

26 January 2026



Trading conduct report 18-24 January 2026

Market monitoring weekly report

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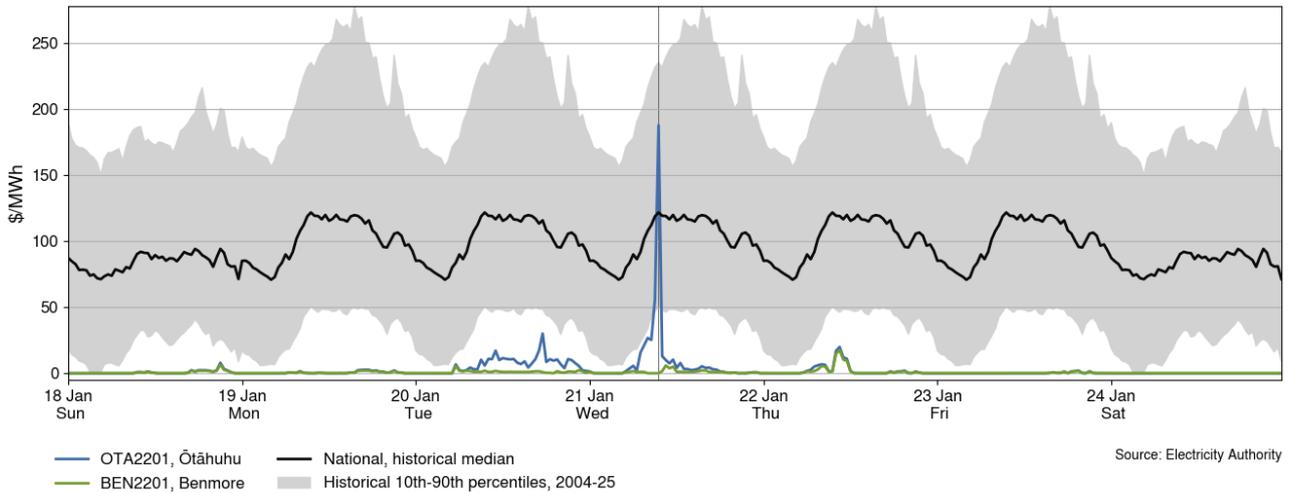
1. Overview

- 1.1. This week the average spot price decreased by \$7/MWh to \$2/MWh, with prices mostly remaining below \$30/MWh. Demand decreased this week compared to the previous week. Wind generation increased this week, while hydro and thermal generation fell slightly. National hydro storage decreased but remains high at 98% nominally full and ~123% of the historical average for this time of the year.

2. Spot prices

- 2.1. This report monitors underlying wholesale price drivers to assess whether trading periods require further analysis to identify potential non-compliance with the trading conduct rule. In addition to general monitoring, it also singles out unusually high-priced individual trading periods for further analysis by identifying when wholesale electricity spot prices are outliers compared to historic prices for the same time of year.
- 2.2. Between 18-24 January:
 - (a) The average spot price for the week was \$2/MWh, a decrease of around \$7/MWh compared to the previous week.
 - (b) 95% of prices fell between \$0.01/MWh and \$12/MWh.
- 2.3. Higher wind generation and lower demand contributed to lower prices this week than the previous week. Prices were mostly below \$30/MWh at Ōtāhuhu and mostly below \$5/MWh at Benmore, with very low prices on Sunday, Monday, Friday and Saturday.
- 2.4. The highest price at Ōtāhuhu was \$188/MWh at 9.30am on Wednesday. A North Island Fast Instantaneous Reserve spike of \$65/MWh and a North Island Sustained Instantaneous Reserve price spike of \$14/MWh occurred at this time, with the HVDC also running close to its northward capacity at this time. Additionally, demand was 91MW higher than forecast.
- 2.5. Price separation between the two islands occurred at times on Tuesday and Wednesday when the northward HVDC flow was close to capacity.
- 2.6. Figure 1 shows the wholesale spot prices at Benmore and Ōtāhuhu alongside the national historic median and historic 10-90th percentiles adjusted for inflation. Prices greater than quartile 3 (75th percentile) plus 1.5 times the inter-quartile range of historic prices, plus the difference between this week's median and the historic median, are highlighted with a vertical black line. Other notable prices are marked with black dashed lines.

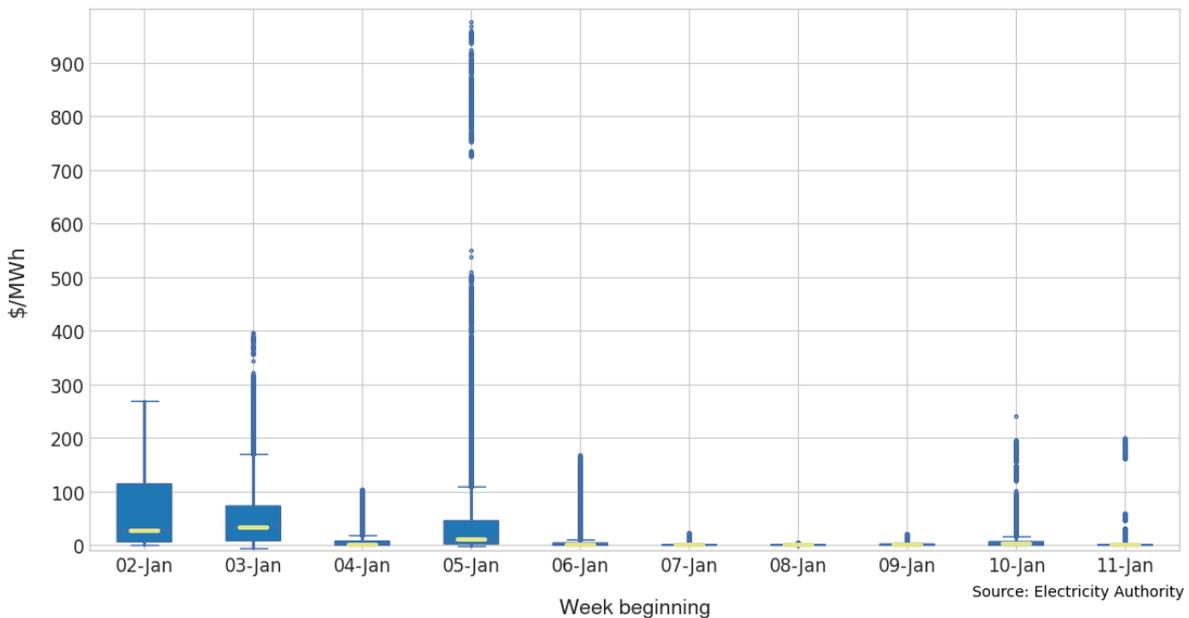
Figure 1: Wholesale spot prices at Benmore and Ōtāhuhu, 18-24 January



2.7. Figure 2 shows a box plot with the distribution of spot prices during this week and the previous nine weeks. The yellow line shows each week’s median price, while the blue box shows the lower and upper quartiles (where 50% of prices fell). The ‘whiskers’ extend to points that lie within 1.5 times of the interquartile range (IQR) of the lower and upper quartile. Observations that fall outside this range are displayed independently.

