



MAJOR ELECTRICITY USERS' GROUP

23rd July 2015

Graeme Peters
Chief Executive
Electricity Networks Association
By email to gpeters@electricity.org.nz

Dear Graeme

Improving communication of outages

1. Thank you for recent discussions with members of the Major Electricity Users' Group Executive Committee. This letter discusses one of the topics we canvassed; namely improving communication of outages.
2. In discussions with distributors, retailers, Transpower and regulators we often find agreement that outage communication is important for consumers, no one-size-fits-all communication mechanism meets the needs of all consumers, and that practices vary widely between distributors. Outage communications is one of those important times of engagement between the public and the industry. It is not a topic of high priority to policy makers and regulators though that is not critical because improving communication of outages lends itself to the industry itself developing sector wide best practices.
3. Distributors are at the heart of planning and communicating outages including co-ordinating with Transpower upstream and retailers and consumers downstream. We therefore suggest there is an opportunity for the Electricity Networks Association, MEUG and other parties to work co-operatively to establish sector wide practices to lift the quality, timeliness and ongoing improvement for communicating outages. Perhaps an initial discussion could be held to scope work where improvements might add greatest value. The scope could consider, not exclusively, improvements to transmission and local distribution notifications of planned and unplanned outages, timings and delivery methods of notifications, possible centralising of unplanned outage call centre/website/phone app for customers, and any related constraints to improvements from the regulatory regime.
4. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this further with ENA, distributors and other parties.

Yours sincerely

Ralph Matthes
Executive Director

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