

Connections

Marlborough Lines

Marlborough Lines Newsletter • Autumn 2012

Headlines



Reliability of your electricity supply

To maximise the reliability of your electricity supply we need to continually review the causes and potential causes of lost electricity supply. Sadly motor vehicle accidents have continued to be a cause of lost supply along with people operating equipment or undertaking work which interferes with the power lines.

Within our electricity network we have extensive monitoring systems and we seek to eliminate potential problems through timely action to improve the network or remove any potential hazard. It is for this reason we have an extensive tree and vegetation control programme, without which the reliability of our electricity supply would be seriously impaired.

As part of our effort to maximise the efficiency of our operations and minimise costs, we seek to cut/spray trees/vegetation on a sequential programme basis and this is especially important in rural and remote areas such as the Marlborough Sounds.

For us to maximise the reliability of your supply we need the ongoing support of landowners and your assistance in this regard is most appreciated. Unfortunately we cannot provide a reliable supply in instances where trees interfere with the lines.

Please help us to help you. If you know of trees which are causing interference or have the potential to cause interference with an electricity line please give us a call on (03) 577 7007.

Return of benefits

During the month of March a discount was paid by Marlborough Lines to all customers in economic areas via your electricity retailer.

This payment will subsequently show up as a discount on your electricity account. A typical domestic customer (as defined by the Ministry of Economic Development) will receive around \$187 (including GST).

All customers should already have received a tax-paid dividend of \$50 paid via your retailer from the Marlborough Electric Power Trust which received the funds from Marlborough Lines as a tax-paid dividend in December.

Consequently the total financial benefit received by a typical customer from Marlborough Lines from our current financial year will be approximately \$237.

The total amount of the line charge discount paid by Marlborough Lines to all customers in economic areas for the financial year ended 31 March 2012 is \$7.55m (including GST). Since 1993 electricity consumers in Marlborough have received dividends and discounts totalling nearly \$80m.

Looking forward it is the intent of Marlborough Lines and the Marlborough Electric Power Trust that these benefits will continue.

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Network investment

Over the last three years Marlborough Lines has invested some \$40m in replacing old lines and substations and we are continuing to increase the capacity of the network to meet customer demand and improve reliability.

We have now constructed four new 33/11kV indoor substations in Blenheim and one in Picton together with upgrading transformer capacity at all of our rural 33/11kV substations.

We've also replaced a number of 33 and 11kV lines which were either at the end of their economic life or of limited capacity.

In the electricity industry, to wait until the demand exists is too late. Forward planning and timely expenditure must always be an integral part of our operations.

By way of example, this year we will construct a new dual 16.5MVA 33/11kV substation at Cloudy Bay Industrial Estate to provide increased capacity and reliability.



Staff working on the Lansdowne to Riverlands 33kV line replacement

We will also continue with the installation of our remotely operated circuit breakers throughout the network particularly in the remote areas to minimise outage times and enhance the reliability of supply.

This new investment is in addition to our ongoing maintenance of the network.

We recognise in today's environment our customers generally seek increased reliability of supply and ideally our goal is no loss of electricity supply.



Network status

Next time you want to check when outages are scheduled to occur, check out the **Network Status** page on our website – www.marlboroughlines.co.nz/Consumer Info/Network Status. This page provides information on faults, planned outages to allow maintenance to occur, network load, and water heating channel shedding and is updated regularly.

For all outage information we encourage you to look at the **Network Status** page first if you can. Alternatively, if you are experiencing problems with your electricity supply please don't hesitate to give us a call on 577 7007.

Who we are

For the benefit of new arrivals to Marlborough, Marlborough Lines is the network company which owns the electricity reticulation in Marlborough and delivers electricity from Transpower's substation in Blenheim to your premises.

Marlborough Lines was established under the Energy Companies Act 1993 and is required by legislation to operate as a successful business i.e. to return a profit to its shareholders.

All of the shares of Marlborough Lines are held by the Marlborough Electric Power Trust and the beneficiaries of the Trust are the customers connected to the Marlborough electricity network.

Accordingly, the benefits of Marlborough Lines' operations are returned to those customers connected to the Marlborough network.

In addition to owning the Marlborough Lines electricity network Marlborough Lines owns 50% of the network which delivers electricity to Nelson city, 51% of the electricity network which delivers electricity to the wider Otago region, excluding Dunedin and Central Otago, and 13.9% of Horizon Energy which delivers electricity to the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The customers of these networks do not receive a discount and the profits of these companies are returned to Marlborough Lines.

Marlborough Lines also operates a significant contracting operation in Marlborough and Otago with in excess of 200 staff and undertakes a wide range of work relative to electricity distribution.



Emergency generation

Marlborough Lines has three large mobile generators which are used in emergency situations in Marlborough and have also been utilised in the Christchurch and Canterbury areas following the earthquakes.

