

# Consumerline



Your community newsletter

www.northpower.com

## Investing in the future

**Northpower is investing for the future by carrying out major upgrades of its network and equipment.**

With the current network now at full capacity, investment is essential in order to maintain the existing infrastructure and to meet future growth in power usage.

Northpower's core network was mainly built in the 1950s and 1960s, and the equipment has been carefully maintained in order to prolong its life and efficiency. However many core

components are now nearing the end of their life and this, along with steadily increasing power consumption, means that the equipment must be replaced and configured in order to deal with future capacity expansion.

Capital expenditure required to keep the network operating effectively has risen from \$4 million per annum to more than \$6 million. However the additional cost which may be passed on by electricity retailers such as Meridian, Genesis, Empower, Contact and Mercury equates to just 13 cents per day for the average domestic consumer.

Over the past five years, Northpower's line charges have increased by less than the limit allowed by regulation.

Northpower remains well priced in comparison with other North Island lines network companies, and its local ownership continues to see millions of dollars returned to the community through line charge holidays for consumers and distributions from the Northpower Electric Power Trust.

Major projects planned include the reinforcement of the power supply to the Whangarei central business district and the construction of a sub-station in Maunu, as well as significant capacity investments over the next two years.

The volume of maintenance carried out has also increased in the past 3 years to ensure safe and reliable operation of the network.

## Winter Safety Tips

### Check your Heaters



Check that all your heaters are in good working condition with no broken parts, frayed cords, funny noises or smells.

Before using your heaters for the first time this winter vacuum all the grills and vents to remove dust.

- Remember the **"heater metre rule"** ensuring all heaters are
- **at least 1 metre away** from things that can burn.

### Check your Electric Blankets



Check your electric blankets for scorch marks, kinks, exposed or damaged wiring.

Store electric blankets flat or rolled when not in use.

## Looking for a Guest Speaker?

**From efficiency facts to safety tips, Northpower's Customer Advisor, Jan Thomsen, could tell us all a thing or two about power.**

As a member of a national electricity safety working group Jan is well versed in this field. She has over 18 years' experience in the industry. Her work is recognised nationally and Northpower is regarded as a leader in electrical safety education programmes.



*"School children especially are at risk," says Jan, "since they love climbing and don't always recognise the danger of overhead wires or of playing near ground mounted transformers."*

Jan attends the Dargaville Field Days and the Northland Home Show where she demonstrates the Induction Hob, an energy efficient cook top. Jan also takes part in the National Field Days, held at Mystery Creek, near Hamilton.

**If you'd like Jan to visit your group or school you can contact her on 09 430 1841 or by email [jan.thomsen@northpower.com](mailto:jan.thomsen@northpower.com)**

## Ask Jan?

**If you have any electrical or Northpower focused questions why not ask Jan.**

One lucky person's question will feature in future consumer newsletters for everyone to benefit and they'll receive a gift in appreciation.

Thanks **Margaret of Kamo** for our first question, she received \$25 prezzy card in appreciation.

### What is the most energy efficient way to heat my home?

The most energy efficient way to heat your home is with a heat pump. You receive 3 times the amount of value than you would a traditional heater.

Heat pumps are permanently installed so they may not be suitable if you are in a rental property or wanting a portable heater.

All portable heaters cost the same amount to run regardless of size as costs are determined on the wattage.

As an example, a 2000 watt fan heater will cost the same to run as a 2000 watt oil filled or bar heater (approximately 53 cents an hour). So choose the heater type that best suits your needs.

**Go to our website and subscribe to our online newsletter to receive the latest news and regular updates, including tips from Jan.**

[www.northpower.com/subscribe.php](http://www.northpower.com/subscribe.php)

Featured questions will receive a prezzy card **\$25**

## Storms, trees and powerlines

**Trees are the main cause of faults during storm events, and those close to power lines cause significant damage, making fault restoration a lengthy process.**



Northpower Vegetation staff fells problem tree

During bad weather hundreds of people experience first hand just how dangerous trees can be and what happens when they grow into or near powerlines, often causing interruptions to the power supply.

