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Electricity Engineers'  
Association



ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY UPDATE - JANUARY 2025

## VIEW FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

[Editorial from Nicki Sutherland](#)



Kia ora tātou,

I hope you all had a relaxing and restful break. With January now practically over, the year is well and truly underway and it looks like another big year of change.

Firstly, you would have seen we have a new Minister of Energy – Simon Watts, also Minister of Climate Change, Minister for Local Government and Revenue, and member of Cabinet. We see these are complimentary portfolios and plan to meet with him in the coming months – particularly to ensure he is aware that vocational training is a critical bottleneck for our sector.

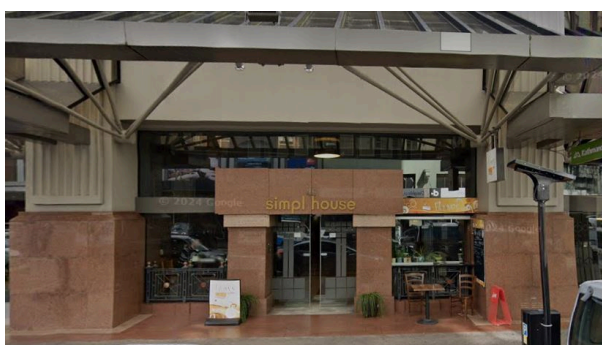
enabling greater industry input into work-based learning – [you can read her press release here](#). There is further consultation underway with the sector and we will be putting forward our views at every opportunity.

Read on for a more in-depth piece and request for involvement in our news section. You can also read our September 2024 submission on Redesign of Vocational Education and Training, along with all our submissions to public consultations, on our website under [Consultations and Submissions](#). You do need to be logged in to view the content.

A final change to signal this month is that the EEA is on the move! We will be relocating offices during the week of 10 February, to Simpl House, 40 Mercer Street. This is more than just a change for our team – we are moving to bigger premises and will now be able to host more of you for meetings, training and stakeholder events.

A huge thanks to all of our members who have hosted our events in the past. We are all really excited at the prospect of returning the favour with plans underway for our first event to welcome you to our new digs and to launch our new strategy.

Keep an eye out for details in the weeks ahead.



Ngā mihi nui,

Nicki



## Stakeholder survey shows the value of EEA activity

sector.

Our thanks to everyone who contributed! It was great to receive endorsement for the work we do, and encouragement to be more ambitious!

There is clearly a desire to see the EEA providing support for a wider group of people – especially trade staff – and to focus on the whole sector, not just the ‘engineering’ component. You also want us to offer more networking opportunities, especially for those in the regions and for young people.

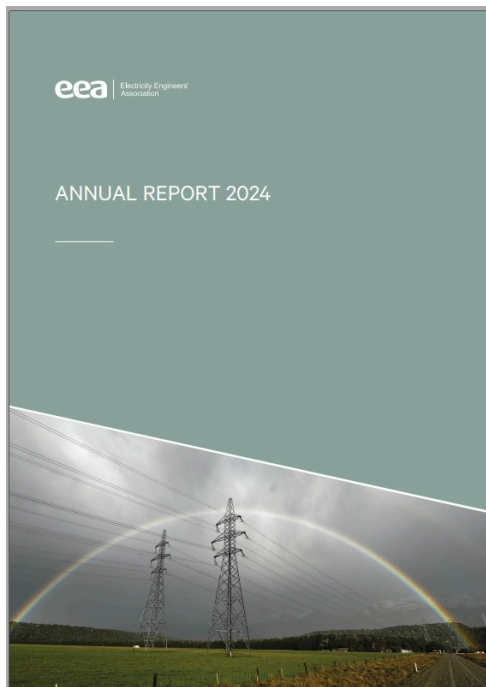
You also want to see us putting more effort into leadership around standardisation and pan-sector efficiencies.

We’ve already used the feedback to refresh our strategy which we plan to launch in combination with an event to celebrate our new office and our first networking event for 2025!

[Read more about the feedback from our survey here.](#)

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## Photo Competition - Voting now open



A huge thanks to everyone for submitting their photos into this year’s competition. We had 55 entries showing the ‘power of the industry’.

Now it’s over to you our members to vote on your favourites. You can do so [on the website here](#).

The winner will be announced on Wednesday 19 February. All eligible entries will go into our photo library for use in our publications, social media or on the website. The winning shot – as voted by you – will feature on the cover of the 2025 Annual Report and the winner can choose either a free registration to the annual EEA conference, or a \$250 gift card.

