



**Media Statement: 19 March 2009**

## **MERIDIAN AND NZ ANTARTIC INSTITUTE SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Antarctica New Zealand and Meridian Energy have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), setting out how the two organisations will work together to achieve their mutual aims of long-term environmental viability in Antarctica.

“Meridian, as New Zealand’s largest renewable electricity generator, is committed to an enduring and mutually beneficial relationship with Antarctica New Zealand,” says Meridian Chief Executive Tim Lusk.

“We are very pleased to be working with Antarctica New Zealand on its quest to become an exemplar of sustainable practices. The MOU means we can now explore ways to share resources, including sharing personnel and joint professional development for staff,” says Tim Lusk

Antarctica New Zealand’s Chief Executive Lou Sanson says he is very pleased to be able to work with Meridian Energy.

“We have similar goals in the areas of sustainability planning and health and safety which have become apparent in the Ross Island wind farm project, and the sharing of best practice in these areas can only be beneficial to both parties,” says Lou Sanson.

In February Meridian Energy, in collaboration with Antarctica New Zealand, completed the first construction phase of the Ross Island wind farm, which when completed in early 2010, will link to the electrical grids of McMurdo Station and Scott Base.

Substituting renewable wind energy for existing fossil fuel use will reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as reducing the risks associated with transporting and storing liquid fuel at Scott Base.

The three 333kW turbines will reduce the amount of diesel required for power generation by around 463,000 litres and cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 1,242 tonnes per year.

**T:** +64 3 358 0200

**F:** +64 3 358 0211

International Antarctic Centre  
Administration Building  
38 Orchard Road  
Private Bag 4745  
Christchurch  
New Zealand  
[www.antarcticanz.govt.nz](http://www.antarcticanz.govt.nz)



“The Ross Island wind farm will become a positive environmental reference point for New Zealand’s activity in Antarctica,” says Tim Lusk.

“The initial three wind turbines will be highly significant in terms of proving our expertise in building a wind farm in one of the harshest environments in the world. Additional wind turbines will be required to meet the power demand at Scott Base and McMurdo Station and further reduce the environmental effects of diesel generation.

“We’re committed to working with Antarctica New Zealand to explore future opportunities to place New Zealand as a world leader in sustainable energy management in Antarctica,” says Tim Lusk.

## ***Ends***

### **For more information please contact:**

Matt Vance  
Communications Advisor  
Antarctica New Zealand  
Private Bag 4745  
Christchurch  
New Zealand  
Tel: +64 (0)3 358 0213  
Mobile: +64 (0) 21 997 993  
Email: [m.vance@antarcticanz.govt.nz](mailto:m.vance@antarcticanz.govt.nz)

Claire Shaw  
External Relations Manager  
Meridian Energy  
33 Customhouse Quay  
Wellington  
021 370 677  
[claire.shaw@meridianenergy.co.nz](mailto:claire.shaw@meridianenergy.co.nz)

**T:** +64 3 358 0200

**F:** +64 3 358 0211

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