

Media Release

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Grid upgrade submissions on the internet

More than 120 submissions to the Electricity Commission's consultation paper on alternatives to Transpower's proposed Whakamaru-Otahuhu transmission upgrade are now available on the internet.

Commission chair Roy Hemmingway said it was an important part of the public consultation process to publish the written submissions on the commission's website.

"The level of interest and public debate in the grid upgrade proposal is extremely high. We were made aware of this by the attendance of more than 600 people at a series of public meetings we held from South Waikato to South Auckland, in June," he said.

"The commission is impressed by the range and quality of submissions. This will help in our deliberations in considering Transpower's proposed Waikato—South Auckland 400kV transmission line proposal."

Public submissions have now closed. The commission is reviewing all submissions and will report its initial findings on the website and at a second series of public meetings in September.

Ideas received by the commission include:

- upgrading the existing lines into Auckland;
- putting the lines underground;
- using high voltage direct current—HVDC—transmission rather than the proposed AC solution, with various routing options proposed;
- investing in generation closer to Auckland;
- using the Otahuhu site, the Marsden B site and the existing 220kV line from Marsden to Auckland for new thermal generators.
- using the Meremere B site, which is recognised in the Waikato District Council district plan;
- using geothermal power in the Taupo area;
- using wind power around the Auckland coastline;
- using wave and tidal power; and
- improving energy efficiency through insulation, passive heating improvements, heat exchangers, efficiencies in street lighting, and standby power settings on household appliances.

The commission's report on the alternatives selected for further consideration is scheduled in November 2005. A decision on Transpower's proposal is expected by June 2006.

The submissions can be viewed on the commission's website at:
<http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/consultation/transaltern>

The Electricity Commission is a Crown entity set up in 2003 under the Electricity Act to oversee New Zealand's electricity industry and markets.

For more information:

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