2.8. The distribution of spot prices this week was slightly narrower compared to last week. The median price was \$0.03/MWh and most prices (middle 50%) fell between \$0.01/MWh and \$1/MWh.

Figure 2: Box plot showing the distribution of spot prices this week and the previous nine weeks

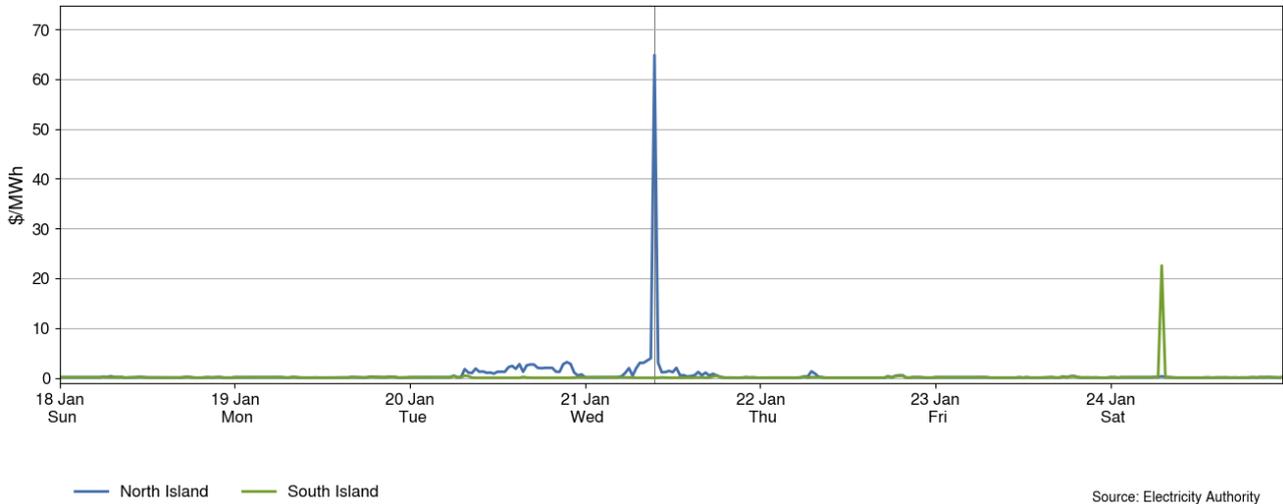


3. Reserve prices

3.1. Fast instantaneous reserve (FIR) prices for the North and South Islands are shown below in Figure 3. FIR prices were mostly below \$4/MWh, aside from two prices spikes on Wednesday and Saturday.

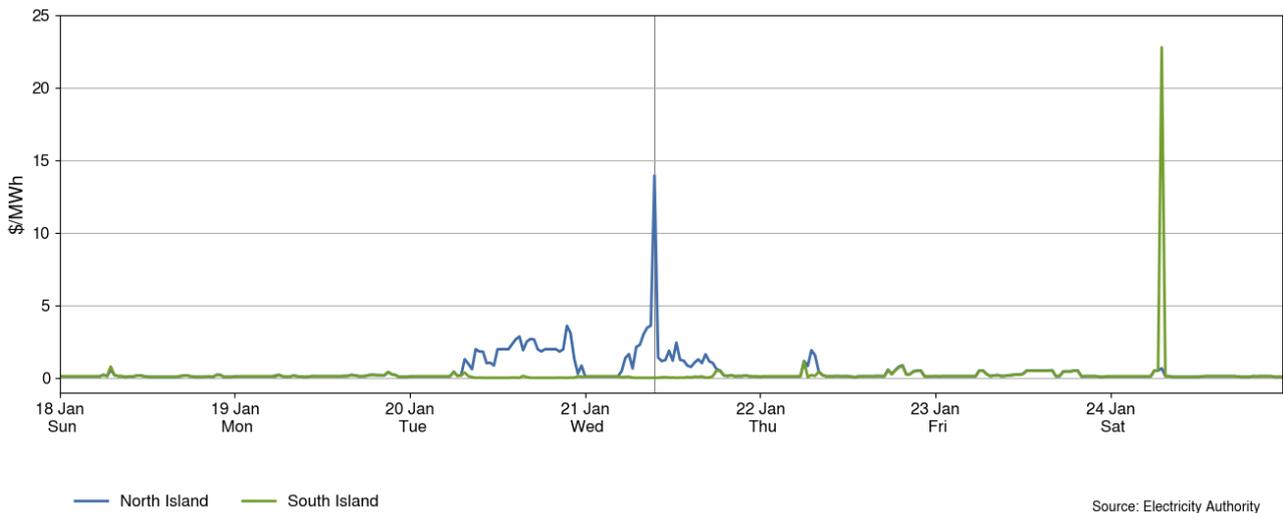
- 3.2. North Island FIR prices spiked to \$65/MWh at 9.30am on Wednesday, during which time a group of Manawatu wind farms was setting the risk for the North Island.
- 3.3. South Island FIR prices spiked to \$23/MWh at 7.00am on Saturday, during which time the HVDC was the South Island risk setter.

Figure 3: Fast instantaneous reserve price by trading period and island, 18-24 January



- 3.4. Sustained instantaneous reserve (SIR) prices for the North and South Islands are shown in Figure 4. SIR prices were mostly below \$4/MWh, aside from two prices spikes on Wednesday and Saturday.
- 3.5. North Island SIR prices reached \$14/MWh at 9.30am on Wednesday, with a group of Manawatu wind farms setting the North Island risk at this time.
- 3.6. South Island SIR prices reached \$23/MWh at 7.00am on Saturday, during which time the HVDC was the South Island risk setter.

