power Scheme and Hydro Inundation Hazards**

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## 1 Purpose of this Memo

The purpose of this memo is to provide background and technical explanation on the following topics:

- 1) Dam Safety in relation to the Waitaki Power Scheme (WPS or Waitaki Scheme)
- 2) Overview of Potential Impact Classification (PIC) of dam and canals
- 3) Discussion of PIC and the likelihood of dam or canal failure
- 4) Potential Effect of Developments on PIC
- 5) Rationale for developing the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay
- 6) History of development of the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay
- 7) Discussion on areas affected by Proposed Plan Change 28
- 8) Commentary on mitigation measures for dam or canal failure

This information and technical explanation is provided for use by Mackenzie District Council (MDC) in development of a Section 42A report<sup>1</sup> related to proposed Plan Changes 28 and 30 to the Mackenzie District Plan (the District Plan).

## 2 Background

MDC has prepared the following proposed plan changes to the Mackenzie District Plan.

- Plan Change 28 – Hazards and Risks, Historic Heritage and Notable Trees (dated 5 Nov 2024)
- Plan Change 30 – Special Purpose Zones (dated 5 Nov 2024)

Plan Change 28 introduces a spatial overlay in the Mackenzie District Plan that identifies the Hydro Inundation mapping associated with the potential release of flood flows arising from an unlikely breach of any of the Waitaki Power Scheme dams or canals in the Mackenzie District. This mapping is a continuation of existing work and mapping which commenced in 2013 which has been done in the district, and which sits over parts of the rural zone.

The proposed Plan Changes would introduce Objectives, Policies and Rules into the District Plan that acknowledge the potential consequences of such a failure and manage development accordingly to reduce the potential impacts on people and structures.

Following receipt of submissions on the proposed Plan Changes, many of which query and seek further information on the basis for the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay, MDC requested that

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<sup>1</sup> A Section 42A report under the Resource Management Act is created before a hearing or decision on a resource consent application or plan change. It includes an evaluation of the application or submission, considering relevant statutory requirements and policies.

Meridian Energy (Meridian) provide a technical explanation of the topics, listed in Section 1 above. Alongside technical memoranda already relied on by MDC in the preparation of its proposed Plan Changes, this memorandum has been written for use by MDC in preparation of its Section 42A report under the Resource Management Act 1991. Meridian has engaged Damwatch Engineering (Damwatch) to provide this information and technical explanation.

