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ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY UPDATE - DECEMBER 2025

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

[Editorial from Nicki Sutherland](#)



Tēnā koutou

As 2026 draws to a close, the work Christmas party and summer holiday seem better deserved this year than ever. It's been an incredibly busy year for our industry with more growth, change, government and consumer scrutiny than ever. So, in this busiest of months, we've pared this back to just the key things for you to be aware of:

- Where to find information about implementing the new voltage changes
- Inaugural substation forum – more standardisation and consistency for our industry
- EEA technical training to plug into your L&D plans for 2026
- How our Re-Energise 2025 workforce strategy builds on the Energy to Grow report

- The submissions we're making to ensure regulatory change works for industry

The EEA team wish you a productive December and a truly relaxing summer break, before we do it all again in 2026.

Ngā mihi nui,
Nicki



Voltage Changes

The recent regulatory changes to New Zealand's voltage operating ranges have arrived, and the sector has understandably had to move quickly to understand what they mean in practice. As questions emerge, industry has been working through the technical and informational implications in real time.

The EEA is taking the technical lead in helping the sector navigate these changes. We've established a dedicated webpage—initially focused on industry needs, but expanding over time to support installers and consumers. This includes:

- clear, plain-English guidance on the basics of the change and what actions (if any) are required
- the recording of our November webinar, and
- a consolidated list of FAQs that we continue to update as common questions arise across the motu

We are working closely with ENA, SEANZ, EECA, MBIE, the Electricity Authority, and Master Electricians to ensure consistent language, aligned messaging, and a shared understanding of how these changes should be applied in practice.

Please visit the [EEA Website for further information](#).

courses for enrolment

The Xmas holidays are the perfect time to rethink your training aims for 2026. Our specialised training courses are developed by and for the electricity supply industry, designed to fit alongside work commitments, delivering practical knowledge you can apply immediately.

We developed these courses to help target specific skill and training gaps in our industry. They're reasonably priced and with dates locked in it's easy to plan ahead and register yourself or your learners. Coming up in February, March and April:

- Line Design Principles
- Line Design Mathematics
- Cross Arm Solutions
- Insulator Solutions
- Line Design Practice

[Link to the full year calendar and registration.](#)

Resilience guide - Finalised and Publishing early December

We're pleased to confirm that the updated EEA Resilience Guide has now been finalised and will be published on our website in early December. This edition incorporates lessons from recent events, including Cyclone Gabrielle, introduces new guidance on climate adaptation and hazard planning, and features refreshed case studies from across the sector.

The guide provides practical, industry-aligned advice to support electricity network businesses in strengthening organisational, asset, and operational resilience. It also includes an updated Pandemic Management section, with detailed operational guidance relocated to a dedicated appendix for easier use.

We'd like to thank everyone across the sector who contributed insights and review feedback throughout the update process. Your input has helped ensure the guide remains a relevant and valuable resource for the industry.

Look out for the full release on the EEA website in early December.

Energy to Grow Report a springboard to *Re-Energise 2026*

sector – this time commissioned by the big four gentailers but building on the 2022 *The Future is Electric Report*. The report timing follows release of the Frontier Economics report and covers similar ground but with a better understanding of opportunities in the New Zealand landscape.

The report contains 5 key priority areas and recommendations:

1. Accelerate renewable generation – most recommendations here aren't surprising
2. Strengthen the electricity market and security – recommendations include firming and reserve markets, incentives for fuel diversification, and support for contingent hydro
3. Enhance lines infrastructure – support for Transpower's attempts to set a centralised vision through Te Kanapu, and recommendations for benchmarking and WACC
4. Address gas supply and decline –support for expanding gas and thermal options
5. Enable gas users to transition – support for an evolved GIDI scheme including education

Energy to Grow is silent on workforce needs and strategy, providing the perfect segue for our *Re-Energise 2025* energy workforce strategy report, underway jointly with Energy Resources Aotearoa. *Re-Energise* investigates workforce demand and supply, capability and skill gaps, opportunities, and recommendations. With industry survey, interviewing, and research phases now complete, report writing is well underway and we are on track for our end February launch date. We're deeply grateful to all from our industry who are contributing. [More information here.](#)

Young EEA



One of our aims this year was more support for our emerging talent – as requested by you in our 2024 survey. Our third targeted event is on 2 December, where new industry entrants can connect, and form support networks across company boundaries. These

events and opportunities.

