

Media Release
Kaikohe, Sunday 13 July 2009



Northland Storm Event Update – 13th July 2009 – 3:00pm

Local electricity generation and lines network company, Top Energy is advising Far North power consumers that its network is currently experiencing a number of power outages across the region.

Heavy rain, flooding and wind speeds in excess of 140kmph have resulted in power loss to areas from Houhora in the North to Waipapa, Whangaroa, Kawakawa, Paihia and Moerewa in the South.

According to Top Energy General Manager Networks, Keith Gilby, line engineer crews have been working hard to restore power to affected areas since the storm began Saturday morning. "At its height, over 12,000 customers were affected by the storm, with approximately 4,000 without power overnight. Our crews have been working tirelessly through the night in frankly appalling conditions to restore supply. In addition to the heavy rain and flooding, conditions such as falling trees, landslips and flying debris are making the working environment very hazardous and are a significant safety issue for our line engineers. For safety reasons, we are also rotating field staff, so that they can get some rest before being called in again should they be needed", Gilby said.

Top Energy apologizes for the inconvenience caused to customers due to the power outages. The company is committed to improving the reliability and performance of the electricity network in the Far North.

Gilby stated, "The recent investment of over \$4 million in special automated equipment has reduced the number of customers affected by a typical fault by over 40% and has undoubtedly reduced the number of customers that would have been without power this weekend. The majority of faults we have seen so far have been attributed to vegetation and flying debris in lines. Our focused three year \$10 million investment plan aimed specifically at vegetation management will also help to reduce the effect to customers of these types of events in future."

“Depending on how the weather develops today, we’re hopeful we can restore power to most areas by 6:00pm Sunday evening”, he added.

Power consumers, who may be without power after 6.00pm Sunday, are asked to call Top Energy’s Information Line on 0800 867 363 with details of any area affected. END

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