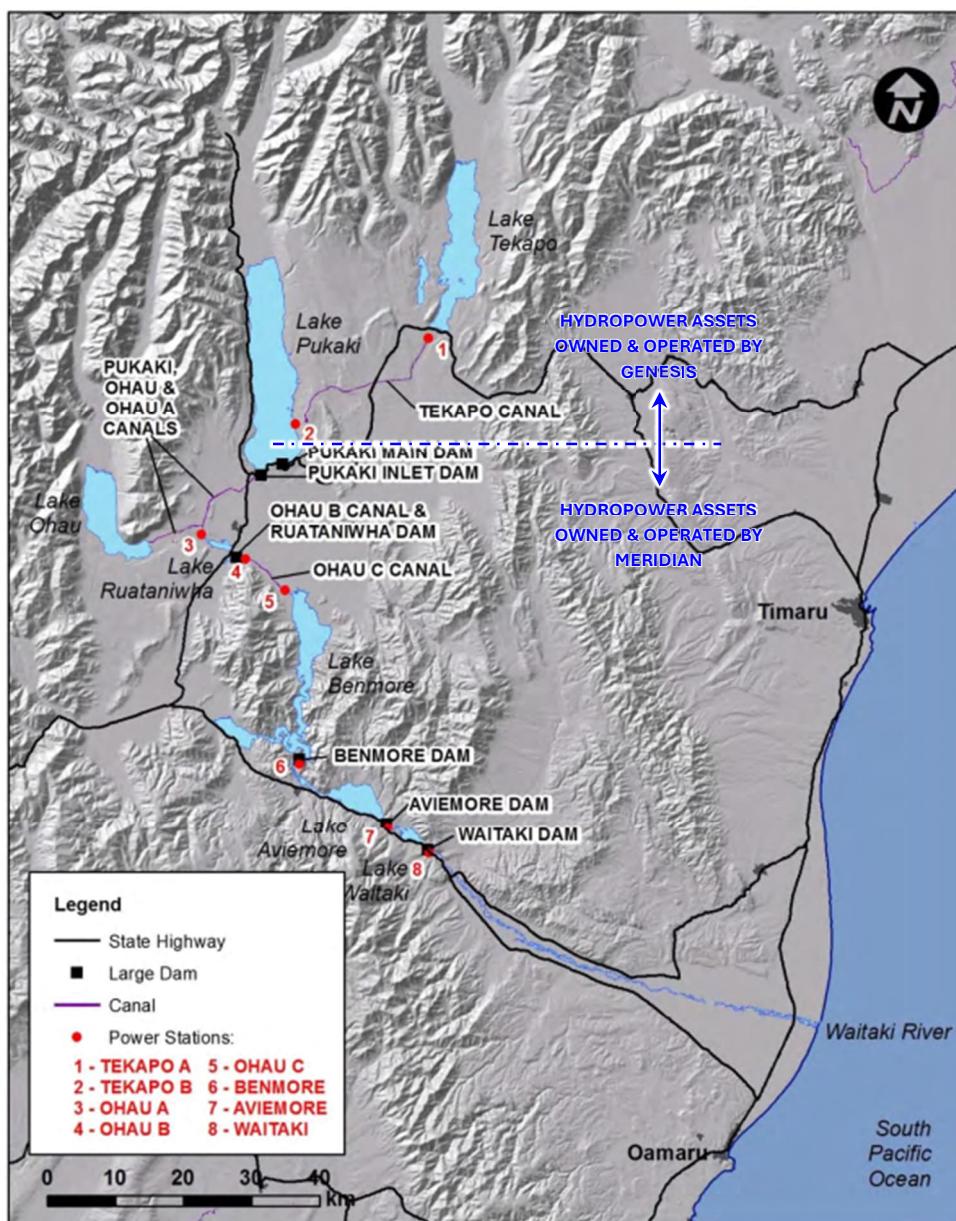
### 3 Discussion

The following sub-sections provide discussion on the topics listed in Section 1.

#### 3.1 Dam Safety in relation to the Waitaki Power Scheme

##### The Waitaki Power Scheme

The Waitaki Power Scheme consists of eight power stations spread between Lake Tekapo and Lake Waitaki (Figure 1). Substantial infrastructure, including large dams and canals, contain and convey water to support hydro electricity generation that meets local, regional and national needs.



**Figure 1: Waitaki Power Scheme layout map**

Meridian Energy (Meridian) and Genesis Energy (Genesis) own and operate the hydropower generation assets associated with the Waitaki Power Scheme. These include the assets shown on Figure 1. Tekapo A and B Power Stations and Tekapo Canal are owned and operated by Genesis. All other dams, canals and power stations shown on Figure 1 are owned and operated by Meridian.

## Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022

Large dams and canals, including those on the Waitaki Power Scheme, are primarily governed by the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022, which are regulations made under the Building Act 2004. It is a legal requirement for dam owners to comply with these Regulations. The objective of the Regulations is to “*help ensure that classifiable dams are well operated, maintained and regularly monitored, and that potential risks of dam incidents and failures are reduced*” (MBIE, 2024)<sup>2</sup>.

The Regulations require dam owners to:

- Determine if their dam is “**classifiable**”. A dam is classifiable if it is 4 metres or higher and stores 20,000 cubic metres or more of water or other fluid.
- For all classifiable dams, conduct a **Potential Impact Classification** (PIC) to determine the potential impact of a hypothetical dam failure on the community, environment, and infrastructure. The PIC can be classified as either Low, Medium, or High. The PIC must be audited and certified by a Recognised Engineer<sup>3</sup> before being submitted by the dam owner to the appropriate regional authority (acting as the Regulator) for approval.
- For dams with a Low PIC:
  - Dams with a Low PIC have less stringent requirements under the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022 than Medium or High PIC dams. Low PIC dams only require their PIC status to be reviewed every five years to ensure the PIC remains accurate, especially if there is increased development downstream or modifications to the dam are made.
- For dams with a Medium or High PIC:
  - Prepare a certified **Dam Safety Assurance Programme** (DSAP). This includes regular inspections, maintenance, and monitoring to ensure the dam's safety. The DSAP must be audited and certified by a Recognised Engineer and submitted by the dam owner to the appropriate regional authority for approval.
  - Implement the DSAP to ensure that a dam operated, maintained and managed safely in accordance with the procedures outlined in the DSAP.
  - Prepare a certified **Annual Compliance Certificate** to demonstrate ongoing adherence to dam safety standards outlined in the DSAP. The Annual Compliance Certificate must be audited and certified by a Recognised Engineer.