Figure 4: Sustained instantaneous reserve by trading period and island, 18-24 January



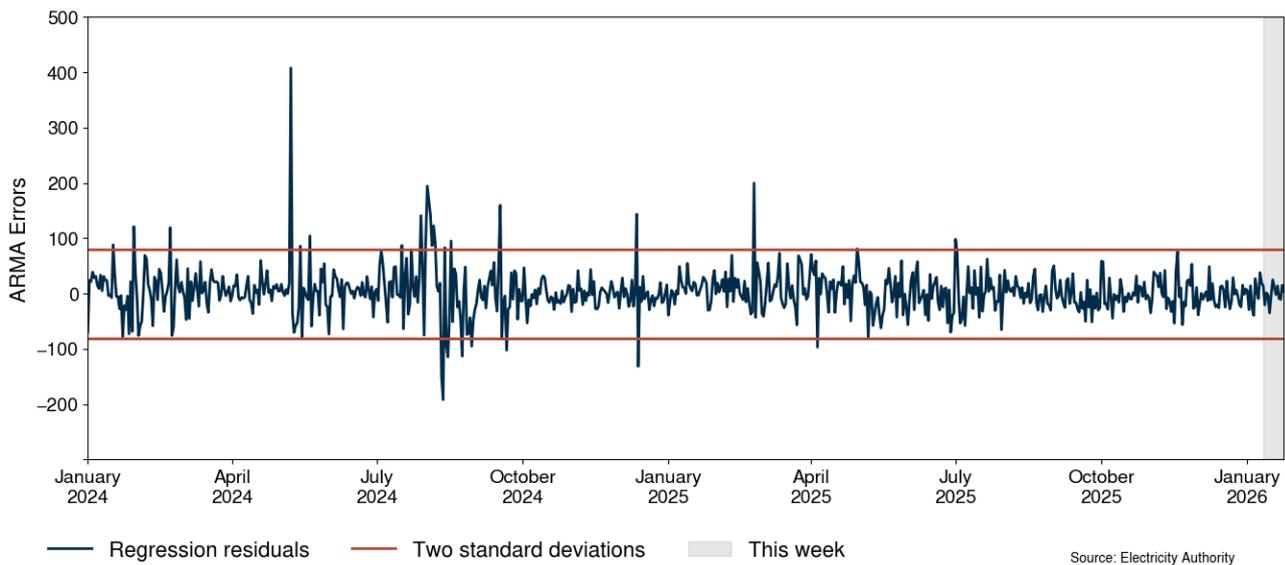
4. Regression residuals

- 4.1. The Authority’s monitoring team uses a regression model to model electricity spot prices. The residuals show how close predicted spot prices were to actual prices. Large residuals

may indicate that prices do not reflect underlying supply and demand conditions. Details on the regression model and residuals can be found in [Appendix A](#).

- 4.2. Figure 5 shows the residuals of autoregressive moving average (ARMA) errors from the daily model. Positive residuals indicate that the modelled daily price is lower than the actual average daily price and vice versa. When residuals are small this indicates that average daily prices are likely largely aligned with market conditions. These small deviations reflect market variations that may not be controlled in the regression analysis.
- 4.3. This week, there were no residuals above or below two standard deviations, indicating that prices were similar to those predicted by the model.

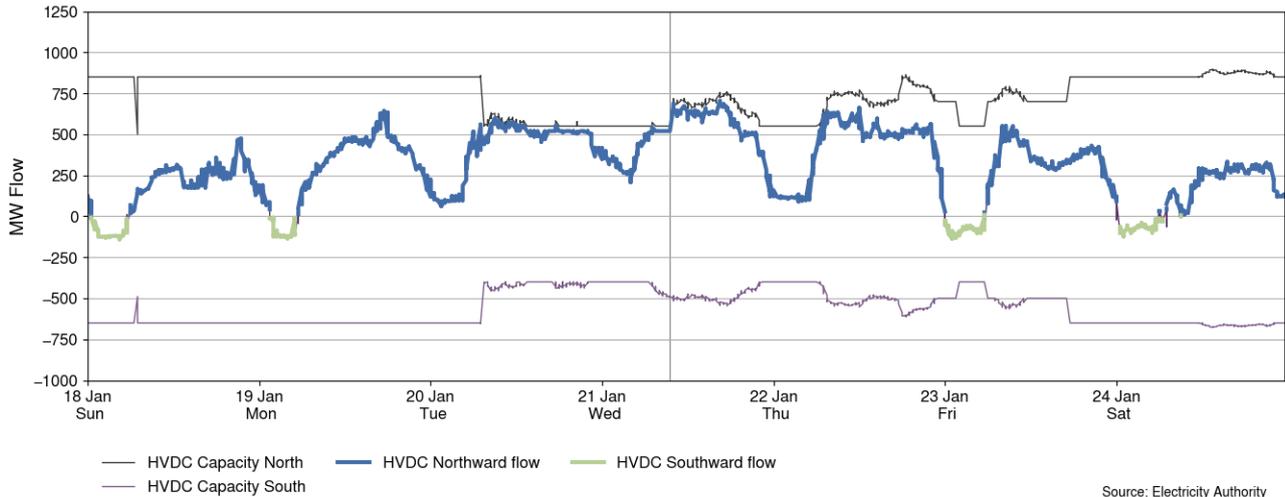
Figure 5: Residual plot of estimated daily average spot prices, 1 January 2023 - 24 January 2026



5. HVDC

- 5.1. Figure 6 shows the HVDC flow between 18-24 January. HVDC flows were mostly northward, with periods of southward flow overnight on Sunday, Monday, Friday, and Saturday.
- 5.2. The highest northward flow occurred at 4.30pm on Wednesday with a flow of around 704MW.

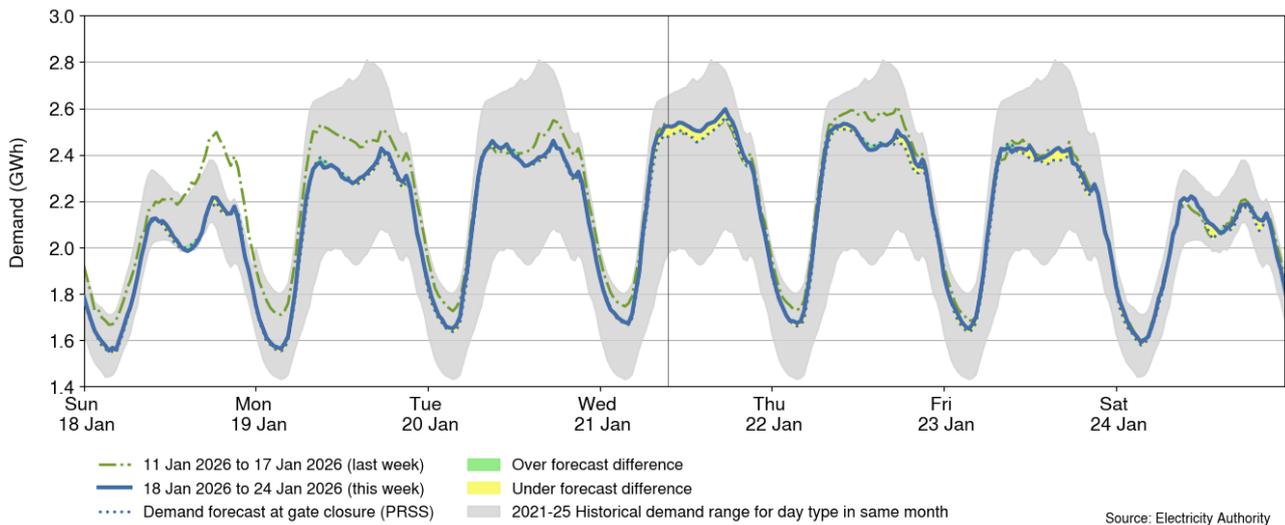
Figure 6: HVDC flow and capacity, 18-24 January



