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Media release

Electricity Commission launches new supply security website

The Electricity Commission is launching a website, aimed at medium to large businesses, to help them monitor the security of the power system and interpret information about the level of risk and how it may impact on them.

Supplyline was developed following the Commission's review of the electricity system's performance during the dry winter of 2008. The review recommended that a central portal should be created to bring together key information about security of supply.

Electricity Commission chair David Caygill said: "For the great majority of the time, the New Zealand power system operates well within secure limits, but there are times when unusual events increase the supply risk. Supplyline is primarily targeted at medium to large electricity consumers to inform them about any potential and actual impact of supply problems, like a prolonged drought or fuel shortage that threatens normal supply.

"Some businesses are exposed to electricity spot prices, which can rise significantly when things get tight. But many also have the ability to respond by cutting back their electricity use, substituting other energy sources or shifting their power usage off-peak," Mr Caygill said. "Supplyline will provide easy-to-understand information that could help those businesses interpret what is going on and respond, so managing their power costs and making an important contribution to national electricity security in difficult times."

Consumers will also be able to sign up to receive email alerts when there are significant changes to the site. During normal conditions the site will be updated relatively infrequently. However, at times when there is increased system stress and concern over security, the Commission expects it will make more frequent updates and provide more detailed information.

Information expected to be presented includes an indication of overall security status (based around the Commission's Riskmeter); data and explanations of key facts such as hydro storage, risk curves, recent inflows, recent demand, HVDC transfers, system constraints or fuel supplies; a simple explanation of how the Commission manages security of supply; and links to key sources about the electricity industry, weather and climate, and how to conserve electricity or use it more efficiently.

The site can be found at <http://supplyline.electricitycommission.govt.nz>.

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