## The New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines

The New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines, published by the New Zealand Society on Large Dams (NZSOLD), complement the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations 2022. While the regulations set the minimum legal requirements, the guidelines provide detailed, industry-recommended practices for dam safety management. The guidelines are structured into seven detailed modules that address specific areas of dam safety, covering aspects such as PIC assessment methods, dam design and analysis, construction and commissioning, dam safety management including dam operation, maintenance and monitoring, emergency preparedness and life cycle management.

<sup>2</sup> MBIE (2024). Guide to complying with the Dam Safety Regulations. Ministry of Building, Innovation and Employment.

<sup>3</sup> A Recognised Engineer must be a Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng) who also meets the qualifications and competencies for dam safety specified in the Recognised Engineer Competency Framework (prepared by Engineering New Zealand). Recognised Engineers are registered and assessed by Engineering New Zealand.

Dam owners are recommended to use the guidelines in conjunction with the legal requirements of the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations to ensure a robust dam safety management system. The guidelines are periodically updated to incorporate advances in knowledge and technology, ensuring that dam safety practices remain current and effective.

### **Meridian's Dam Safety Policy and Dam Safety Assurance Programme**

Meridian's commitment to the safety of the system of large dams and canals associated with the Waitaki Power Scheme is stated in its Dam Safety Policy and Dam Safety Assurance Programme (DSAP).

#### *Meridian's Dam Safety Policy*

Meridian's Dam Safety Policy articulates the company's commitment to meeting dam safety objectives in respect of:

- New Zealand and international industry practice;
- Public safety;
- The protection of third party property, public infrastructure and the environment;
- The protection of asset value; and
- Meridian's goals and values.

Meridian is committed to meeting its asset management obligations in a manner that is demonstrably world class.

#### *Meridian's Dam Safety Assurance Programme*

The DSAP complies with the requirements of the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations and is in general accordance with industry recommended practices of the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines.

The purpose of the DSAP is to capture the effective procedures Meridian has in place to meet its dam safety commitments. The DSAP includes the following elements:

- Dam and Reservoir Operation and Maintenance
- Surveillance and Monitoring
- Inspection, Maintenance, and Testing of Appurtenant Structures and Gate and Valve Systems
- Annual Dam Safety Reviews
- Comprehensive Dam Safety Reviews
- Emergency Planning and Response
- Identifying and Managing Dam Safety Issues
- Risk Management

## **3.2 Overview of Potential Impact Classification of Dams and Canals**

### **Potential Impact Classifications (PIC)**

As outlined previously in Section 3.1, the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations require all "classifiable" dams and canals to be assigned a PIC of either Low, Medium or High.

The PIC of a dam or canal represents the potential impact that a hypothetical failure of the dam or canal could have on the community, critical or major infrastructure, historical or cultural places, and the natural environment.

The PIC is used to guide the necessary safety measures and regulatory requirements for dam owners. The principle is that a dam or canal with a “High” or “Medium” PIC, whose failure would cause significant damage or endanger a significant number of people, should be designed, constructed, managed, operated and maintained to a proportionately higher standard than a Low PIC dam or canal whose failure would result in relatively minor damage and with little to no impact on people. Internationally, this is well-established industry practice for dam safety management.

It should be noted that the PIC of a dam:

- Only considers the consequences of a hypothetical dam or canal failure, and no account is taken of the likelihood of that failure
- Does not, in any way, provide an indication of the physical condition or structural integrity of a dam or canal.

### **PIC Assessment Methodology**

The procedures to determine the PIC of a dam or canal are outlined in the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations, and require consideration of the impact of a hypothetical dam or canal failure flood on:

- Life safety (i.e. the number of people who could be affected by a dam failure as well as estimating the potential loss of life that could occur).
- Community buildings and facilities
- Historical or cultural sites
- Critical or major infrastructure
- Natural environment

The PIC assessment process typically involves the following three steps:

- **Dam-Break Flood Hazard Assessment:** Evaluate the potential flood hazards resulting from a dam or canal breach, and development of dam or canal breach flood inundation maps.
- **Consequence Assessment:** Determine the potential impacts of the dam or canal breach flood on life safety, community buildings, historical or cultural places, critical or major infrastructure, and the natural environment.
- **Potential Impact Classification:** Assign a PIC level (Low, Medium, or High) based on the assessed consequences.

The New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines provide further detail and guidance on methods to conduct a PIC assessment.

### **3.3 PIC and the likelihood of dam or canal failure**

The likelihood of failure of a well-designed, constructed and operated dam or canal is generally considered to be very low. Dam failures are often described as very low probability but high consequence events.

