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For immediate release

### **Major Electricity Upgrade Brings Big Increase in Capacity**

A massive, \$27.3 million, five-year project to upgrade and extend electricity supply through central, western and northern Southland is now complete, giving local communities increased capacity, greater reliability and a future-proofed supply.

In September 2019, PowerNet finished upgrading and extending The Power Company's (TPCL) 66kV network through central and northern Southland to include Centre Bush, Dipton, Lumsden and Mossburn substations.

Seventy-six kilometres of 66kV lines were installed or upgraded from 33kV, and four substations (Centre Bush, Dipton, Lumsden and Mossburn) rebuilt or upgraded. Where lines have been upgraded from 33kV to 66kV, capacity has been increased by four times. A new microwave network provides fast protection operations between substations.

"The completion of this major project brings real long-term benefits to communities across central, western and northern Southland. It reinforces the network's reliability and increases capacity for all customers, as well as future proofing supply for potential growth," says TPCL chair, Doug Fraser.

"It also means TPCL is very well-positioned for increasing energy use and electrification."

"We've appreciated the fantastic support we've had from central, western and northern Southland communities during construction, including their patience during planned power outages, and when we've needed to access private land for installation work," Mr Fraser says.

"Thanks also to the great work of PowerNet's staff and contracting teams we've been able to complete this major piece of work safely and efficiently."

As part of the project, 763 power poles were climbed (at least twice) and microwave radio links were installed at nine sites.

There were technical challenges to overcome, including installing four 38m steel towers either side of the flood prone Oreti River, so that the conductors could span the river's 543m width.

The Power Company's mobile substation provided additional capacity when required, including while substation upgrades were underway and during a heatwave in November 2017.

In total, over 120 personnel worked on the project.

The new 66kV line and substations are now fully commissioned.

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