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I, Katherine Margaret Eleanor MacNeill of Wellington, public servant, will say:

Introduction

1. My full name is Katherine Margaret Eleanor MacNeill. I am the General Manager, Resource Markets at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (**MBIE**). On 3 October 2025 I provided a brief of evidence covering the development of the geothermal strategy.

Scope of evidence

2. The purpose of this brief is to reply to the following claimant briefs of evidence:
 - 2.1 Brief of evidence of Deborah Helen Kissick (20 October 2025);¹
 - 2.2 Joint brief of evidence of Aroha Campbell and Desterney Mana Newton (20 October 2025);²
 - 2.3 Joint brief of evidence of Te Urunga Evelyn Aroha Kereopa, Anthony Whareraupo Olsen, Ian John Mitchell, Merle Maata Ormsby, Daniel Whetu Ormsby and Bryce Peda Aldridge (20 October 2025);³
 - 2.4 Brief of evidence of Shamubeel Eaqub (17 October 2025);⁴
 - 2.5 Joint brief of evidence of Brian Edward Cox and Greg Bignall (17 October 2025);⁵
 - 2.6 Joint brief of evidence of Kenneth Kennedy and Anthony Olsen (17 October 2025).⁶
3. In my reply evidence, I will explain the consultation on the draft geothermal strategy.

¹ Wai 2358, #190.

² Wai 2358, #189.

³ Wai 2358, #188.

⁴ Wai 2358, #185.

⁵ Wai 2358, #186.

⁶ Wai 2358, #187.

Public consultation on the draft strategy

4. In my 3 October brief of evidence, I explained the consultation undertaken as part of the development of the geothermal strategy to that date. MBIE officials have since reviewed all 59 submissions received during the public consultation period (30 July to 12 September 2025).
5. Extensions to the consultation end-date (12 September 2025) were granted to several submitters on their request including the New Zealand Māori Council (submitted on 19 September), Raukawa (submitted on 18 September), and Wairākei Ahī Tāmou Rōpū (submitted on 17 September).

Key themes from the public submissions

6. Submissions on the draft geothermal strategy were received from commercial entities (20), iwi, hapū, ahu whenua trusts, and other Māori organisations (12), individuals (12), industry bodies (7), local government/regional economic development agencies (4), and academia/research institutes (4).
7. The submissions were broadly supportive of the draft strategy's vision and goals, with many submitters acknowledging the draft strategy's potential to unlock geothermal opportunities across New Zealand. Many supportive submitters called for items in the action plan to be undertaken sooner and be backed by funding.
8. Five key themes emerged from the 59 submissions:
 - 8.1 Economic enablement and regional development;
 - 8.2 Strategic governance and regulatory reform;
 - 8.3 Treaty of Waitangi partnership, Māori rights and interests and integration of mātauranga Māori;
 - 8.4 Environmental stewardship and sustainability; and
 - 8.5 Geothermal data issues.

9. MBIE intends to publish a summary of all submissions and key themes on the MBIE website on 31 October.⁷

Submissions from iwi, hapū, ahu whenua trusts, and other Māori organisations

10. The 12 submissions categorised as from iwi, hapū, ahu whenua trusts, and other Māori organisations were provided by:
- 10.1 Ngati Tāhu - Ngāti Whāoa Runanga Trust;
 - 10.2 Te Ahi Ka Roa geothermal roopu (Rotorua);
 - 10.3 Taheke 8C;
 - 10.4 Te Tumu Paeroa / the Māori Trustee;
 - 10.5 Whakarewarewa Living Māori Village;
 - 10.6 New Zealand Māori Council;
 - 10.7 Kereopa, Olsen, Mitchell, Ormsby, Pillot and Ormsby;
 - 10.8 Ngati Tahu - Ngati Whaoa Collective;
 - 10.9 Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa;
 - 10.10 Wairākei Ahī Tāmou Rōpū;
 - 10.11 Raukawa; and
 - 10.12 New Zealand Māori Council - Wellington District.
11. A submission was also received from Ngati Tuwharetoa Geothermal Assets, which was classified as one of the 20 submissions from commercial entities due to the nature and scale of that business.
12. These submissions are attached to the brief as **Appendix A**.
13. Further engagement has occurred with two of the submitters listed above at [10].

⁷ Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment “Draft geothermal strategy” (31 October 2025) <<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/building-and-energy/energy-and-natural-resources/minerals-and-petroleum/strategies/draft-geothermal-strategy>>.

14. In this regard, MBIE officials met with the New Zealand Māori Council on 22 October 2025 to hear more about their submission and views on the strategy. At the meeting NZMC expanded on the points raised in their submission, including views from their experts and MBIE shared the key themes from submissions and an overview of next steps in the development of the strategy. Both parties agreed to meet again to further discuss Māori rights and interests in geothermal.
15. MBIE officials have also been in contact with Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa, seeking to engage on the issues raised in their submission. The submission of Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa clearly opposed the draft strategy, setting out their perspective that it failed to recognise their customary rights in Te Ahi Tāmou (geothermal resources) and calling for Crown engagement.

Next steps

16. The feedback received through the public submissions is informing the policy work which is currently under way to provide advice to Ministers and support them to finalise the content of the strategy. In addition to further discussions with some submitters, this policy work includes engaging with Crown agencies across portfolios on possible actions for inclusion in the final strategy that fall outside the Resources portfolio. We are also open to further engagement on the geothermal strategy, including with parties who did not submit during the consultation period.
17. At the conclusion of the policy process, MBIE will provide advice to the Minister for Resources, who I expect will take a Cabinet paper to Cabinet that recommends agreement to the content of the final strategy. The policy work is ongoing. We intend to provide initial advice following the consultation period to the Minister in the near future. The timing of the Cabinet process and the final content of the strategy are decisions for the Minister and his Cabinet colleagues.
18. As outlined in the draft strategy, the geothermal strategy is intended to be high-level strategic document that sets the overall direction for the development, management, and use of geothermal resources in New

Zealand and does not make or implement specific policy changes itself. It is intended to support central government agencies, iwi and hapū with interests in geothermal resources, Māori-led commercial entities, regional councils, sector stakeholders, and other parties to work together towards shared strategic outcomes.

19. Any future policy work to give effect to the final strategy, including the development of new or amended policies, regulations, or operational practices, would be undertaken through separate policy processes. These processes may be led by different agencies, depending on the portfolio they relate to and would include Consultation as appropriate. Iwi, hapū, and sector participants will accordingly have the opportunity to provide further input into the development of any substantive policy proposals arising from the strategy.

Signed:



Katherine Margaret Eleanor MacNeill

Date: 31/10/2025