As outlined in Section 3.2 above, dam-break and PIC assessments only consider the consequences of a hypothetical dam or canal failure. No account is taken of the likelihood of that failure occurring. The PIC therefore does not provide an indication of the risk posed by the dam, where risk is commonly defined as:

- $Risk$  (of dam failure) =  $likelihood$  (of dam breach occurrence)  $\times$   $consequence$  (of the dam breach)

There is no requirement under the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations and industry-recommended practices outlined in the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines, to determine the likelihood (and hence

the risk) of a dam or canal breach. Instead, the PIC of the dam is used to set the appropriate criteria which should be applied for dam design, construction and post-construction operation, maintenance and monitoring. This is a legal requirement of the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations and applies irrespective of the likelihood of the dam or canal breach occurring.

Rather than requiring that likelihood of a failure be determined, the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations and the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines promote a “standards-based approach” to dam safety engineering. This is the approach in which risks are controlled by following established rules and minimum standards for defining design parameters and loads, structural capacity and defensive design measures commensurate with the structure’s PIC. Post construction DSAPs provide an overarching framework for managing dam safety risks through the operational phase of a dam or canals lifecycle.

### 3.4 Potential Effect of Developments on PIC

#### Background

New developments constructed downstream of a dam or canal, and within a dam or canal breach flood inundation zone, can increase the potential consequences of a hypothetical dam or canal breach. This, in turn, may require a dam or canal to be reclassified into a higher PIC category, even if there is no change to the dam or canal.

For example, a dam or canal that was designed and constructed as a Low PIC structure might need to be reclassified as having a Medium or High PIC due to new development in the downstream dam or canal breach flood inundation zone which occurs after the dam or canal was commissioned.

Once a dam or canal is reclassified, it may not meet the design, inspection and maintenance requirements for its new PIC and the owner would need to bring the dam into compliance with the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations and recommendations of the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines.

This concept is sometimes referred to in the dam safety industry as “hazard creep” or “reverse sensitivity”.

#### Impacts on the Dam Owner

Changes to a higher PIC can cause the regulatory requirements for dam safety management and associated dam performance criteria to become more onerous. Raising these dam safety requirements and performance criteria can have significant implications for the owner of a dam or canal.

In terms of dam safety management, the biggest change in owner requirements results from a change in PIC from Low to Medium, or Low to High. Owners of Medium and High PIC dams are required to carry out more rigorous monitoring and surveillance, dam safety reviews, inspections, maintenance, testing of appurtenant structures and gates and valves, and preparation of emergency action plans and systems for identifying and managing dam safety issues. These activities are required to be documented in a Dam Safety Assurance Plan (DSAP) with the DSAP audited annually by a Recognised Engineer. The DSAP also requires the emergency action plans to be coordinated with the local civil defence organisations.

In terms of changes to the dam performance criteria, the dams and canals must be able to safely withstand greater structural loading conditions (primarily floods and earthquakes). These are likely to be greater than the original design load capacity and therefore significant upgrade works may be required. This could result in a significant investment by the owner of the dam or canal being required