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## Reform of Vocational Education and Training

Boards will eventually replace Workforce Development Councils (Option B now known as the “Independent Model”). Some have described this as a continuation of the current model with different names and reduced funding.

There’s more yet to be decided by Cabinet. Minister Simmonds has begun consulting with targeted industry representatives on two options for the work-based learning (ie apprenticeships and traineeships) that industry training organisations currently arrange. Only “Independent” Option B was consulted on in 2024. The new Option C described as the “Collaborative Model”, would separate vocational planning and delivery. It is not clear but looks likely that Connexis could be disestablished under this option. Targeted consultation closes on Friday 21 February.

Public consultation on policy will follow in February-March, with consultation on coverage. Final decisions are expected in April 2025, and funding in April – June. The final plan will go through Select Committee July – September, and progressively start to come into effect from 2026 onwards.

What this means for EEA members and stakeholders is further protraction of uncertainty, delays in the development and provision of the learning that our sector workforce needs, and future workers who are discouraged from continuing or even starting vocational learning in New Zealand. Ultimately, delays to our ability to attract, train and retain the skilled workforce needed to electrify Aotearoa.

We are working with WaterNZ, ENA, Civil Contractors NZ and engaging closely with Waihangā Ara Rau and Connexis to ensure that our sector’s needs are raised and prioritised during the targeted consultation. We will be advocating that Industry Skills Boards for infrastructure and construction are kept separate and that work based learning for our sector is not given to regional polytechnics. We’ll also be urging that sectors are prioritised based on the essentiality of services and contribution to the economy rather than volume of learners.

As well as developing a joint position and attending a joint meeting with Minister Simmonds, we will try to meet with new Minister Watts to ensure he is aware that decisions made in these reforms are critical to meeting future energy workforce needs.

If you have views about the reforms and their potential impact, or are making your own submission (whether through the consultation process or to your local member of parliament), we encourage you to get in touch so we can ensure we do a good job of representing members’ needs and views.

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## New IEC White Paper on Digital Twins

The new IEC White Paper on ‘Virtualizing power systems: how digital twins will revolutionize the energy sector’ was released in December, focussing on the benefits digital twins can bring.

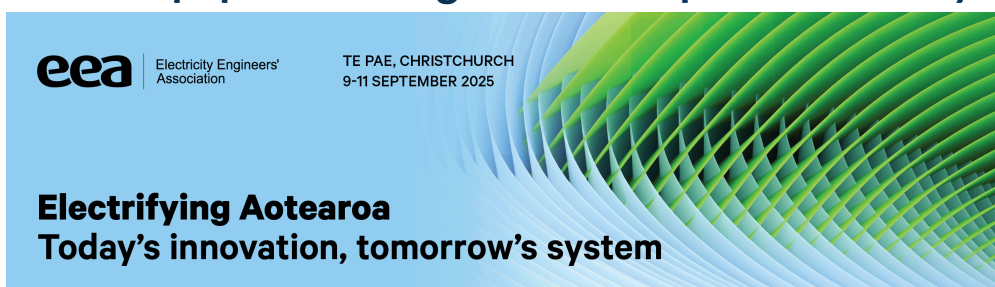
solutions, the adoption of core standards for describing underlying data models, and to create secure open data exchange policies.

The paper [can be found here](#) and provides recommendations for tangible actions to unlock the potential of digital twin technologies and their revolutionary impact on the energy sector of the future. It has been prepared by a project team representing a variety of international organizations, working under the IEC Market Strategy Board.

DT technologies can help grid planners and operators manage their systems more efficiently, helping them overcome infrastructural challenges of dealing with load growth, the increasing complexity of power systems, variability of renewable energy, and extreme weather. DTs offer a way to stress-test important assets and systems in preparation for a wide range of scenarios. They can also help industry meet net-zero goals by helping planners monitor and identify design alternatives to reduce carbon emissions.

## EEA2025: 9-11 September 2025

### Call for papers and registrations open 3 February!



The EEA annual Conference and Technology Exhibition in Ōtautahi / Christchurch on 9-11 September 2025 is not to be missed whether as an exhibitor, presenter or delegate! Our 2024 conference attracted over 1,200 delegates and visitors and more than 80 technical presentations. This is your chance to be part of it.