It is timely with winter coming up to think about using qualified people to trim or remove trees near powerlines that may pose a problem.

With the landowner's consent, we can fell problem trees at our cost in order to prevent continual interruptions to the power supply.

**For more information contact Northpower's Vegetation Department on (09) 430 1803**

## Please look after service lines

Service lines link each property to the main network, and are owned by the landowner, who has responsibility for maintaining their service line.



**If you have any concerns about the safety of your service line please contact Network Services on (09) 430 1784**

Legislation covering public safety requires Northpower to take action if a service line is seen to be unsafe, even though Northpower does not own the line.

This can mean that a household is disconnected from the network due to an unsafe service line. It is in everybody's interests to maintain their service lines and to ensure that any necessary repairs are carried out.

## Poroti area first to benefit

**Residents in the Poroti area will be the first to benefit from a new system aimed at minimising power supply disruption to rural consumers.**

The Resonant Earthing System is scheduled for installation in mid-2009, and should lead to a 30 per cent reduction in the number of power supply outages caused by incidents like trees and animals (birds and possums) contacting lines.

The system works by eliminating single phase earth faults, which are responsible for around a third of all outages. When these faults occur, the system will enable the power system to continue safe operation while the fault is located. The system will also reduce the dangers associated with fallen lines.

If the system proves successful and cost-effective it will eventually be rolled out to other rural areas in the Northpower network.



## Caring for our environment makes business sense

Northpower's efforts to "go green" have led to the company being accredited with an international standard for environmental management.

The company gained ISO 14001 certification following efforts to reduce its environmental impact. These include the Northpower carbon footprint project, which involved assessing

the carbon generated from business activities in New Zealand and Western Australia.

Northpower now aims to reduce its carbon footprint by 10 per cent by March 2011, without adding unnecessary business costs. Also in the pipeline are a fuel saver plan, aimed mainly at vehicle usage, and the introduction of a simple but effective waste management system at each of Northpower's offices.

As well as making a positive contribution to the environment, these projects will assist Northpower to win external contracts, as many client companies want to better understand how the work we do impacts on the environment.

## TRANSFORMERS GONE BUSH

Green transformer units the size of a small Mini are disappearing from the Northland landscape.

They can be unsightly to look at, but at the same time easy location is necessary to quickly restore power to households with minimum disruption.



Can you find the transformer box?

A one meter clearance around the transformer unit is recommended before planting any bushes. This also allows air to freely circulate around the external coolers allowing the oil inside to cool and enabling the transformer unit to run more efficiently.

Please be reminded the job of these transformer units is to convert 11,000 Volts of electricity to 240 Volts for household use. So, think twice before planting bushes too close to transformer units and always take care when working near or around electricity.

If you have any questions, please contact our Vegetation Department on (09) 430 1803.

## Native bird centre gets a famous visitor

World-renowned environmentalist and ocean explorer, Jean-Michel Cousteau, will remember the Northpower Native Bird Recovery Centre for a very long time.

Mr Cousteau visited the centre in Whangarei with his team during a recent trip to Northland to film Orca whales. When he discovered that a rescued Black-Browed Mollymawk bird was ready to be released back to the wild, he joined the team and was able to release the bird at sea, describing it as the highlight of his trip.

The centre receives injured birds and nurses them to health before releasing them back to the wild, or continues to care for those that cannot be returned to their native habitat. The centre has been supported by Northpower since 1994.



Jean-Michel Cousteau releases a Mollymawk

## Ultra fast broadband praised among local businesses

Several local businesses including Mark Cromie Holden were first to take advantage of receiving ultra fast broadband when we launched our fibre network with retail partner TelstraClear.



Allan Freeth, CEO of TelstraClear and Mark Gatland, CEO of Northpower talk to local business owner Mark Cromie

The success of our fibre network is reflected in the quick uptake by businesses in the Whangarei area.

