



*planning & resource management consultants*

Level 1, 2-8 Northcroft St. PO Box 33-817, Takapuna, Auckland 0740, New Zealand  
Phone 09-917 4300 Fax 09-917 4311

File: 09j003

Writers DDI: 09 917 4302

Email: [klacey@burtonconsultants.co.nz](mailto:klacey@burtonconsultants.co.nz)

6<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Stratford District Council  
PO Box 320  
STRATFORD



Attention: Mike Avery

Via Email: [mavery@stratford.govt.nz](mailto:mavery@stratford.govt.nz)

Dear Mike,

**RE: SUBMISSION BY POWERCO LIMITED ON VARIATION 1 TO THE PROPOSED  
STRATFORD DISTRICT PLAN 2009**

Please find enclosed a submission by Powerco Limited on Variation 1 (Indigenous Forest and Biodiversity) to the Proposed Stratford District Plan 2009.

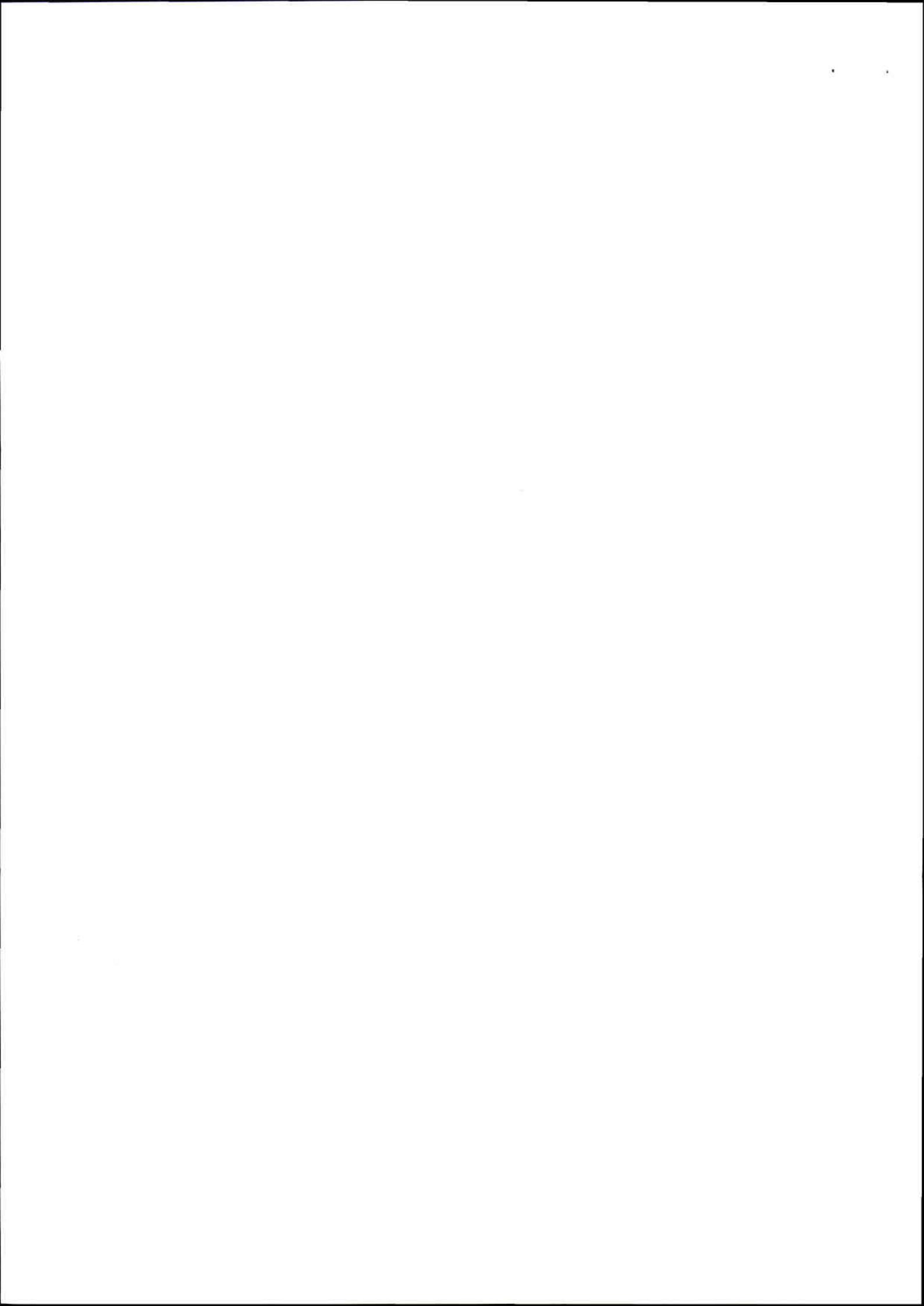
Please do not hesitate to contact Kathryn Lacey should you require any further information regarding Powerco's submission.

Yours faithfully,

**BURTON PLANNING CONSULTANTS LTD**

Kathryn Lacey

**Planner**



**SUBMISSION BY POWERCO LIMITED UNDER CLAUSE 6 OF THE FIRST SCHEDULE  
OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991 VARIATION 1 (INDIGENOUS FOREST  
AND BIODIVERSITY) TO THE STRATFORD DISTRICT PLAN**

To: Stratford District Council  
PO Box 320  
Stratford

From: Powerco Limited ("Powerco")  
Private Bag 2061  
NEW PLYMOUTH

*(Note that this is not the address for service.)*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Powerco Limited ("Powerco") is New Zealand's second largest gas and electricity Distribution Company and has experience with energy distribution in New Zealand spanning more than a century. The Powerco network spreads across the upper and lower central North Island servicing over 400,000 consumers, which represents 46% of the gas connections and sixteen per cent of the electricity connections in New Zealand. These consumers are served through Powerco assets including nearly 8,500 kilometres of electricity lines (including overhead lines and cables) and 850 kilometres of gas pipelines. Powerco distributes electricity and gas to the whole of the Stratford District.

