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Media Release

Ecobulbs[®] campaign could save householders \$27 million and reduce electricity demand

Christchurch and central Canterbury households together could save up to \$27 million in power costs in the coming years if each householder invests just \$5 in three energy efficient Ecobulbs[®].

The Electricity Commission, electricity retailer Meridian Energy and local network company Orion have launched an \$800,000 campaign that could save around 150 GWh of electricity demand.

“That is enough power to run about 15,000 households for a year”, says Electricity Commission chair Roy Hemmingway.

The campaign aims to sell 200,000 Ecobulbs over the next few weeks throughout the Orion network area.

“A \$5 investment in three Ecobulbs will save a household more than \$300 in power costs over the nine-year life of the bulbs. This is because an Ecobulb lasts up to 10 times longer, and uses only about a fifth of the power of a normal bulb, while providing the same light output,” says Roy Hemmingway.

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“This project also makes very good business sense. The cost of reducing electricity usage through this campaign works out at around 1c per kWh, a fraction of the 6-8c per kWh it costs to build new generation.”

Roger Sutton, Chief Executive of Orion, says Ecobulbs are high quality, use the latest technology and reach maximum light output after only a few seconds.

“They were selected for this project after extensive technical testing by Orion and have not been previously available in the Christchurch and central Canterbury area. We are especially pleased with the warm light provided by the Ecobulb, which should enhance their consumer acceptance over older, compact fluorescent lamps,” says Roger Sutton.

Grenville Gaskell, Meridian Energy’s New Zealand Operations Director, says the \$5 cost of three Ecobulbs is a significant saving for householders compared with the normal retail price of up to \$5.95 each.

“Householders will also benefit from this campaign by saving money through reduced power bills and discounted Ecobulbs.”

“Ecobulbs will help offset the impact of the electricity price rises of recent years by reducing household bills. The project will also help reduce the need for new generation investment,” says Grenville Gaskell.

Roy Hemmingway says the Electricity Commission will use this pilot programme to assess the impact on peak electricity demand in Christchurch and how much this type of programme might reduce pressure on transmission lines, distribution lines and power stations.

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The potential electricity reductions from the installation of 200,000 Ecobulbs in the winter months, when peak electricity demand occurs in Christchurch, could be up to 15MW. This is equivalent to over one year's load growth on the Orion network. As well as a reduction in electricity demand, the installation of 200,000 Ecobulbs would reduce the over-all amount of electricity that needs to be generated and transported on transmission lines each year.

Electricity and cost savings from the energy efficient lightbulb campaign will be measured and analysed during winter 2006 by the Electricity Commission, Orion, and Meridian Energy.

“Christchurch and Canterbury, like most other areas of the country, have recorded strong growth in electricity demand over the past few years. The lightbulb campaign is a cost effective way for consumers to contribute to the reduction in demand growth by buying and replacing as many normal light bulbs per household as is practical,” says Roy Hemmingway.

Vouchers offering three Ecobulbs for \$5 are being sent to every Meridian Energy customer in the Orion network area and should arrive in mailboxes in early November. Non-Meridian Energy customers can receive a voucher by sending a self-addressed envelope to: **Ecobulbs Offer, PO Box 215, Christchurch.**

The vouchers can be redeemed at any New World, PAK'nSAVE or Four Square store between the Waimakariri and Rakaia rivers. Additional Ecobulbs can be purchased at these outlets for the special price of \$3.95 each while stocks last.

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Ecobulbs® and house lighting facts and figures

- Lighting makes up about 10 per cent of a typical household's power use.
- The Ecobulbs come in two sizes:
 - 15W, that can be used in place of a standard 75W bulb; and
 - 20W, that can be used in place of a standard 100W bulb.
- Ecobulbs are available for both bayonet and screw fittings.
- Ecobulbs last for up to nine years, that is up to 10 times longer than a normal bulb — based on an average usage of three hours a day — and use only about a fifth of the power.

More information about Ecobulbs is available at: www.ecobulbs.co.nz

(ENDS)

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