Registrations open on February 3 so get one task off the list early in the year by booking your place at our industry's premier engineering and technical event.

Exhibitors, we have only a few stands left so if you haven't made up your mind yet – don't delay any longer. [Book your exhibition space now!](#)

Do you have an idea for a paper to present? EEA2025 is a fantastic opportunity for you to profile and share new knowledge, practices or technology. It's also a platform for a company or individual to get recognition as an engineering leader. We are looking for papers on the challenges and opportunities as electrify Aotearoa. Plus – you could win a Best Paper or People's Choice award.

[Visit the conference website for more information here.](#)



Our new website went live in October and there are a few differences from the old. Below are a couple of tips to help you navigate the new.

1. **Inside the Knowledge Network - My Publications:** When you purchase a publications licence, or renew your SM-EI licence, it enables you to access all publications within the EEA suite. You will then find all these publications listed under My Publications for ease of access.
2. **Inside the Knowledge Network - My Courses:** My courses tracks all courses you are enrolled in or have completed, given you an easy snapshot of information about your professional development journey.

[Log on and explore the Knowledge Network here.](#)

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## Recent submissions available on our website

In the past month, we provided submissions for the following consultations which you can access on our website, once you are logged in.

- Electricity Authority: Network Connections Project – Stage one amendments

You can access all past submissions made by the EEA by logging onto our website under [What we do > Consultations and Submissions](#).



## Downstream: 20-21 March 2025

The EEA is proud to support Downstream, the energy sector's strategic forum and encourages everyone to get their tickets now! This is the first time Downstream has been held in the South Island and will be held at Te Pae in Ōtautahi / Christchurch.

This year, the team at Downstream have introduced some changes and will be bringing you

- New presentation and engagement formats
- Extended networking
- A selection of round table discussions
- More audience participation options
- Energy innovators updates

To find out more and to purchase tickets, visit the [Downstream website](#).

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## Trainer's Forum - 6 May

After a wonderful response to last year's trainers' forum we will be doing it again this year, to be held at the Novotel near the airport in Christchurch.

The theme this year is: Thinking differently – and our guest speaker, Paula Echavarria of DivergenThinking, will be providing us with an Introduction to Neurodiversity Awareness.

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## Save the date!

ICAM Training - 20-21 March, Auckland: Email [admin@eea.co.nz](mailto:admin@eea.co.nz) to reserve your place

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Overhead Line Designers' Forum - 21 May, 2025: Hamilton

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Health and Safety Workshop – 16-17 July, 2025: This year's event will be held at Jet Park Hotel, in Auckland conveniently placed near the airport.

If you have anything you would like to share with industry or any topics that you would like covered at these events, please let [Hayley@eea.co.nz](mailto:Hayley@eea.co.nz) know!



**Let EEA help with professional development in 2025**

The EEA have worked with industry to develop a common, structured programme of learning and development, that supports current and future industry needs.

All our courses and micro-credentials [can be found on the website](#) which makes it easy for you to pick the ones that best suits you, your team and your organisation.

Courses use 'blended learning' and have been designed to fit around full-time work. They are delivered via a mix of self-directed online learning, webinars (led by industry subject matter experts) and written (scenario-based) assessments.

This year we are continuing to develop and deliver the micro-credential in Overhead Line Design, the Professional Certificate in Power Systems Design and our Safety in Design courses. If you (or your organisation) would like to discuss scheduling needs or in-house training please contact [admin@eea.co.nz](mailto:admin@eea.co.nz).

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## Courses in March 2025

We are now taking enrolments for the following courses to be run in March.

- OLD-020 Conductor Solutions – Part of the Micro-credential in Overhead Line Design. In this course you will learn to design a conductor solution for an overhead distribution line, using a whole-of-life design approach, and in accordance with sound Safety in Design (SiD) principles. [Learn more and register here](#).
- PSD-030 Earthing Systems – Part of the Professional Certificate in Power Systems Design. In this course you will learn the purpose and objectives of earthing, understand how design decisions are made, and resolve earthing system design problems. [Learn more and register here](#).
- PSD-040 Protection Systems – Part of the Professional Certificate in Power Systems Design. In this course you will learn the purpose and objectives of protection systems, evaluate a range of protection devices, and design a protection scheme to meet a given set of safety and performance requirements.

This course was over-subscribed in November and we expect places to fill fast! [Learn more and register here](#).

