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AWARUA NETWORK PROJECT

Dear customer,

As you will be aware, the bulk of the work on the Awarua Network Project has been completed and the line is now live. We're getting in touch to update you on a few things, as well as let you know what work is still to come.

Fibre install

You may have noticed the additional line being strung along the new line. This line is a fibre cable that allows our substations to communicate with each other and notify of issues along the line.

We've had several inquiries from residents about the possibility of connecting to this, but unfortunately, the fibre is not set up to connect individual properties.

Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) testing

Early in the project we committed to further EMF testing once the line was complete and made live. We expect this will now be completed by the end of March and we will be in touch with the residents who requested this as soon as dates are confirmed.

Noise

We've been getting reports of buzzing or crackling noises coming off some parts of the new line, particularly when the weather is wet.

We appreciate this noise is disruptive for residents and can assure you we are investigating to find the cause.

The noise is likely to be something known as corona discharge, which is the sound of minor electrical discharge from the conductor.

These emissions are common for power lines but not usually audible to a person on the ground below unless conditions are wet, damp or foggy when elevated discharge occurs.

This is due to water droplets collecting on the surface of the conductor – the higher the rainfall the higher the noise level.

New conductor can be noisier than normal initially due to the oil used in manufacture retaining water droplets on the line.

Customer service is important to us at PowerNet. If for any reason, we do not meet your expectations we would like the opportunity to work through a solution with you, please call our office on 03 2111899. If we are unable to resolve your concern, there is a free and independent resolution service available through Utilities Disputes Limited www.udl.co.nz

We are in contact with the line designer and seeking their review and advice and are also undertaking some testing ourselves to understand whether there is elevated corona discharge, what is causing this and any mitigations we can put in place.

We have used Fog Type Profile Glass Suspension insulators on the new Awarua line. While these come at an additional cost, they are designed to assist with reducing corona discharge.

Next steps

Some of our completion work was delayed because of the October 2025 storm and the subsequent repair work, however our team is focused on getting all final work complete for the Awarua Network Project.

Mill Road South – We still have a small amount of work to do in Mill Road South, towards Mason Road. This will involve some trenching, the changing over of the last remaining transformers and removing overhead lines and poles.

East Road – We have two further phases of work in East Road. Phase one will begin on 16 February, with phase two scheduled to begin on 16 March. This will include some trenching to install underground cable, installing pillar boxes and installing ground mount transformers. There will be some power outages and traffic disruption while this work is carried out, but we will be in touch with affected residents directly.

Findlay Road – Work is continuing to underground individual property connections, as weather permits. A new ring main unit needs to be installed to complete the undergrounding work here. It has been ordered from overseas and is expected to arrive in New Zealand in April/May. It will be installed as soon as possible once it arrives.

At this stage, we anticipate all this final work will be complete by the end of May 2026.

We know this project has caused some disruption and concern for residents along the line and we want to acknowledge the patience you have shown. As a business, we have learnt and improved our processes and engagement with the community based on your feedback throughout the project. Thank you for taking the time to ask questions and share your thoughts with us.

If you have any questions or specific concerns, you can contact us via email at awarualine@powernet.co.nz, or by contacting PowerNet team on 03 211 1899.

Regards

The PowerNet Team