A recent connection to the Whangarei District Council was praised by Bob Wolff, IT Manager from the Whangarei District Council (WDC) who said "we signed up to the TelstraClear very high speed broadband at the beginning of the year and internet access has proven consistently faster and more reliable since then."

Wolff went on to say "this organisation relies on this connection which handles more than 200GB (Gigabytes) of data a month servicing email, web access for staff and servicing the council website."

The WDC have benefited by receiving fully symmetrical upload and download speeds in excess of 100Mbps (Mega bits per second), with Wolff saying "the web access has vastly improved our ability to access government and local government organisations across the country and internationally."

To understand the 100Mbps speed, if you were to download a 700MB (Megabyte) movie it would only take 56 seconds compared with 28 hours, 27 minutes on a 56Kbps (Kilobit per second) dial-up modem. Now, that's fast!

We are continuing to expand our fibre network in Whangarei and connecting commercial customers in the central business district.

To get connected contact TelstraClear.



## TelstraClear Next IP Network

TelstraClear have built New Zealand's first IP Network and now they're bringing the benefits of IP technology to Northland.

### IP Gateway

By connecting multiple sites together in one easy, web based system, IP Gateway provides organisations with a far richer, more efficient communications experience.

### IP Clarity

Does your office require more than just a simple phone package to make doing business easier? IP Clarity is a virtual telephone system to support your calling, fax and eftpos connections.

### IP Connect

Makes voice communication simpler for your business by easily integrating multiple locations together. Your organisation can experience improved calling and communication between offices.

### IP FeatureLine

If you want a high quality voice service to combine your calling line, eftpos, fax and dial-up data connections, then IP FeatureLine is right for you.

To find out more about how TelstraClear can improve your business outcomes, call 0508 UpNorth (876678) or visit [www.nextip.co.nz](http://www.nextip.co.nz).

## Streetlighting - whose responsibility?

Most people think that the streetlights in the Whangarei area are the sole responsibility of Northpower, but this isn't necessarily the case.



### State Highway Lighting

The lights on state highways are owned by Transit NZ. Works Infrastructure currently have the responsibility for the maintenance of these lights. However, Northpower does undertake the repair work for Works Infrastructure as their subcontractor, after the fault has been registered through their help desk.

### Kaipara District Lighting

The Kaipara District Council owns the lights in the Kaipara District that are not on a state highway or private property. Northpower undertakes the repair work on these lights.

### Whangarei District Lighting

The Whangarei District Council owns the lights in the Whangarei District that are not on a state highway or private property. Whangarei District Council's lighting contractor (not Northpower) undertakes the repair work on these lights.

### Private Lighting

Maintenance of lights that are on private roads or on private property is the responsibility of the private owner. Northpower has trained staff who can repair these lights for you at our normal charge out rates.

The following phone numbers are the numbers to use when reporting streetlighting outages.

### Highway lighting

Highway North Help Desk

0800 11 16 55

### Kaipara District Lighting

Northpower Faults

0800 10 40 40

### Whangarei District Lighting

Whangarei District Council

09 430 4200

### Private Lighting (chargeable)

Northpower Faults

0800 10 40 40

## 0800 Faults line gets a makeover

We are upgrading and streamlining our faults phone system, just in time for winter when the majority of fault calls are received.

Now, Kaipara and Whangarei consumers will only need to remember one faults number **0800 10 40 40**.

The new faults phone system can now answer 255 calls at one time. This means consumers will no longer experience an engaged tone nor have their call go unanswered.

Through our new faults phone system, consumers will now be able to quickly access information about widespread faults while still retaining the option to talk with a member of our faults team, should they have additional information about faults in their area or if they are experiencing a localised fault on their line.

So, don't forget to keep Northpower's fault number handy **0800 10 40 40** you never know when you may need it.



Lesley, our faults operator answering your call