Our programme isn't just about events. We're expanding relationships with tertiary providers and working on a range of support targeted at early career needs which we'll launch in 2026.



STEM Industry

**Women's
Development
Scholarships
Available**

womenandleadership.co.nz/industry/stem



Boost Your Career with STEM Industry Scholarship

Women & Leadership New Zealand is offering scholarships to support women to access world-class leadership and workplace skill development programs.

Professional development designed for you:

- **Balance Life & Learning:** Flexible part-time delivery fits your busy schedule.
- **Essential Work Skills:** Combine cutting-edge theory with practical application.
- **Targeted Growth:** Choose from four distinct programs, each tailored to a different career stage, from emerging to senior leadership.

Partial scholarships ranging from \$700 to \$3,000 are available to support women at all levels, from entry-level to senior executives.

Applications close Friday 12 December 2025, unless allocated earlier.

[Learn more and apply](#)



Substation Forum - March 2026

On 26 March 2026, we'll host the inaugural EEA Substation Forum at Rydges Wellington Airport. **Registrations are now open**, and we're also calling for interest in speaking on our morning panels.

This event brings together engineers and technical specialists from across Aotearoa to lift visibility of the key challenges facing substation design, identify opportunities to align on common approaches, and help shape a long-term, sector-wide work programme through EEA's new national substations working group.

The Forum is open to all those involved in substation design and engineering — from senior and principal engineers through to graduates and early-career professionals. While the focus is on distribution networks and large energy users (and their consultants), the sessions will also be highly relevant to those working in the transmission sector.

We're committed to strengthening standardisation, consistency, and continuous improvement across the electricity sector — and are excited to extend this focus to substation design and engineering.

Overhead Line Designers Forum & Product Day



through relatively small-scale distribution businesses, overhead line designer's generally form a small team within an organisation, or may even work alone. For this reason, it is important for a wider NZ professional community or Overhead Line Designer's to exist. The Line Designer's Forum seeks to support this community.

The overarching purpose of the Line Designer's Forum is to:

- Develop and sustain an Overhead line design and engineering professional community.
- Provide a networking opportunity for overhead line designers and subject matter experts
- Communicate good practice overhead line design, including specific examples of design and generally design which is consistent, efficient, effective, and safe
- Support and promote industry learning programmes
- Communicate and roll out new industry standards, regulations and resources (e.g. EEA publications)
- Foster and coordinate collaboration across industry members and stakeholders
- Support the development of Overhead line design subject matter experts and future leaders

The event runs over two days with the following activities:

- Tuesday 19 May 2026 from 10:00am to 5:00pm: **PRODUCT DAY**
- Tuesday 19 May 2026 –6:30pm: **DINNER**
- Wednesday 20 May 2026 from 8:30am to 3:30pm: **DESIGNER'S DAY**

[Visit the EEA website Up Coming Events for registration for each day.](#)



Regulatory Consultations - Ensuring the Industry's technical voice is heard

The pace of regulatory and policy change continues to accelerate. Several Electricity

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new connections and DER integration to storage, pricing, and data visibility.

We play a critical role in advocating for regulatory settings that are practical, safe, future-focused, and have a system lens. We prepare EEA submissions in line with our core swim lanes but need member input to ensure we represent you effectively.

Priority Consultations for EEA Submission

- **Reducing barriers for new connections** – addressing the technical and process challenges facing EDBs, installers and customers as new load and DER connect at scale.
- **Wholesale market arrangements for battery energy storage systems** – ensuring market and operational settings support safe and efficient BESS deployment across distribution networks.
- **Strengthening price discovery in forward markets** – supporting long-term planning, risk management, DER integration and future investment decisions.
- **2026/27 Levy-funded appropriations** – helping shape where sector funding should be directed to support technical capability, resilience, and future-grid needs.
- **Standardised super-peak hedge contract (Clause 2.16 information notice)** – considering data, reporting and operational impacts for members.

We continue to monitor other EA consultations that are more retail or financial-market-facing and will respond where needed.