6. Demand

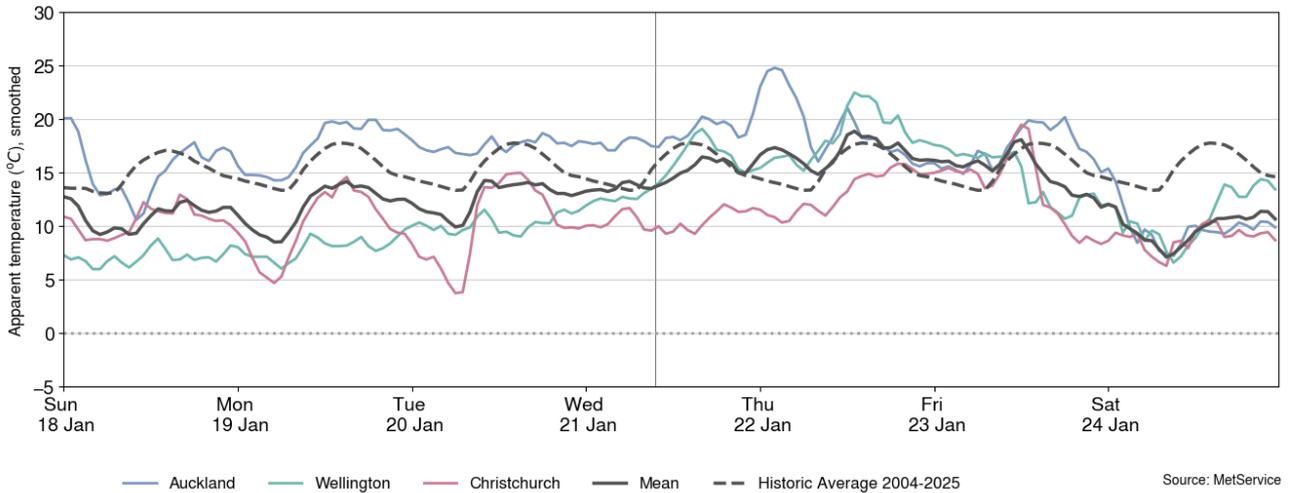
- 6.1. Figure 7 shows national demand between 18-24 January, compared to the historic range and the demand of the previous week.
- 6.2. Demand was lower than the previous week between Sunday and Tuesday as well as on Thursday. Demand was otherwise similar to the previous week.
- 6.3. The highest demand of the week was around 2.60GWh at 5.30pm on Wednesday.

Figure 7: National demand, 18-24 January compared to the previous week



- 6.4. Figure 8 shows the hourly apparent temperature at main population centres from 18-24 January. The apparent temperature is an adjustment of the recorded temperature that accounts for factors like wind speed and humidity to estimate how cold it feels. Also included for reference is the mean temperature of the main population centres, and the mean historical apparent temperature of similar weeks, from previous years, averaged across the three main population centres.
- 6.5. Apparent temperatures ranged from 7°C to 25°C in Auckland, 6°C to 23°C in Wellington, and 3°C to 20°C in Christchurch.

Figure 8: Temperatures across main centres, 18-24 January

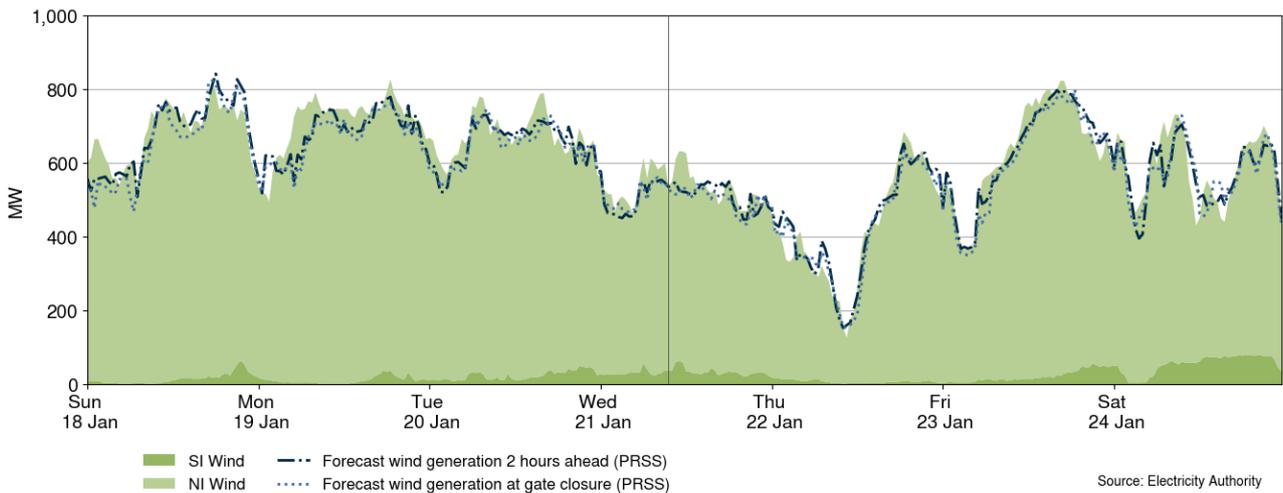


7. Generation

7.1. Figure 9 shows wind generation and forecast from 18-24 January. This week wind generation varied between 127MW and 827MW, with a weekly average of 607MW.

