

# CONNECTIONS

AUTUMN 2019

## Financial benefits to consumers

All consumers received a distribution from the Marlborough Electric Power Trust of \$185 by way of a reduction on their electricity retailer's account in February/March this year.

This distribution to all consumers has been funded by the success of investments made by Marlborough Lines including Yealands Wine Group and Nelson Electricity.

In March all consumers, excluding those in remote areas, will also receive a discount from Marlborough Lines in relation to the operations of the Marlborough electricity network.

The discount will appear on your electricity retailer's account in April or May.

A typical "domestic consumer" as defined by MBIE will receive \$226 (including GST).

Marlborough Lines will advise each consumer individually of the discount that should be received from your retailer.



Cabling work being undertaken at the new Renwick zone substation

## Reliability of our network

Within Marlborough Lines we have an ongoing programme of maintenance and capital expenditure to ensure that you have a reliable and safe electricity supply of adequate capacity.

This work has included the ongoing upgrade of lines, substations and the remote operation of equipment.

A significant project currently being undertaken is the construction of a new substation at Renwick bordered by State Highway 6 and Boyce Street. This new substation will comprise two 16.5MVA 33/11kV transformers and switchgear which will be remotely operated.

This substation will replace the existing Renwick Substation at the corner of State Highway 63 and Hawkesbury Road, part of which has been in service since the 1920s.

The new substation at Renwick has been designed and constructed to have minimum impact on the environment and all transformers and switchgear will be located inside a building integrated within a landscaped environment.

## Use of drone technology

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring the reliability of our network in a cost-effective manner, we utilise drone technology.

Our drone is a specialised item of equipment which enables us to identify and remedy problems before they impact on your electricity supply. Our drone operator is fully qualified in its use and of course before utilising the drone on private property we will always seek landowner approval.



Network condition assessment using drone technology

## Marlborough Lines background

From time to time we are asked for background information about Marlborough Lines.

Marlborough Lines is required by legislation to operate as a successful business. It owns the electricity network in Marlborough and delivers electricity from the Transpower point of supply in Blenheim to your premises.

Marlborough Lines also meets the cost of transmitting the electricity from major generators over the national grid to Marlborough. We bill your retailer for the costs incurred in the transmission of your electricity over the national grid, and its distribution via the Marlborough Lines network.

Marlborough Lines is owned by the Marlborough Electric Power Trust and the beneficiaries of the Trust are the current and future electricity consumers of the day connected to the Marlborough electricity network.

The Marlborough Electric Power Trust is administered by Trustees elected by consumers. The Trustees in turn appoint the Directors of Marlborough Lines who have responsibility for the Company.

## Marlborough Lines investments

In accord with legislative criteria for Marlborough Lines to operate as a successful business it has previously

purchased shareholdings in three electricity networks external to Marlborough in Nelson, Otago and the Eastern Bay of Plenty at no cost to the electricity consumers of Marlborough.

Marlborough Lines subsequently sold the shareholdings in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and Otago and had investment funds of some \$135m.

Because of the need to consider the interests of current and future consumers it was decided to invest the proceeds to provide ongoing benefits to consumers. As a consequence of relatively low interest rates and the absence of further investment opportunities within the electricity sector, Marlborough Lines considered alternative investments and purchased an 80% shareholding in Yealands Wine Group which has subsequently been increased to 100%.

Yealands Wine Group is one of New Zealand's major wineries and in each of the three years in which Marlborough Lines has been involved with the company, dividends have been paid to Marlborough Lines, and in turn these have been passed on to the Marlborough Electric Power Trust who have made distributions to the electricity consumers of Marlborough.

Marlborough Lines is unique among electricity companies in owning a major winery but equally it is unique in having achieved significant financial benefits through investment in other electricity networks external to its area.

It is relevant that within its electricity business Marlborough Lines has no debt.

## Trees and power lines

When trees grow too close to power lines they not only have the potential to cause disruption to power supply but also can create risk of fire and hazards in relation to electrical safety.

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.

Marlborough Lines has a vegetation control programme in place to ensure that safe distances between trees and power lines are maintained. 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 an outcome with tree owners that will remove the problem for the long term, e.g. 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.

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.marbloroughlines.co.nz](http://www.marbloroughlines.co.nz)

If you have any concerns in relation to trees and power lines please give us a call.