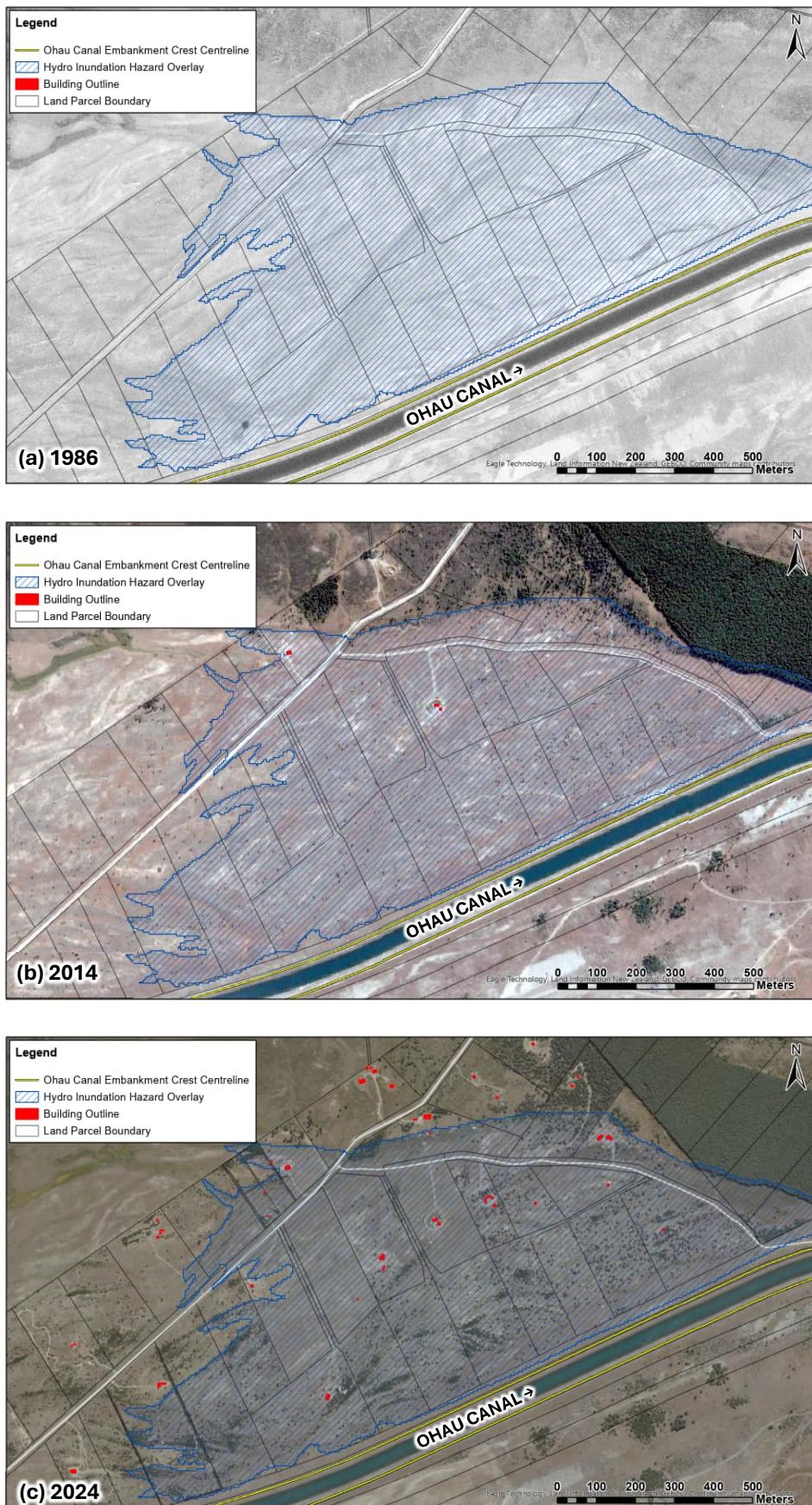
as well as the potential for significant operational downtime of the hydroelectric generation assets while upgrade works are implemented.

In summary, it is important to Meridian that it is aware of any developments located within the dam or canal breach flood inundation zones downstream of its dams or canals. Such developments will change the consequences of a hypothetical dam or canal failure flood and may therefore have an impact on the PIC for the dam or canal.

### **Example of Reverse Sensitivity Effects on Meridian Hydropower Assets**

An example of recent developments downstream of the true left bank of the Ohau Canal in the Mackenzie District, outlines how the PIC of this structure has changed over time. With reference to Figure 2, the following points describe how the PIC changed for this section of canal over time:

- The Ohau Canal was first constructed in the early 1970s as part of the Waitaki Power Scheme. No developments were downstream of the canal embankments at that time (Figure 2a).
- In 2005 and 2011, a PIC assessment was carried out for the canal. A Low PIC was determined for the left bank of the canal. At that time, there were no known developments downstream of the canal embankments.
- In 2014, the PIC assessment was reviewed, and a Medium PIC was determined due to two residential building developments in the subdivision area near Flanagan Lane (Figure 2b).
- In 2021 and 2024, the PIC assessment was reviewed, and a High PIC was determined due to further residential building developments in the subdivision area near Flanagan Lane (Figure 2c).



**Figure 2: Aerial photographs captured (a) 1986 (b) 2014 and (c) 2024 showing changing developments downstream of the true left bank of the Ohau Canal**

## Effect of Developments on Dams and Canals with a High PIC

Reverse sensitivity effects can still affect High PIC dams and canals, even though an increase in development does not result in an increase in PIC category.

The New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines prescribe performance criteria (primarily for floods and earthquakes) which a dam or canal must be able to safely withstand. These performance criteria are linked not just to PIC but also to a life safety metric, measured by the Population at Risk<sup>4</sup> and/or Potential Loss of Life<sup>5</sup>. For example, Figure 3 from the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines shows the recommended Inflow Design Flood (IDF) that a dam must be able to safely pass. From Figure 3, the IDF is a function of both PIC and the Population at Risk downstream of the dam.