## **2. POWERCO'S SUBMISSION**

2.1 Proposed Variation 1 to the Stratford District Plan proposes a range of changes to the Proposed Stratford District Plan in regard to the way in which wetlands, indigenous vegetation and indigenous fauna are managed.

2.2 Powerco generally supports the nature and intent of the current provisions in Variation 1, and in particular those provisions that provide for tree trimming associated with the ongoing operation, maintenance and upgrading of utilities such as Electricity Lines. The reasons for Powerco's support are outlined in further detail below:

- 2.3 Powerco's transmission lines are inspected on a regular basis to ascertain the potential hazard posed to the lines by any vegetation. Vegetation that is likely to pose a risk to the integrity of the network is trimmed or sometimes cleared in accordance with the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003 ("The Tree Regulations")<sup>1</sup>. It is important that Powerco are able to trim and clear any vegetation around its lines that may affect the operation of those lines.
- 2.4 The Tree Regulations define the safe separation distances required between trees and overhead transmission lines. When tree branches get close to or contact a power line, they can create a significant public safety hazard (e.g. setting fire to vegetation or causing it to become live) and may cause an interruption of electrical service or an outage. In addition, power lines that are downed or broken by trees or tree branches can be live, and live lines can be extremely dangerous. Powerco regularly trims branches and other vegetation to prevent them from interfering with the overhead electric lines and equipment.
- 2.5 Powerco considers the Rules in Variation 1 adequately provide for tree trimming in association with network utilities as indigenous vegetation disturbance is defined in the Variation as follows:

*"Indigenous vegetation disturbance"*

*means felling, destruction or damage to indigenous vegetation, including indigenous trees, manuka, kanuka, grasses, shrubs or other plants, by any means including cutting, burning, crushing or spraying except that indigenous forest disturbance does not include:*

.....

- (b) *tree trimming or the selective removal of vegetation necessary for the operation and maintenance of legally established infrastructure, including roads, stream or river access, fire water points, utilities and the upgrading of utilities, structures and fence lines; and*

.....

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<sup>1</sup> The Regulations can be found online at: [http://www.legislation.govt.nz/browse\\_vw.asp?content-set=pal\\_regs](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/browse_vw.asp?content-set=pal_regs)

- 2.6 Powerco supports this definition, in particular clause (b) that excludes tree trimming or the selective removal of vegetation associated with operation, maintenance and upgrading of utilities. The inclusion of clause (b) means that Powerco would not need to obtain resource consent under Rules B1.2.1.2.1-B1.1.2.1.5 for tree trimming associated with the operation, maintenance and upgrading of its assets.
- 2.7 Furthermore, Rule B1.2.1.1 (Rural Zone permitted activities) provides for the removal of any vegetation whatsoever, and including indigenous vegetation (with the exception of any tree identified in Appendix 5: Notable Trees Identified for Protection) as required for the operation and maintenance of legally established infrastructure, which includes electricity lines in accordance with the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003. Powerco supports this rule and seeks that it is maintained in the Variation.

**3. POWERCO SEEKS THE FOLLOWING DECISION:**

**3.1 Retain without modification the definition of “Indigenous Vegetation Disturbance” in Variation 1 and in particular (b) as follows:**

*“Indigenous vegetation disturbance” means felling, destruction or damage to indigenous vegetation, including indigenous trees, manuka, kanuka, grasses, shrubs or other plants, by any means including cutting, burning, crushing or spraying except that indigenous forest disturbance does not include:*

.....

*(b) tree trimming or the selective removal of vegetation necessary for the operation and maintenance of legally established infrastructure, including roads, stream or river access, fire water points, utilities and the upgrading of utilities, structures and fence lines; and*

.....

**3.2 Retain without modification Rule B1.2.1.1 and in particular clause (b) and as follows:**

*Rural Zone Permitted Activities*

*B1.2.1.1 The following are permitted activities throughout the Rural Zone, subject to compliance with the Standards, Conditions and Terms in Part B2 relevant to the zone in which the activity is undertaken and provided that no part of the activity is listed in either B1.2.1.2, B1.2.1.3, B1.2.1.4, B1.2.1.5 or B1.2.1.6:*

.....

*The removal or trimming of any vegetation whatsoever, and including indigenous vegetation, (with the exception of any tree identified in Appendix 5: Notable Trees Identified for Protection) as required for:*

.....

*(b) the operation and maintenance of legally established infrastructure, including roads, stream or river access, fire water points, utilities and the*

*upgrading of utilities, structures and fence lines to a maximum distance of 3 metres from the road, stream or river access, fire water point, utility, structure or fence or, in the case of any electricity line, such distance as is prescribed by the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003.*

**3.3. Any other such relief as to give effect to the submission.**

**3.4. Powerco wishes to be heard in support of this submission.**

Dated at TAKAPUNA this 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Signature on behalf of POWERCO LIMITED



.....  
Kathryn Lacey

Planner

Address for service:

Burton Planning Consultants Limited

PO Box 33-817,

Takapuna,

AUCKLAND 0740

Attention: Kathryn Lacey

Telephone: (09) 917 4303 Fax: (09) 917 4311