## Service lines

Property owners are responsible for the power line from the point of supply, which is normally where the line crosses the boundary of the property to the point of connection to the installation.

This is typically known as the service line. However in some areas, especially rural areas, the point of entry to a property might not be clear. If you are not sure which portion of the power line is your responsibility please contact Marlborough Lines.

Overhead service lines may extend over several poles on a property from our network. It is recommended that property owners carry out periodic visual checks to ensure that the lines and the poles supporting the lines on their property are in good order. These checks should include ensuring that power lines are not in close proximity to trees.

Low service lines are a potential hazard and must be a safe distance above ground – if in doubt please contact our Customer Services team. The required height above ground will vary due to the type, voltage and span length of the conductor.

Similarly, service lines may traverse buildings or other structures and care needs to be taken to prevent direct contact. Please ensure there are no opportunities for children (or anyone) to climb buildings, trees or other objects where they could potentially make contact with service lines.

Service lines can appear to be insulated, but this is often not the case. Service lines should always be treated as uninsulated and live unless proven otherwise. Should you require any assistance in relation to service lines we would be pleased to oblige.

## Scaffolding hazards

**The majority of the overhead services to houses in Marlborough are “trurip” and while this appears to be touch-safe, it is in fact not fully insulated and must be treated as bare wire.**

The minimum safe distances you are legally permitted to erect scaffold near overhead electrical conductors are set out in the “New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances” (NZECP 34). Requirements for scaffolding (buildings/structures) are set out in Section 3, and requirements for workers erecting or working on scaffold are set out in Section 9.

The minimum safe distances (vertical and horizontal) between scaffold and conductors can vary depending on conductor span length and line voltage. Unless authorised consent has been obtained, workers (including any parts being held) must be a minimum of 4m from all overhead conductors. Please contact us if you require any advice or further information.

Marlborough Lines can provide a disconnection and work with you to find safe ways to remove any potential hazards created by locating scaffolding and other equipment in close proximity to power lines and cables. However we ask that you please notify us 48 hours prior to planned work. For further information please contact our Customer Services team on (03) 577 7007.

## Always treat power lines as live

Sometimes circumstances arise such as vehicle accidents where power lines are in close proximity to the ground, or are 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.

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.

## Use of appliances outdoors

If you use an electrical appliance outdoors or in a wet environment, please ensure you are protected by an earth leakage circuit breaker/ RCD or an isolating transformer. Failure to do so has sadly resulted in death here in Marlborough.





Some of the 400 participants enjoying Relay for Life Marlborough 2019

## Sponsorships

Marlborough Lines was pleased to support Cancer Society Marlborough as principal sponsor of Relay for Life Marlborough 2019.

Relay for Life is a unique overnight community event that involves teams who walk or run around a track continuously for 14 hours to celebrate cancer survivors, carers, remember loved ones lost to cancer and to raise vital funds to support Cancer Society Marlborough.

In 2019 the Marlborough Relay for Life event raised just over \$120,000. All funds raised will stay in Marlborough to help locals touched by cancer.

In recent months our sponsorship has included Marlborough Lines Stadium 2000, the continued illumination of Pollard Park, Garden Marlborough, Blenheim and Picton Christmas Parades, Marlborough Lines Tertiary Study Awards, the Picton Maritime Festival, Marlborough Wine & Food Festival, Sauvignon 2019 and the Havelock Mussel Festival. At Easter this year Marlborough Lines will also be a sponsor of the Classic Fighters Airshow at Omake.

## Defibrillators

Defibrillators are electronic devices used to restart the heart, and sometimes are essential to save life in the event of a cardiac arrest.

All marked Marlborough Lines vehicles are equipped with defibrillators. So should you be confronted with a situation where a defibrillator is required please be aware that if you are handy to a Marlborough Lines vehicle it will have a defibrillator on board and our staff are trained in its use.

We also have a defibrillator at our office in Alfred Street, Blenheim, and two at our depot in Taylor Pass Road. The defibrillator in Alfred Street has already saved a member of the public.



## Always at your service

Our fault service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Any problems with your electricity supply please call us on **(03) 577 7007**.

Otherwise our office at 1 Alfred Street is open 7.30am to 5pm weekdays.

Our website: [www.marbloroughlines.co.nz](http://www.marbloroughlines.co.nz) also provides information in relation to a range of issues relative to the electricity Network and Marlborough Lines.