PIC	Incremental Population at Risk	IDF (1 in T AEP)
Low	No limit	1 in 100 to 1 in 1,000 AEP <sup>1,2</sup>
Medium	No limit	1 in 1,000 to 1 in 10,000 AEP <sup>1,2</sup>
High	0	1 in 10,000 AEP
	1-10	1 in 10,000 AEP to average of 1 in 10,000 AEP and PMF peak discharge <sup>3</sup>
	11-100	Average of 1 in 10,000 AEP and PMF peak discharge, to PMF <sup>3</sup>
	> 100	PMF

Source: New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines (2024 edition), published by the New Zealand Society of Large Dams

Note: AEP = Annual Exceedance Probability; PMF = Probable Maximum Flood; IDF = Inflow Design Flood

**Figure 3: Recommended minimum Inflow Design Floods based on PIC and PAR**

Developments which increase the number of people living or working downstream of a dam or canal, and within dam or canal breach flood inundation areas (i.e. cause the Population at Risk to increase), therefore have the potential to increase the performance requirements, even for High PIC dams.

Any such increase in performance requirements for the dam or canal are likely to be greater than the original design load conditions and therefore significant upgrade works may be required. This could also result in a significant investment by the owner of the dam or canal being required as well as the potential for significant operational downtime of the hydroelectric generation assets while upgrade works are implemented.

<sup>4</sup> Population at Risk is defined in the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines as “*the number of people likely to be affected by an uncontrolled release of all or part of the stored water or other fluid due to a failure of the dam, assuming that no person takes any action to evacuate*”.

<sup>5</sup> Potential Loss of Life is defined in the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines as “*the number of people expected to lose their life as a result of an uncontrolled release of all or part of the stored water or other fluid due to a failure of the dam*”. While Population at Risk is an estimate of the total number of people in a dam or canal breach inundation zone, Potential Loss of Life estimates take additional factors into account such as the severity of the floodwaters (i.e. depth, velocity and time of arrival) and consideration of population density across different time scenarios (e.g. daytime versus nighttime). Any estimate of Potential Loss of Life has a high degree of uncertainty due to various factors such as the amount of warning time, the responsiveness of people to evacuate when warned, the presence of suitable evacuation routes, historical patterns of human activity and the limitations of predictive models.

### 3.5 Rationale for developing the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay

#### Introduction to the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay

While the Waitaki Power Scheme dams and canals are managed under recommended industry practice dam safety assurance programmes (refer Section 3.1), there remains very low residual risk that a dam or canal failure could occur. While the likelihood of a structural failure is very low (as outlined in Section 3.3), the consequences can be serious for people, property and the environment.

Potential areas of inundation that could occur following failure of large dams and canals associated with the Waitaki Power Scheme are mapped in the District Plan as the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay. This overlay is available from the following webpage hosted by MDC:

- <https://mackenzie.isoplan.co.nz/review/property/1510646/1289189/5204023/5064124/0/109>
  - Click Stage 4 Changes > PC28 & Variations > Natural Hazard > Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay

The Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay provides MDC with an awareness of the potential dam or canal breach flood hazard zones which would be impacted in the unlikely event of failure of any of the large dams or canals associated with the Waitaki Power Scheme. It also enables MDC to consider the appropriateness of any future development with respect to safety of people and property, and the ‘reverse sensitivity’ impacts that developments or changes in land use might have on Meridian and Genesis Energy’s existing dam and canal assets.

### 3.6 History of development of the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay

#### Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay Prepared for Plan Change 13

The Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay was originally prepared between 2014 to 2016 for Plan Change 13 to the Mackenzie District Plan. The final hazard areas are shown on Drawings 6/3434/1/6504 Sheet No. 21 to 29 prepared by Opus International Consultants<sup>6</sup>.

This overlay was developed using all previous dam or canal breach flood hazard information compiled for Meridian Energy and Genesis Energy at that time. These included:

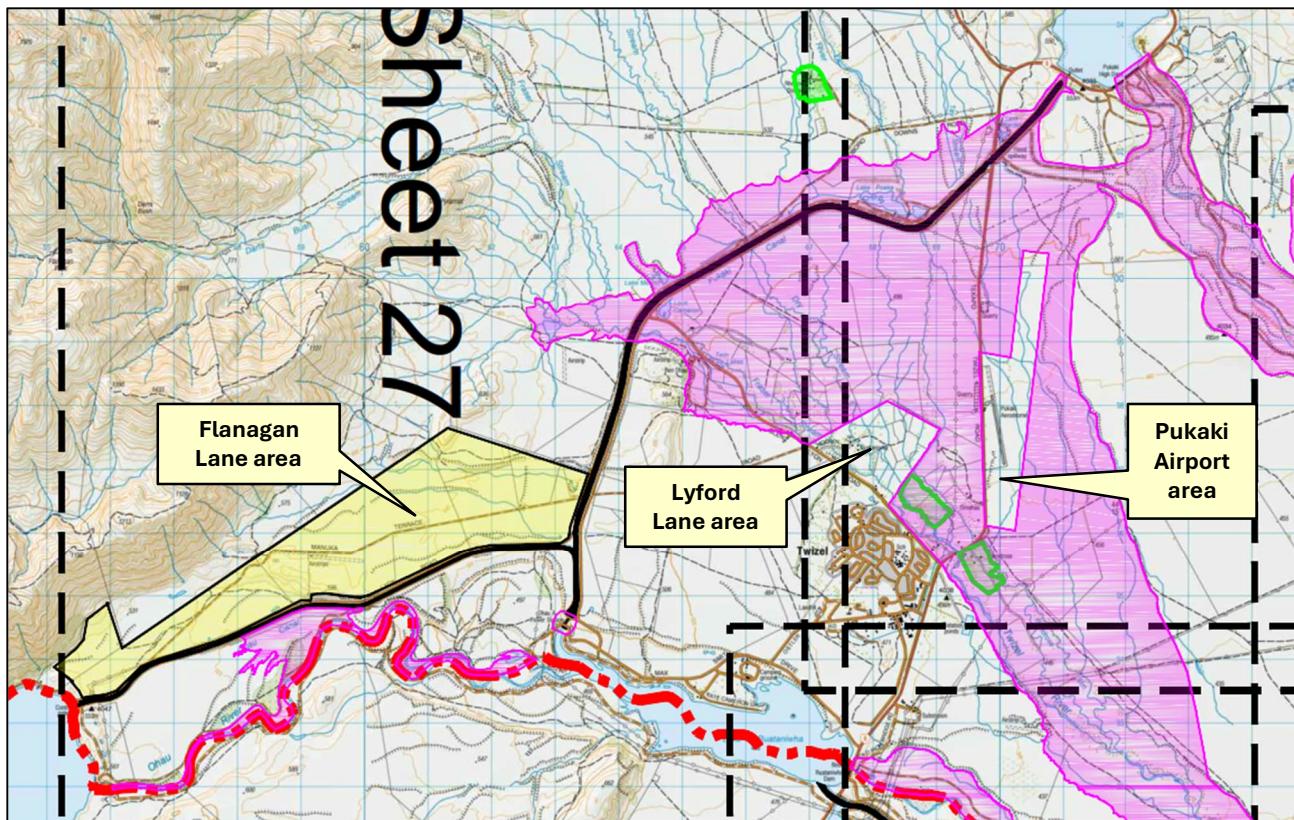
- Comprehensive dam breach flood hazard maps for a hypothetical breach of the Pukaki Dam (prepared by Works Consultancy Services in 1990)
- Broad scale dam breach flood hazard maps for a hypothetical breach of the Pukaki Inlet Dam (prepared for Meridian Energy by Damwatch in 2014)
- Broad scale canal breach flood hazard maps for hypothetical breaches of the Ohau A, Ohau B and Ohau C Canals (prepared by a joint Damwatch and Opus study in 2005)
- Detailed canal breach flood hazard maps pertaining to specific hypothetical breach scenarios for the Tekapo Canal (prepared for Genesis Energy by Opus in 2013)
- Detailed canal breach flood hazard maps pertaining to specific hypothetical breach scenarios for the Pukaki and Ohau Canals, and Ruataniwha Dam (prepared for Meridian Energy by Damwatch in 2013)

The flood hazard areas defined for all hypothetical canal and dam breach locations and scenarios from the past studies listed above were integrated together to produce the composite Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay for the Mackenzie Basin.

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<sup>6</sup> Available online at: [https://www.mackenzie.govt.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/514208/Appendix-U-Flood-Hazard-Inundation-Maps.pdf](https://www.mackenzie.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/514208/Appendix-U-Flood-Hazard-Inundation-Maps.pdf)

The 2016 version of the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay excluded areas at the Pukaki Airport, Lyford Lane and Flanagan Lane locations shown on Figure 4.



Source: Opus Drawing 6/3434/1/6504 (Rev R4) Sheet No. 21

**Figure 4: Excerpt of Waitaki Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay prepared for Plan Change 13**

### Site Specific Maps prepared for Farm Base Areas

In 2017, Meridian Energy requested Damwatch to prepare site-specific dam-break flood hazard maps for the following four sites.