In an endeavour to improve reliability in the Marlborough Sounds beyond Okiwi Bay we have now installed a generator which can be remotely operated from Blenheim.

Similarly we plan to increase the number of remotely operated switches within the network to provide faster restoration of supply and reduce outage times.

We also intend to install switching devices on spur lines where we have ongoing potential tree problems to ensure such lines do not impact on the reliability of other customers.

Price changes

The government-owned grid company Transpower, has advised its charges to Marlborough Lines will increase by 8% from 1 April.

This increase, together with an increase in Marlborough Lines' charges, will result in an overall increase of 16 cents per day for a typical domestic customer as defined by the Ministry of Economic Development.

Transpower is working through a five-year programme to improve the capacity and reliability of the national grid, a programme which Marlborough Lines believes is absolutely necessary. Projects completed by Transpower last year include installation of a third 110/33kV 60MVA transformer at its Blenheim substation. This work follows Transpower's construction of a third 220kV line from Islington to Kikiwa and a second 110kV line from Stoke to Blenheim. These projects have markedly enhanced electricity supply to Marlborough and will stand the region in good stead for the future.

It is important to note Marlborough Lines' costs, including those of Transpower, are passed onto your electricity retailer who determines the fixed and variable components of your electricity account. When looking at the total bill for an average domestic customer over the last year, Marlborough Lines' charges comprised 30.9% and 23.2% on a post-discount basis.

Community support



Pollard Park

Sponsorship

Marlborough Lines has again sponsored the Blenheim and Picton Christmas Parades, and assisted the Blenheim Blues Brews and BBQs and the Marlborough Wine Festival in the provision of power supplies.

We have again over the summer illuminated the magnificent trees and gardens of Pollard Park and this is well worth a visit to see the beautiful features of the gardens from a night time perspective.

The Marlborough Lines Stadium complex has been substantially increased in recent months with the addition of new swimming pools and a new gymnasium all of which will be of considerable benefit to the people of Marlborough.



Marlborough Lines Stadium Complex

Defibrillators

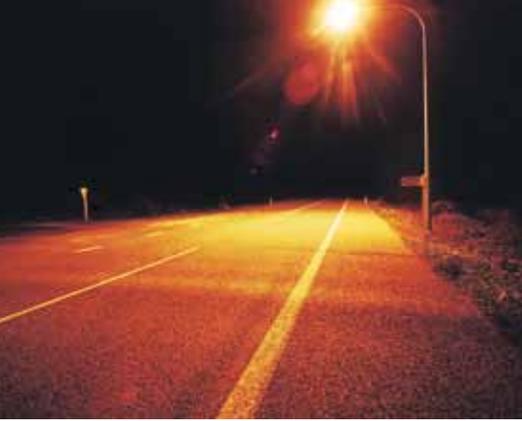
Because of our everyday work a number of our vehicles and premises at our depot and office are equipped with defibrillators.



These are of course available for the use of our community should you be in proximity to us.

Our vehicles carrying defibrillators are denoted by the universal defibrillator sign.





Safety message



Always treat powerlines as live

Tragically from time to time circumstances arise where power lines are in close proximity to the ground, or actually touching the ground, or have come in contact with equipment.

Regardless of the circumstances, power lines must always be treated as live. It is also important to recognise that aside from the dangers of the line itself, in some instances high voltage can occur across the ground.

Accordingly if you come across a situation where power lines are down please exercise extreme caution. Tragically lives have been lost in Marlborough and in other parts of New Zealand because of direct or indirect contact with a power line.

Please remember: regardless of whether power lines are on the ground or above ground they should always be treated as live. Never assume that a power line is dead no matter what the circumstances.

Environment

Sustainability of our operations

Throughout Marlborough we have some 50,000 hardwood cross arms on power poles to carry the electricity conductors.

These arms typically have a life in the vicinity of 40-50 years and we replace them on an ongoing basis as required.

Traditionally the cross arms have come from Australia and Malaysia but following trials by the New Zealand Dryland Forests initiative and Canterbury University it has been determined suitable trees can be grown in Marlborough.

These trees are fast growing and Marlborough Lines has planted an area of some 60ha on a sustainable basis at a much lower cost than those imported.



Efficiency tip

40% of a household's energy use is hot water

Ways to conserve your hot water

Fix any dripping hot taps – these can waste considerable amounts of hot water.

Use cold water for drinks and washing clothes – this reduces your overall energy, as while the electric jug uses a little more energy (and takes a little more time), you reduce the waste in the pipes from the tank to the tap.

Install lower flow shower nozzles. This is a great saving, particularly if your house has mains pressure cylinders.

Insulate your hot water pipes. You can also put a wrap on your cylinder, although if it is A grade, then this will have less effect than insulating the pipes.

Check your hot water temperature – 60C-70C is sufficient for most household purposes.

For any problems with your electricity supply call our 24 hour fault line: 577 7007

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