

30th September 2019

Electricity Authority - Te Mana Hiko
Level 7, Harbour Tower, 2 Hunter Street
PO Box 10041
Wellington 6143

By email: TPM@ea.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam,

TPM Submission – 2019 Issues Paper

Northland is one of the most deprived communities in New Zealand.

Northland cannot be subjected to the Electricity Authority's proposed Transmission Pricing Methodology (TPM). It will load millions of dollars of additional electricity costs on people who simply cannot afford it.

We work daily with whanau living in poverty and struggling to make ends meet. Daily living expenses are beyond financial means as incomes are too low.

Many whanau have told us that they struggle to pay their electricity bills on time. When people can't pay their electricity bills (among other necessary, daily living expenses) they receive penalty payments – money that would be better spent on health and wellbeing. Sadly, we have heard many stories of whanau that have had their electricity disconnected. Energy poverty is very real for tens of thousands of Northlanders and already has a significant impact on Northland households.

We also know that whanau take measures to save power. One example is of entire whanau sleeping in one room for warmth. But overcrowded sleeping conditions are a breeding ground for significant health issues such as rheumatic fever and respiratory conditions. Rheumatic fever is a third world disease, yet Northland has one of the highest rates in the country.

There are also many whanau living in cold, damp unhealthy homes. Their heating options are limited due to the current cost of electricity. As a result, people get sick.

People can't afford to go to the doctor so they end up in our hospital EDs, cramming up an already, under-funded, over-populated and under-resourced healthcare service. People commonly can't afford medicine and when they are treated in hospital they are sent back to those cold, damp and unhealthy homes.

Since 2007 there have been over 10,000 at need Northland homes retro-fitted with insulation to make them warmer and drier and healthier yet there are still well over 6000 homes that we know of without insulation. We suspect there are thousands more uninsulated homes out there in Te Tai Tokerau that we are unaware of.

Constant illness leads to increasingly significant health issues (mental and physical) and that leads to absenteeism at early childhood centres, schools, tertiary institutes and workplaces. That creates more cost to families and our community and places more financial pressure on our whanau.

Increasing the cost of electricity is not acceptable. Families and older people on fixed low incomes are unable to pay current charges, it is unreasonable to expect that future costs would be manageable.

The Electricity Authority must put idealistic economic modelling aside and consider with urgency the immense harm your proposed TPM methodology will do to Northlanders of all walks of life.

The proposed TPM must be thrown out with immediacy. A sensible and democratic resolution must be reached with greater, fairer electricity sector and community involvement. This will result in a TPM that works for the good of all New Zealanders.

Yours Sincerely

Ngaire Rae

Chair, Healthy Homes Tai Tokerau and Wellbeing Health Promotion Leader, Mahitahi Hauora

Craig McKernan

Principal St Francis Xavier School and representative of Tai Tokerau Principals Association

Janine Kaipo

Te Hau Awhiowhio o Otangarei Trust

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