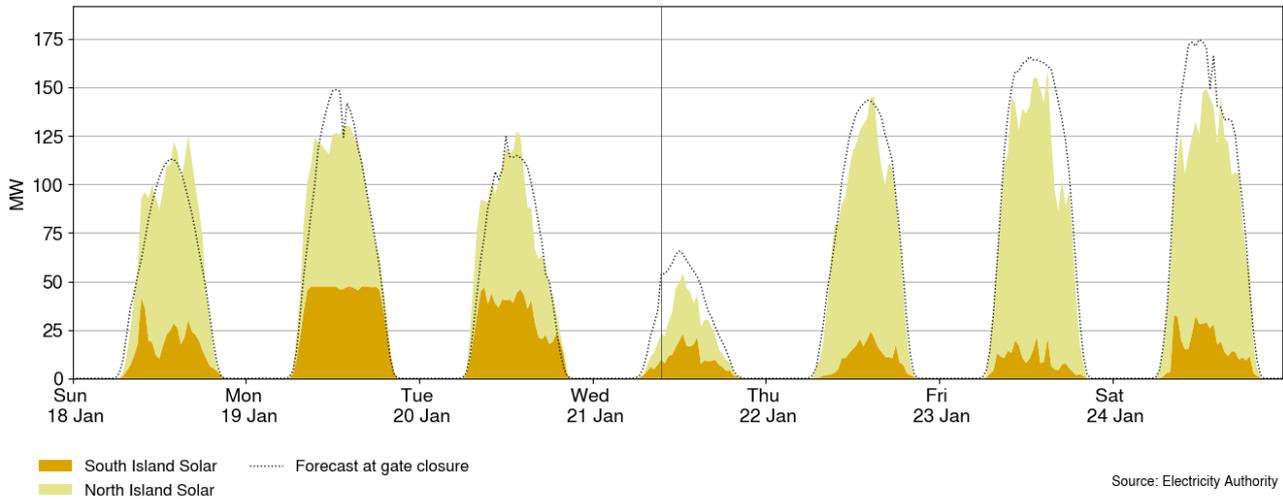
7.2. Wind generation was mostly high across the week, with a drop below 200MW on Thursday morning.

Figure 9: Wind generation and forecast, 18-24 January



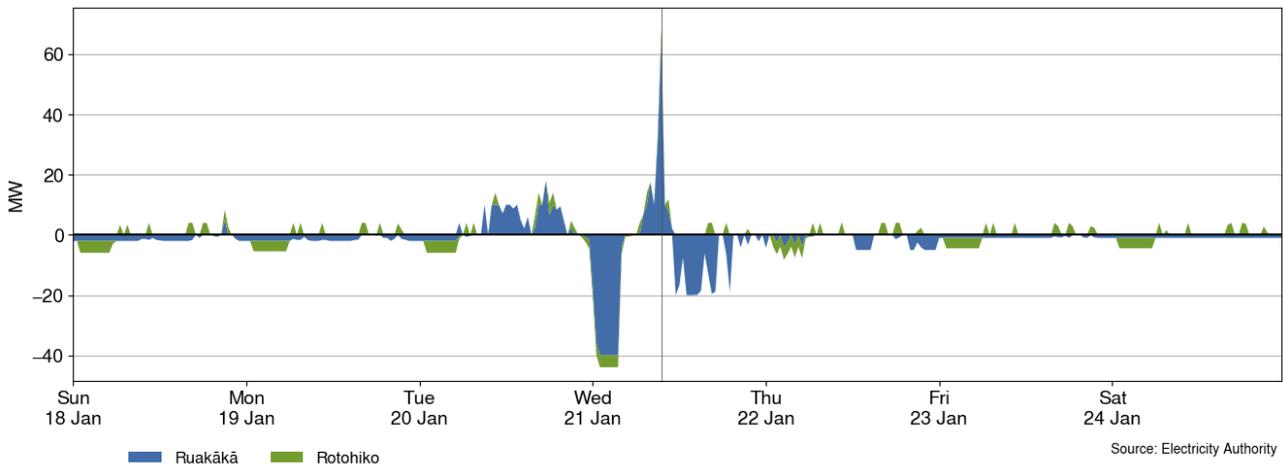
7.3. Figure 10 shows grid connected solar generation from 18-24 January. Solar generation reached above 125MW daily, except on Wednesday where generation reached a maximum of only 54MW. Solar generation peaked on Friday at 3.00pm at around 159MW.

Figure 10: Grid connected solar generation, 18-24 January



- 7.4. Figure 11 shows when the grid scale batteries Rotohiko (35MW/35MWh) and Ruakākā (100MW/200MWh) charged (negative values) and discharged (positive values). Typically, a grid scale battery charges when prices are low and discharges energy back into the grid when prices are higher.
- 7.5. This week, the batteries mostly discharged during the day on Tuesday and Wednesday when prices were higher. The batteries mostly charged overnight or during the day when prices were low. When daytime prices were low on Sunday and Monday as well as between Thursday and Saturday, the batteries discharged less.

Figure 11: Grid scale battery charge and discharge, 18-24 January



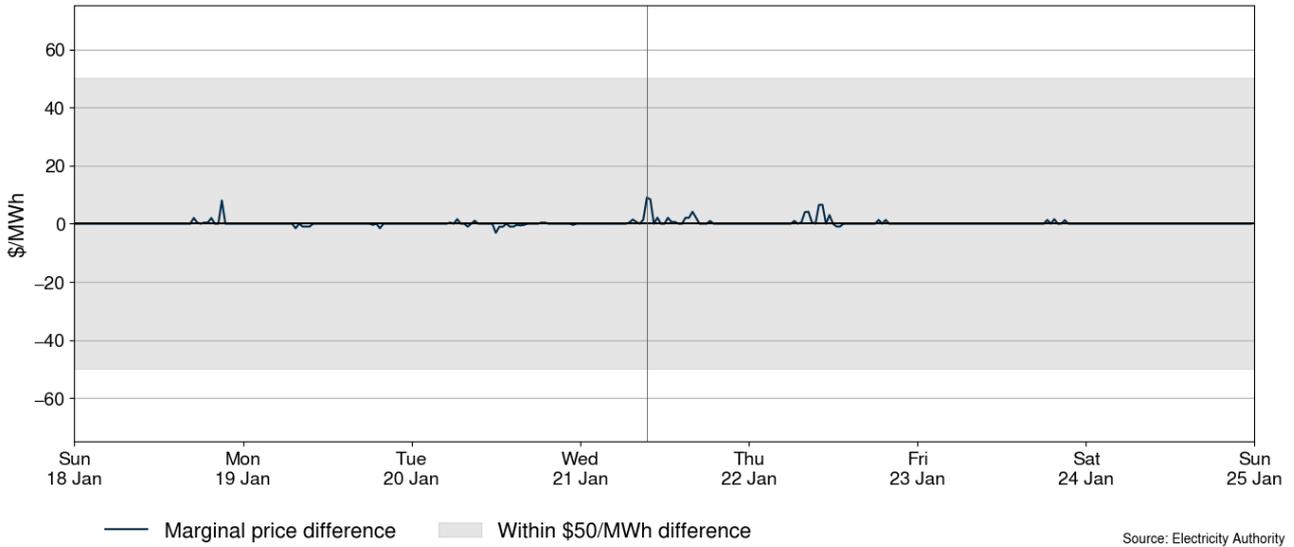
- 7.6. Figure 12 shows the difference between the national real-time dispatch (RTD) marginal price and a simulated marginal price where the real-time intermittent generation and demand matched the 1-hour ahead forecast (PRSS¹) projections. The figure highlights when forecasting inaccuracies are causing large differences to final prices. When the difference is positive this means that the 1-hour ahead forecasting inaccuracies resulted in the spot price being higher than anticipated - usually here demand is under forecast and/or intermittent generation is over forecast. When the difference is negative, the opposite is true. Because of the nature of demand and intermittent generation forecasting, the 1-hour