- Bendrose Farm Base Area
  - Refer map “Potential Dam-Break Flood Hazard at Bendrose Station”, dated 05/10/2017
- Omahau Downs Farm Base Area
  - Refer map “Potential Dam-Break Flood Hazard at Omahau Downs”, dated 05/10/2017
- Black Forest Station Farm Base Area
  - Refer map “Potential Dam-Break Flood Hazard at Black Forest Station”, dated 05/10/2017
- Ben Ohau Farm Base Area
  - Refer map “Potential Dam-Break Flood Hazard at Ben Ohau Station”, dated 05/10/2017

### Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay Prepared for Proposed Plan Change 28

The Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay is included in proposed Plan Change 28 and can be viewed at the weblink provided previously in Section 3.5.

It is understood that the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay included in proposed Plan Change 28 is unchanged from the version produced in 2016, but now covers the missing areas shown in Figure 4 at Pukaki Airport, Lyford Lane and Flanagan Lane.

### 3.7 Discussion on areas affected by Proposed Plan Change 28

Table 1 summarises which Waitaki Power Scheme dam or canal breach inundation zones the Pukaki Airport, Lyford Lane and Flanagan Lane areas are located in. This table also summarises the current PIC of those dams or canals.

**Table 1 – Summary of dam or canal contributing to the Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay at Pukaki Airport, Lyford Lane and Flanagan Lane areas**

Area	Dam or Canal Contributing to Waitaki Hydro Inundation Hazard Overlay	Potential Impact Classification (PIC) of Dam or Canal
Flanagan Lane	Ohau Canal, true left bank	High
Pukaki Airport	Pukaki Inlet Dam	High
	Pukaki Canal, true left bank	High
Lyford Lane	Pukaki Inlet Dam	High
	Pukaki Canal, true left bank	High

Notes: \* PIC sourced from Damwatch (2024) report “Dam Classification Certificates for Meridian Energy Dams and Canals”

Table 1 indicates that the Pukaki Airport, Lyford Lane and Flanagan Lane areas are affected by dams or canals which currently have a High PIC. In terms of reverse sensitivity effects, developments in these three areas would not change the PIC, as High is the highest PIC category.

However, for the reasons outlined previously in Section 3.4, any future developments which increase the number of people in these areas (i.e. the Population at Risk), have the potential to increase the performance requirements that the associated dam must safely withstand.

Additionally, when more people live in a dam or canal breach flood inundation zone, the complexity of emergency action planning and preparedness become more challenging due to the increased evacuation needs and potential constraints associated with access and transport to safe evacuation points.

### 3.8 Commentary on mitigation measures for dam or canal failure

As outlined in Sections 3.1 previously, dam owners are required, through the Building (Dam Safety) Regulations and industry-recommended practices outlined in the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines, to take actions to keep their dams safe and reduce the risk of dam or canal failure. This is the fundamental dam safety objective of the New Zealand Dam Safety Guidelines:

- *“People, property and the environment, present and future, should be protected from the harmful effects of a dam failure or an uncontrolled release of the reservoir contents”*

Measures must be taken by dam and canal owners to achieve an appropriate level of safety, which is commensurate with a dam or canal’s PIC. These measures are prescribed in the DSAP for a dam or canal, as previously outlined in Section 3.1.

This approach means that dam owners are required to prioritise investments directly into the dam or canal assets, and asset management programmes, to ensure the structural integrity and safety of those assets.

There is no precedent, either nationally or internationally, that the author is aware of regarding the construction of infrastructure downstream of an engineered dam or canal to mitigate the

consequences of dam failure (e.g. stopbanks to deflect dam-break flood waters away from development). There would be engineering challenges involved in designing such infrastructure to withstand dam-break floods which are typically an order of magnitude more damaging than natural flood hazards. Further, infrastructure that is not regularly used is more likely to degrade over time, due to lack of maintenance, and potential issues which could affect its performance may not be identified and addressed.

For these reasons, dam owners prioritise investments directly into the safety of the dam or canal assets, rather than focusing on downstream infrastructure which attempts to mitigate the consequences of dam failure.

## 4 Summary

The memorandum provides background and technical explanation on the topics listed in Section 1 and related to proposed Plan Change 28 to the Mackenzie District Plan.

It is understood that the information in this memo will be provided to MDC to assist in their development of a Section 42A report related to proposed Plan Change 28.

## Document history and status

Issue no.	Issue date	Description	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	20/03/25	Issue 1	BV	GW	DCE
2	01/04/25	Issue 2	BV	GW	DCE
3	10/04/25	Issue 3	BV	GW	DCE

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