

Connections

Marlborough Lines

Marlborough Lines Newsletter • Autumn 2014

Headlines

Discounts delivered: We've paid \$9.1m in discounts

On 31 March 2014, Marlborough Lines paid line charge discounts totalling \$9.1 million (including GST) to be credited to individual consumers' accounts via their electricity retailers.

The letter accompanying this newsletter advises you of the amount of your discount/s, and to which electricity retailer it has been paid. The reason we don't pay consumers directly is because we are a lines company and our consumers' contractual relationships are with their electricity retailers, not with us.

Our discounts are based on the revenue received from delivering electricity to each economic installation (ICP) connected to the network between 1 February 2013 and 31 January 2014

(and that are still connected at the qualifying date in March 2014). Those in the more remote areas supplied by our network do not receive a discount because of the uneconomic nature of their supply. The discounts are on top of the \$50 tax-free capital distribution which was paid via the Marlborough Electric Power Trust (MEPT) through electricity retailers in December last year.

A typical domestic consumer received a discount of \$226.38 (including GST). Discounts for non-domestic consumers vary according to their consumption.

Since 1999, electricity consumers in Marlborough have received discounts totalling \$93 million. An additional \$15.72 million has been paid to the MEPT as dividends.

For more information about the discount, including how it is calculated and frequently asked questions, visit our website www.marlboroughlines.co.nz/About-us/Disclosures/Discounts.aspx



Blowing in the wind

On 4 February the new park developed by Marlborough Lines on its Leeds Quay property was officially opened to the public.

The park includes a wind-activated kinetic sculpture by Nelson-born sculptor, Phil Price. The sculpture was commissioned to acknowledge the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the former Marlborough Electric Power Board, and give something back to the public in recognition of their support over the years. This follows on from our 80th anniversary when we lit up Pollard Park and have maintained the Pollard Park lights ever since.

The sculpture, named 'Morpheus', is an abstract work and was seen as a good fit with Marlborough Lines as it relies on engineering excellence and engages with energy.

The park provides seating as well as grassy areas where you can sit or lie back and enjoy the sculpture and surrounds. 'Morpheus' is driven by the wind, and if you take a trip to the park on a blustery day you'll be rewarded with some fascinating movement patterns. At night, colour changing LED lights make the sculpture an eye-catching sight.

The Marlborough District Council is installing new steps to link the park to the riverbank and this work is expected to get underway in April.



The new Marlborough Lines park and kinetic wind sculpture by Phil Price.

In this issue

- Discounts delivered
- Blowing in the wind
- Surveillance system upgrade
- Improving reliability
- Tame those trees
- Thanks for your views
- Price changes from 1 April
- Winter is on its way
- That's the spirit
- Safety message

Network update: Surveillance system upgrade



Within our network we have a number of remotely operated circuit breakers and automatic surveillance systems. These convey information such as voltage, current loadings, and loss of supply back to our system control.

This surveillance helps us monitor the quality of our network and speeds up the process of restoring any loss of supply.

These remotely operated systems depend upon Marlborough Lines having an extensive radio network with numerous repeaters on prominent points throughout Marlborough.

Of course, these remote radio repeaters require power to operate. As part of our proposal to install more radio repeaters in remote hilltop areas where

there are no power supplies, we are looking to use a combination of a wind generator, solar panels and batteries.

Previous wind generators we have trialled have not been able to withstand extreme winds but we are currently in the process of installing two 3kW wind generators which we will trial in conjunction with the manufacturer. The generators are unusual in that they have a single rotating blade but in extreme winds the blade aligns itself with the direction of the wind and the generator ceases to operate.

Subject to performance, these wind generators have the potential to enable more radio repeaters to be installed in remote locations to enhance the reliability of our electricity supply.

Improving reliability



Moving forward, we aim to continue to improve the reliability of our network.

We have undertaken a number of measures to improve the reliability of the network over a period of years which include:

- having extensive tree trimming and vegetation control programmes in place
- retrospectively fitting in excess of 16,000 long length possum guards
- installing thousands of bird spikes
- installing significant numbers of remotely operated circuit breakers
- increasingly expanding our surveillance system.

Regardless of these measures, the extreme earthquake and storm events from July last year have caused our minutes of lost supply in some areas to be far greater than planned. We are serious about continuing to improve reliability and it has to be said that were it not for the significant efforts made to improve reliability, the outages we have experienced over the last few months would have been much worse. It should also be noted that if extreme events like the earthquakes and storms are excluded, the reliability of the network has improved significantly in recent years.

Tame those trees

When trees grow too close to power lines they have the potential to cause power fluctuations and appliance damage, power failure, fire, electric shock or electrocution.

Tree owners are legally required to ensure their trees don't grow too close to power lines. The Electricity (Hazard from Trees) Regulations 2003 were introduced by the Government because trees need to be kept at a safe distance from electricity lines for public safety and to protect your electricity supply.

We have an ongoing vegetation control programme in place to maintain a safe clearance between trees and power lines. The objectives of our programme are to reduce the risk of:

- accidental electric shock or electrocution
- fires caused by electricity
- power fluctuations or interruptions caused by branches touching or being blown into power lines.

For all vegetation control work we try to achieve a solution with the tree owner that will remove the problem for the long term, eg. through tree felling rather than trimming. If this isn't possible then we work with the tree owner to reach a mutually acceptable solution. At the minimum, the requirements of the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003 must be met.