¹ Price responsive schedule short – short schedules are produced every 30 minutes and produce forecasts for the next 4 hours.

ahead and the RTD intermittent generation and demand forecasts will rarely be the same. Trading periods where this difference is exceptionally large can signal that forecasting inaccuracies had a large impact on the final price for that trading period.

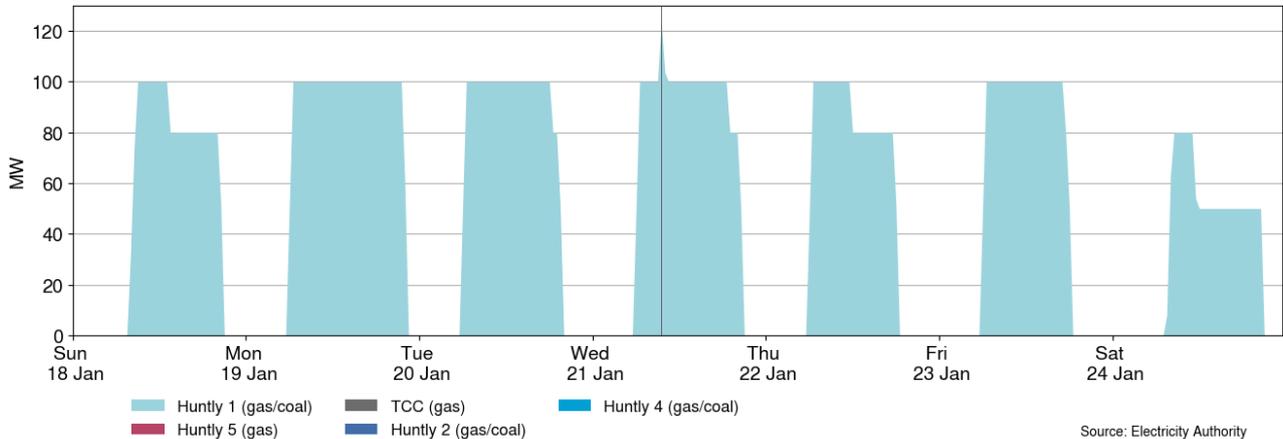
7.7. No trading periods this week had a marginal price difference above or below \$50/MWh.

Figure 12: Difference between national marginal RTD price and simulated RTD price, with the difference due to one-hour ahead intermittent generation and demand forecast inaccuracies, 18-24 January



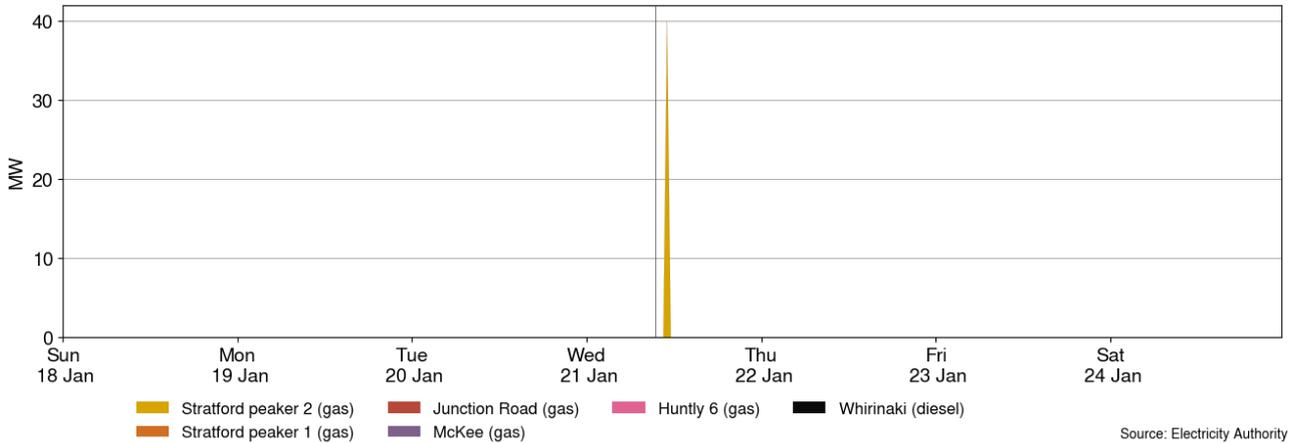
7.8. Figure 13 shows the generation of thermal baseload between 18-24 January. Huntly 1 ran every day this week.

Figure 13: Thermal baseload generation, 18-24 January



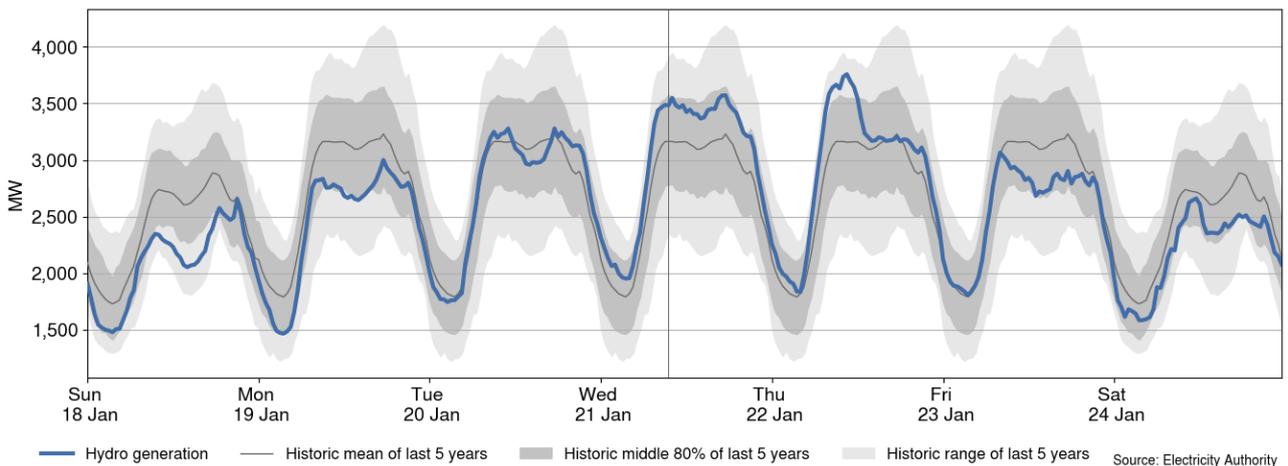
7.9. Figure 14 shows the generation of thermal peaker plants between 18-24 January. Almost no peaker generation ran this week, aside from Stratford peaker 2 which ran during trading period 23 on Wednesday.

