

25 November 2005

Media Release

Electricity Commission to expand funding for household efficient lighting programmes

The Electricity Commission has announced it will spend a further \$2 million expanding its household lighting-efficiency funding next year.

This follows the commission's successful launch of a pilot programme in Christchurch and central Canterbury, in partnership with Orion and Meridian Energy earlier this month, offering 150,000 households high-quality energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps at a reduced cost. Of the 200,000 lamps available through this pilot programme, 120,000 have been purchased already.

The commission estimates just five high-quality compact fluorescent lamps permanently installed in half of all New Zealand households could save enough electricity to power up to 29, 000 homes—equivalent to the electricity used in all the households in the Nelson and Marlborough regions. This could cut New Zealand's annual domestic power bills by up to \$55 million, based on an average lamp use of three hours a day and an average household electricity use of 10,000kwh a year at an electricity cost of 18c/kwh.

Electricity Commission chair, Roy Hemmingway, says if householders install the lamps in the high-use areas of their homes, three and a half million lamps could reduce the peak demand on the country's power system by up to 180MW.

"That's equivalent to about one year's growth in electricity demand for the country. Each high-quality compact fluorescent lamp produces about the

same light output as an incandescent light bulb but uses about one fifth of the energy,” he said.

The Wellington region will be first to benefit from the expanded programme. The commission is working with the Hutt Mana Charitable Trust to build on the experience it has gained from the Christchurch and central Canterbury pilot programme. The knowledge gained from both the Canterbury and the Wellington pilot programmes will be used to develop a nationwide funding programme for implementation early next year.

“We want to build on our experience in Christchurch and Wellington to promote the use of high-quality compact fluorescent lamps—or CFLs—in homes throughout the country. We are confident power companies and the lighting industry will work with us to expand the project nationally,” said Mr Hemmingway.

“Our immediate aim is to look at how these initiatives can be delivered to all electricity consumers. We will consult widely with the electricity industry to encourage co-operation among retailers, lines companies and power trusts to deliver energy-efficient lighting to New Zealand households,” he said.

“The commission wants to work with the lighting industry and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority to expand the types of high-quality energy efficient lighting available in the market and to educate consumers about the benefits of their use. Electricity efficiency is an important resource for the effective management of the power system and makes good economic and environmental sense for all power users and for the country as a whole.

“Among its many duties, the commission is charged with promoting electricity efficiency and environmental sustainability. The household lighting-efficiency programme is an important part of our commitment to this. The Christchurch and Wellington projects are among New Zealand’s largest-ever electricity efficiency initiatives and the first major electricity efficiency projects we have

funded. We are keen for them to succeed to provide a blueprint for New Zealand.”

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

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