Thanks for your views

During February we undertook a customer research survey to enable us to better understand our customer needs and meet regulatory requirements which include obtaining information relative to the cost and quality of supply.

Price changes from 1 April

Transpower's charges to Marlborough Lines will increase by 8.5% from 1 April 2014. This increase is a result of the significant programme of work being undertaken by Transpower to upgrade the national grid infrastructure. We totally support the upgrade of the grid because a reliable national grid is essential for the reliable delivery of electricity.

Marlborough Lines' prices will increase overall by 3.8%. This increase will provide for the recovery of the higher Transpower transmission costs and the expected increases in our own costs.

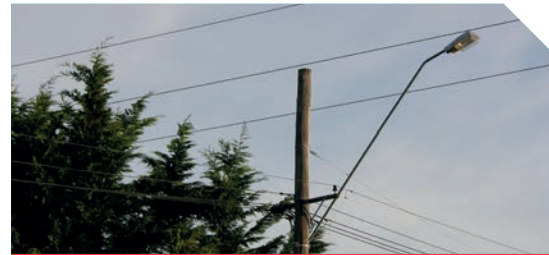
Help us by planting power line friendly trees

Please plant only recommended trees under or near our power lines. Recommended trees grow less than four metres tall and don't tend to shed branches or fronds. For a list of recommended trees, phone us on **(03) 577 7007**, or email info@linesmarl.co.nz.

Please take care

Sometimes felling or trimming of trees is not as simple as it first appears. Trees can weigh several tonnes and can fall in unintended directions when cut. Recently in Marlborough a member of the public felled a tree over an 11kV line. The resulting fire caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damage. Were it not for the superb efforts of the fire fighting crews the consequences would have been much worse.

Please seek professional advice about felling trees in the vicinity of power lines or please do not hesitate to give us a call. It is imperative that all risks are identified and evaluated prior to beginning any work.



Electricity Regulations

Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003

- Define safe separation distances between trees and power lines.
- Specify who is responsible for ensuring clearances are maintained.
- Place potential liability on the tree owner if any damage or accident occurs when trees touch power lines.

Further information about the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003, including the responsibilities of tree owners and network companies, can be found on our website www.marlboroughlines.co.nz.

Environment

Winter is on its way

With the cooler weather approaching it's a good time to think about how you can be more energy efficient in your homes and businesses to keep your electricity costs at a minimum.

Using compact fluorescent or LED lights and installing good insulation are just a couple of ways you can save.

The EECA Energywise website, www.energywise.govt.nz, is full of practical information and advice to help you make energy efficient choices at home and on the road. You can also talk to one of our customer services staff about energy efficiency by phoning **(03) 577 7007**.



Community

That's the spirit



We continue to be lead sponsor of Marlborough Lines Stadium 2000 and are pleased to see the use of these top class facilities increase over time. The latest statistics for the Stadium complex usage include:

- 600,000 visits last year (that's up from 520,000 the previous year)
- Over 250 new water polo players in the sport's first year at the Stadium
- Sol3 Mio (2,000 tickets) and Billy Connelly (2,500 tickets) booked due to unavailability of Trafalgar Centre in Nelson
- Exciting new Group Training Studio installed
- Gym membership has more than trebled since opening
- Fundamental skills programme for primary school children goes from strength to strength, with nearly 2,000 children attending annually.

In January and February we supported the Picton Maritime Festival and Marlborough Wine and Food Festival by providing power supplies and technical support on the day. We will continue to support community events through help with power supplies as required.

Congratulations to Jordon Skipper who was awarded the Marlborough Lines 2013 Tertiary Scholarship for Māori in February. Jordon is undertaking a Bachelor of Physical Education and Māori Studies at Otago University.

Safety message

A few lines about safety

As we are all aware, electricity is a very convenient form of energy that also poses some serious safety risks. Taking unnecessary risks when working in the proximity of live lines has the potential for dire consequences.

Taking unnecessary risks when working in the proximity of live lines has the potential for dire consequences.

Working near power lines, cables and electrical equipment

Almost every month electricity supply is lost in some part of Marlborough because of the actions of an external party using diggers, trucks, cranes or cutting trees. Please ensure that if you are undertaking work of this kind, your procedures satisfy all safety requirements.

If you are undertaking excavations please give some thought about the possible location of underground electric cables and have their positions identified.

Cable location services

We maintain records of many buried underground cables and can provide these records free of charge. Where records are not available our 'Cable Location Service' can be used.

Marlborough Lines Contracting provides a 'Cable Location Service' for all underground cabling within roadways or on private property. Using an electronic cable locator our staff can identify and mark on site the location of any buried cables. There is a charge for this service. Please call us on **03 577 7007** to arrange a cable location. Alternatively you can download, complete and return our Request for Cable Location form on our website www.marlboroughlines.co.nz.

Regulations require that unless written approval from the line owner has been obtained, equipment should not be operated within four metres of a power line. Special consideration needs to be given when trees are being cut or work such as painting is being undertaken near live lines.

If you have any doubts regarding how to carry out your work safely or you require any assistance from us at Marlborough Lines please don't hesitate to give us a call.

Please do not take risks with overhead lines, regardless of whether you are in a rural or urban environment.

Working outside or in wet environments



If you are using appliances outside or in wet environments please use an earth leakage circuit breaker or an isolating transformer. These are life-saving devices and sadly the failure to use such devices has cost people their lives.

Our 24 hour fault service is available 7 days a week, 365 days a year, by calling 03 577 7007.