Figure 14: Thermal peaker generation, 18-24 January



7.10. Figure 15 shows hydro generation between 18-24 January. Hydro generation was close to or below the historic mean most days this week. Wednesday during the day and Thursday morning saw higher hydro generation, the latter of which aligns with a drop in wind generation.

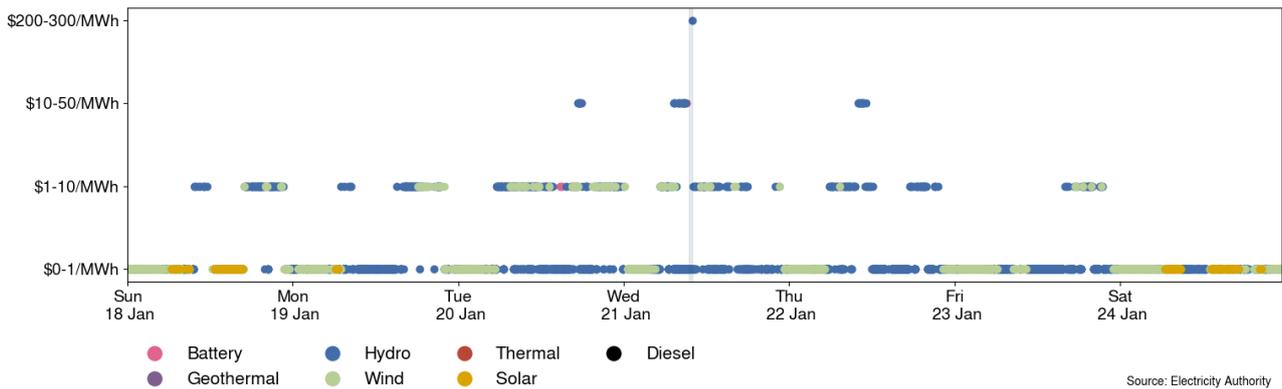
Figure 15: Hydro generation, 18-24 January



7.11. Figure 16 shows the distribution of marginal prices this week and what generation technology produced each marginal price. Note there can be multiple marginal plants for each 5-minute period.

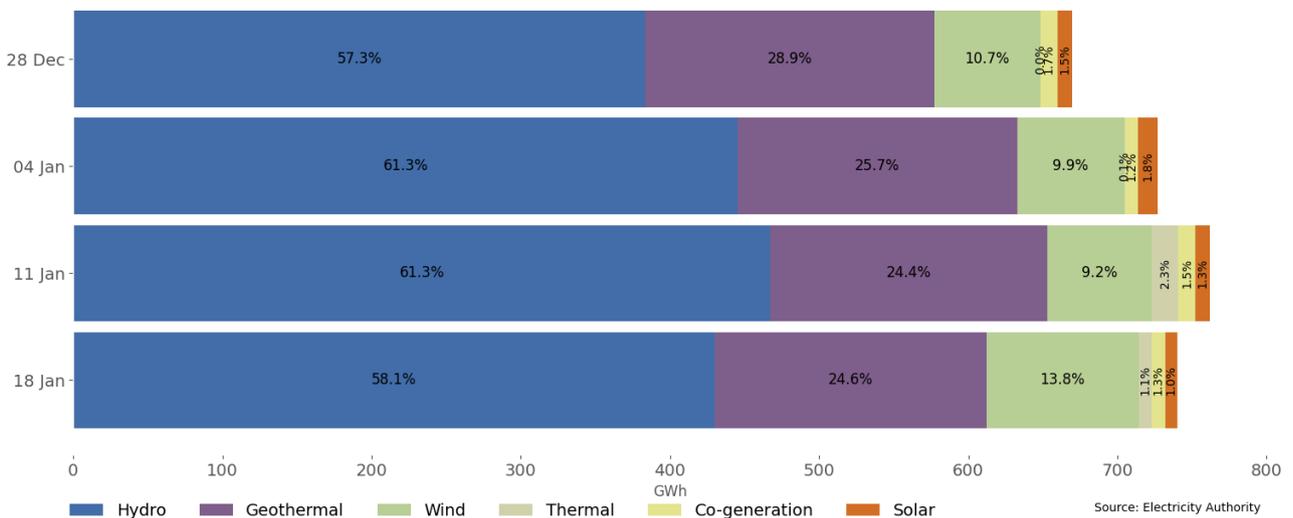
7.12. The highest prices this week were caused by North Island Genesis hydro and Huntly 1. The most common technology setting prices this week was hydro generation, with wind generation the second most common. Most marginal prices were between \$0-1/MWh.

Figure 16: Prices of marginal generation, 18-24 January



7.13. As a percentage of total generation, between 18-24 January, total weekly hydro generation was 58.1%, geothermal 24.6%, wind 13.8%, thermal 1.1%, co-generation 1.3%, and solar (grid connected) 1.0%, as shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Total generation by type as a percentage each week, between 28 December 2025 and 24 January 2026



8. Outages

8.1. Figure 18 shows generation capacity on outage. Total capacity on outage between 18-24 January ranged between ~1,763MW and ~2,831MW. Figure 19 shows the thermal generation capacity outages.