We Need Your Insights

Your practical experience and technical expertise to ensure EEA's submissions reflect the realities of design, operations, planning and asset management.

Please share any feedback or key issues for inclusion via admin@eea.co.nz

Recent EEA Submissions

Since the last newsletter, we have completed the following submissions:

- **Electricity Authority:** Requiring distributors to pay a rebate when consumers supply electricity at peak times – Definition of a small business
- **Electricity Authority:** Requiring the use of half-hourly data for reconciliation
- **Electricity Authority:** Maximising benefits from local generation
- **Electricity Authority:** Emergency Reserve Scheme – Code Amendment Proposal
- **Electricity Authority:** Improving Electricity Billing in New Zealand

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- **Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority:** Unlocking the Potential of Demand Flexibility – A Residential Product Perspective
- **Electricity Authority:** Improving Visibility of Significant Distributed Generation and Load Projects (Clause 2.16 Information Notice)
- **Electricity Authority:** Exploring Network Visibility – Costs, Benefits and Value

These submissions reflect our commitment to representing members' engineering and operational perspectives in the development of regulations that are workable, future-focused, and technically robust.

[Read all EEA submissions on our website](#)



Bumper year for Asset Management Group

The Asset Management Group has continued to play a pivotal role this quarter, supporting the EEA's technical work and providing clear, practical insight across a wide range of regulatory and operational issues. AMG members have been central to shaping the EEA's submissions and engagement with regulators, ensuring that EEA submissions reflect the sector's on-the-ground experience and asset-focused perspectives.

As well as finalising the updated Resilience Guide, the group has been deeply involved in the Streamlining Connections programme. This work helps steer the development of the LV/MV connection guidelines, responding rapidly to the recent voltage range changes, and supporting the work on export-limit methodologies (ELAM/BELAM). The groups input is critical to this work being practical, technically robust, and aligned across industry.

Early scoping for the Substation Design and Overhead Line Working Groups is underway, including inaugural Substation Forum and early thinking on a composite cross-arm specification. The refresh of the Condition Assessment Guide has also begun, with a focus on improving consistency across networks.

AMG members continue to support FlexTalk 2.0, helping interpret emerging insights and consider the asset-management implications of demand flexibility. Looking ahead, the

AMG's contribution in 2025 has been substantial, and we are grateful for the ongoing commitment and expertise members bring to this work. Further updates and opportunities to engage will follow early in the new year.



Safety Standards and Procedures Group (SSPG)

The SSPG has been busy! Thanks to those who provided feedback on the second round of the *Lock Out Tag Out Guide* consultation. There were some great takeouts for the SSPG, who will be working through them early in the new year.

Thanks also to those who attended and provided information at the Fall Protection webinar, hosted in response to the changes to AS/NZS 1891. The main change affecting our industry is the requirement to have a secondary form of attachment when a work positioning system is used, while working at height. You can view the [recording of the webinar here](#).

Shortly we will be sharing and asking for feedback on three guides; the new *Safe Use of Drones around Electricity Assets Guide* and *Worker Safety with Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Guide*, and the reviewed *Use of Helicopters in Electricity Supply Industry Guide*.

A quick reminder that the Safety Performance Indicator survey return is **due this Friday 5th December**, please contact [Hayley](#) if you have any questions.

Common Competency Framework

Over recent months, the CCF Working Group has been putting in significant effort to review and refine the framework, so it remains closely aligned with current and emerging industry skill needs. This work is supporting greater consistency across organisations and helping clarify pathways for training, assessment, and progression

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Congratulations to the CCF Governance Group's new Chair, Brent Dias (COO at Scanpower), who will help guide the next phase of development and sector engagement.

Sharing safety alerts and knowledge

Industry safety alerts are published on our [website](#). Login to view these alerts. By sharing alerts to admin@eea.co.nz, we are building a safer workplace together. Every alert counts.

Looking ahead

Visit the [EEA Upcoming Events webpage](#) for event information and registration

23 December	EEA Office closes for the Xmas/New Year break
5 January 2026	EEA Office opens for business
26 March 2026	Inaugural Substation Forum
19 & 20 May 2026	Overhead Line Designers Forum & Product Day

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