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## Planning ahead for 2025

This year we will be providing even more opportunities for upskilling including 1) our ICAM course, (tentatively booked for 20 and 21 March in Auckland) 2) Learning Teams courses and 3) Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) courses. We will update the [Upcoming](#)





## HEALTH & SAFETY

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### Consultation on industry guides

There is still a chance to send feedback on two new guides with consultation [documents available here on the website via this link](#). Feedback closes **tomorrow** on **Friday 31 January 2025**.

If you have any questions, please contact [Hayley@eea.co.nz](mailto:Hayley@eea.co.nz)

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#### **Permit Area Guide – combining Principles of permit areas and Guide for marking of equipment for access for work.**

The SSPG have reviewed these two documents and as a result, the two have been combined into one making the requirements for permit areas and equipment marking simple and easy to understand.

The purpose of the new Permit Area Guide is to provide industry good practices and standardisation on the principles and requirements for the application and the management of permit areas in switchyards and stations as defined in the Safety Manual-Electricity Industry (SM-EI).

The guide also includes the good practices relating to the signage requirements that can be used within permit areas of Switchyards and Stations to define safe access limits for work being undertaken within the permit area.

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#### **Temporary traffic management**

Following the introduction of the New Zealand Guide to Temporary Traffic Management, the EEA established a working group to identify where our industry differs from other contractors working in the road corridor, and where we can provide specific guidance for certain activities.

## Learn more about our work

The SSPG is hitting the road again this year, keen to visit you and your organisation! Having developed many industry resources, the team are keen to support you in using them.

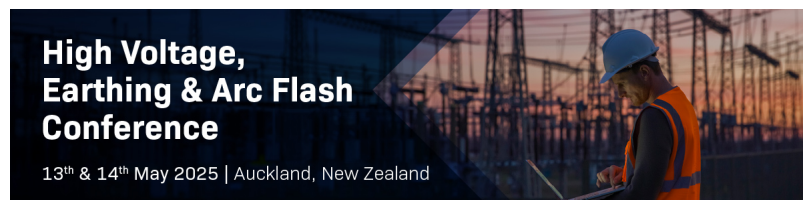
The group would love the opportunity to visit your organisation and demonstrate how to make the most of what's available through the EEA and the Knowledge Network.

In February the team are off to visit Horizon Energy Group and then its MainPower's turn in March!

They would love to see their calendar fill with even more visits so if you are keen to know more, please contact [hayley@eea.co.nz](mailto:hayley@eea.co.nz) or give her a call on 027 7024746



## Share your expertise - High Voltage, Earthing & Arc Flash Conference



The [High Voltage, Earthing & Arc Flash Conference](#), organised by IDC Technologies, is seeking electrical engineers to share their expertise at the upcoming conference in Auckland on the 13th and 14th of May this year.

Presentation proposals on topics such as design, installation, testing, maintenance, safety, standards, and regulations related to high voltage systems, HV & LV earthing, or arc flash mitigation are welcome.

technical solutions, stay updated on industry trends, and explore innovative techniques for overcoming challenges in these critical areas.

Contribute to the advancement of electrical engineering in New Zealand by presenting your insights to industry peers.

To express your interest, email Conference Manager Arna Eru at [arna.eru@idc-online.com](mailto:arna.eru@idc-online.com) or visit the [conference website](#) for more details.

## Looking ahead

To keep up to date with all of the EEA's activities and projects or to register for an event please visit the [Upcoming EEA Events page](#) on the EEA website.

29 January	<a href="#">Voting commenced for member photo competition</a>
31 January	<a href="#">Feedback closes on EEA guides: Temporary traffic management and permit area guide</a>
10-14 February	EEA Wellington office move
14 February	Voting closes for the photo competition
19 February	Winner of photo competition announced
20-21 March	ICAM Training - Auckland
20-21 March	<a href="#">Downstream25 - Te Pae, Christchurch</a> EEA is a proud supporter of Downstream
6 May	Trainer's Forum
21 May	Overhead Line Designers' Forum
16-17 July	Health and Safety Workshop
9-11 September	<a href="#">EEA2025 Conference and Technology Exhibition</a>

## Connect with the EEA

- Staff within your organisation can now directly subscribe to our newsletters! Email us [here](#).
- Follow our [LinkedIn](#) page to see more of our outreach and comment on our work and activities.

Want to no longer receive these emails?

[You can](#) unsubscribe from this list.