



Newsletter 03

Project West Wind



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Project West Wind

All 62 turbines are now installed at Project West Wind and the wind farm is an impressive sight visible from vantage points such as Mt Kaukau and the summit of Mt Victoria.

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Turbine installation completed

The turbine installation and commissioning stage of the project has now been completed and all 62 turbines are now converting Wellington's infamous wind into electricity which is then fed into the national grid. Despite an early start to winter and the arrival of some very harsh southerly storms, the project team and turbine installers, Siemens Wind Power, have worked hard to keep the project timetable ahead of schedule.

Project West Wind Project Manager Royden Mayfield says the bitter southerly storms in May made for some challenging times, "It's ironic that the wind which makes this a perfect place for a wind farm is also a problem for construction. We needed it to be relatively calm to be able to put the turbines up and whenever the wind calmed down the team worked tirelessly to install as many turbines as possible".

First power celebration

Prime Minister John Key joined Meridian Chief Executive Tim Lusk and other guests to officially switch on the first 15 turbines at Project West Wind in late April. Those first turbines had the capacity to generate enough electricity for approximately 17,000 homes. Once fully completed, the wind farm will provide enough electricity to power the equivalent of 70,000 average homes.



Tim Lusk acknowledged the hard work by all members of the project team and contractors in overcoming the challenges of building a wind farm in such difficult terrain. With no possibility of transporting the turbine components by road the team found a solution by building a temporary wharf at Oteranga Bay and barging the turbine components to the site. Barging operations and turbine installation has now been completed and Project West Wind remains on schedule for completion at the end of 2009.



Turbines at Project West Wind generating clean, renewable energy.



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Manapouri Community Fund planting day.

“The Community Fund has worked very well in our Manapouri, Waitaki, Te Āpiti and White Hill generation areas. It gives people a sense of ownership of the funding process and a say in how the funds are used. This ensures that initiatives that are of value to the community are supported,” says Mark France.

Community Fund launched for Project West Wind

Meridian is launching a Community Fund to the value of \$200,000 over the first three years for the communities around the West Wind wind farm – Makara, South Makara, Makara Beach and Takarau Gorge.

The Meridian West Wind Community Fund will be administered by a panel of community members and Meridian staff and will begin operating in May 2010.

Meridian’s Strategic Relations Advisor Mark France says this model of community funding has worked well in Meridian’s other generation areas.

“The funding round will be for an initial three years. This will allow for certainty in planning for projects with long term benefit and will allow local people to initiate various projects that will help ensure a successful and sustainable community,” he added.

There will be two funding allocation meetings per year, with the first in May and again in October. Funding decisions will be based on the objectives established for the Fund.

Over the coming months, a survey of community members will be carried out by Colmar Brunton to find out the types of things the Community Fund could support. These priorities will form the objectives of the Fund and will guide funding decisions.

Recreation Plan

In November 2007, Meridian convened a Project West Wind Recreation Group to investigate and provide recommendations on the recreational opportunities on the wind farm site once construction is completed.

The terms of reference required the Group to identify and develop recreation and visitor opportunities that are feasible and compatible with the established farming activities and the wind farm operation. The Group has now completed a Recreation Report, an assessment of potential tracks for walking and cycling, and an assessment of the ecological values of the area including management options in respect of native vegetation. These reports will be finalised and available on Meridian’s website shortly.

Meridian intends to have access to the Makara Walkway and Opau Bay through Makara Farm available for the public to enjoy by the end of the year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit our website
www.meridianenergy.co.nz/ourprojects/westwind

Email questions to
wind.info@meridianenergy.co.nz

Phone us on 0800 500 305

About Meridian

Meridian is the country’s largest renewable electricity generator and is 100 percent New Zealand owned. We generate around 30 percent of the electricity used in New Zealand. We own and operate nine South Island hydro stations, including eight on the Waitaki hydro scheme and the Manapouri power station. We own and operate the Te Āpiti wind farm north of the Manawatu Gorge and White Hill wind farm in Southland. We have plans for more wind farms in both the North and South Islands.

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