Figure 18: Total MW loss from generation outages, 18-24 January

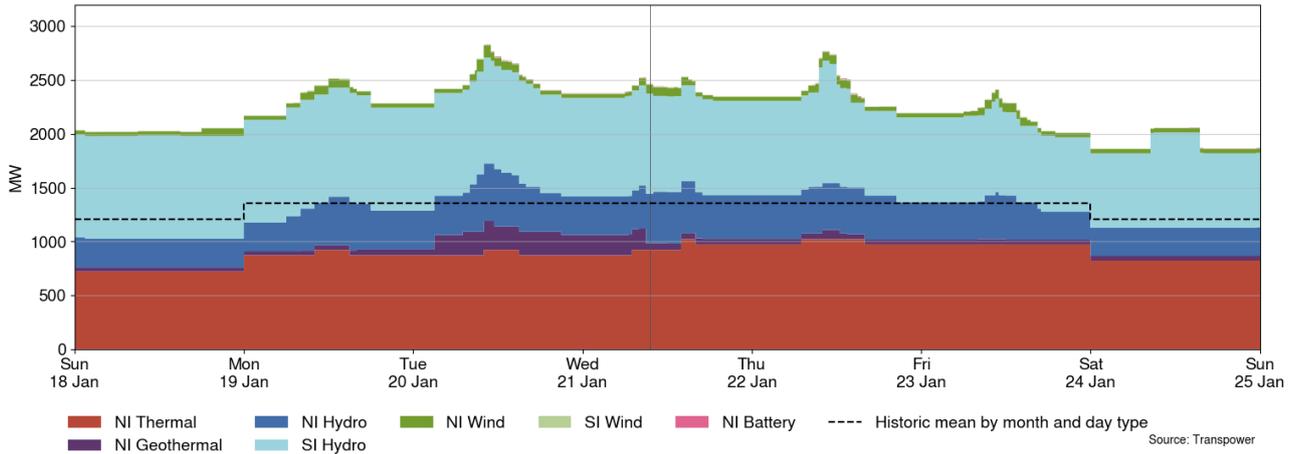
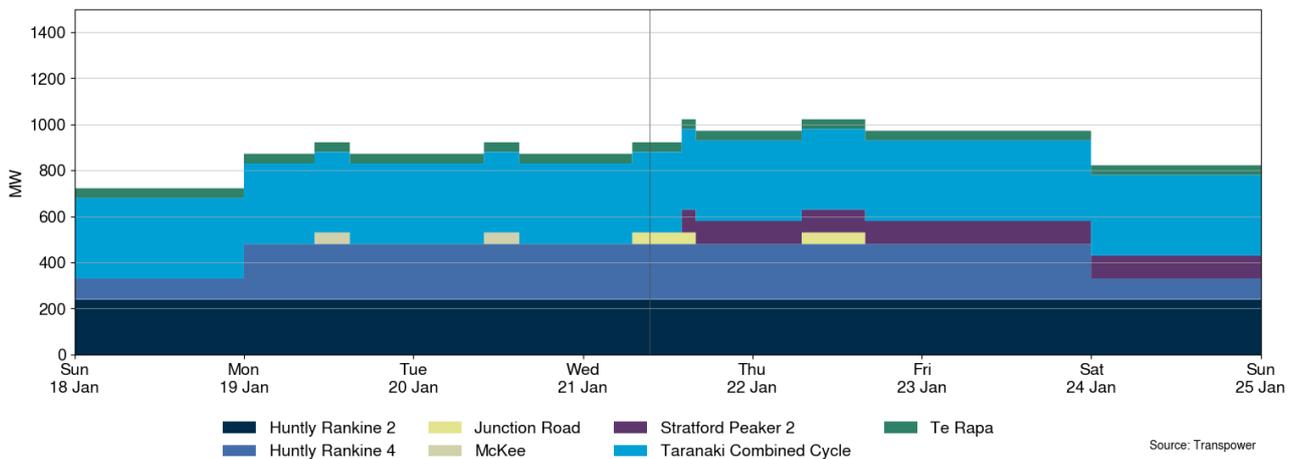


Figure 19: Total MW loss from thermal outages, 18-24 January



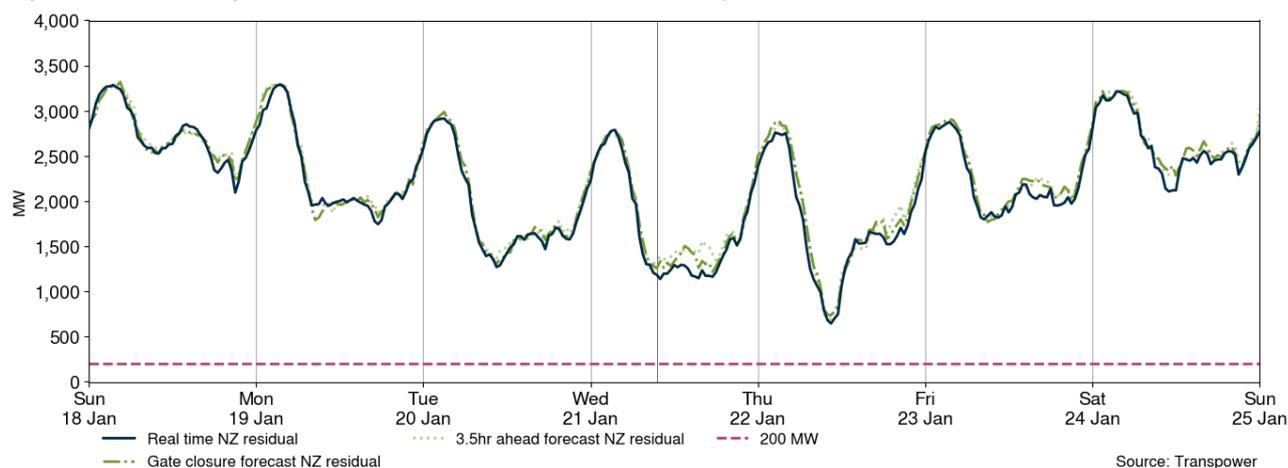
8.2. Notable outages include:

Plant	Partial or Full	End Date
Nga Awa Purua	Full	21 January 2026
Manapōuri unit 6	Full	22 January 2026
Stratford peaker 2	Full	25 January 2026
Ōhau C	Partial	28 January 2026
Huntly 4	Partial	14 February 2026
Ōhau A	Partial	27 February 2026
Roxburgh unit 5	Full	11 March 2026
Rangipō unit 6	Full	29 March 2026
Huntly 2	Full	28 April 2026
Clyde unit 2	Full	1 May 2026
Manapōuri unit 4	Full	12 June 2026

9. Generation balance residuals

- 9.1. Figure 20 shows the national generation balance residuals between 18-24 January. A residual is the difference between total energy supply and total energy demand for each trading period. The red dashed line represents the 200MW residual mark which is the threshold at which Transpower issues a customer advice notice (CAN) for a low residual situation. The green dashed line represents the forecast residuals and the blue line represents the real-time dispatch (RTD) residuals.
- 9.2. Overall, residuals were healthy this week. The lowest national residual was 645MW at 4.00pm on Thursday.

Figure 20: National generation balance residuals, 18-24 January



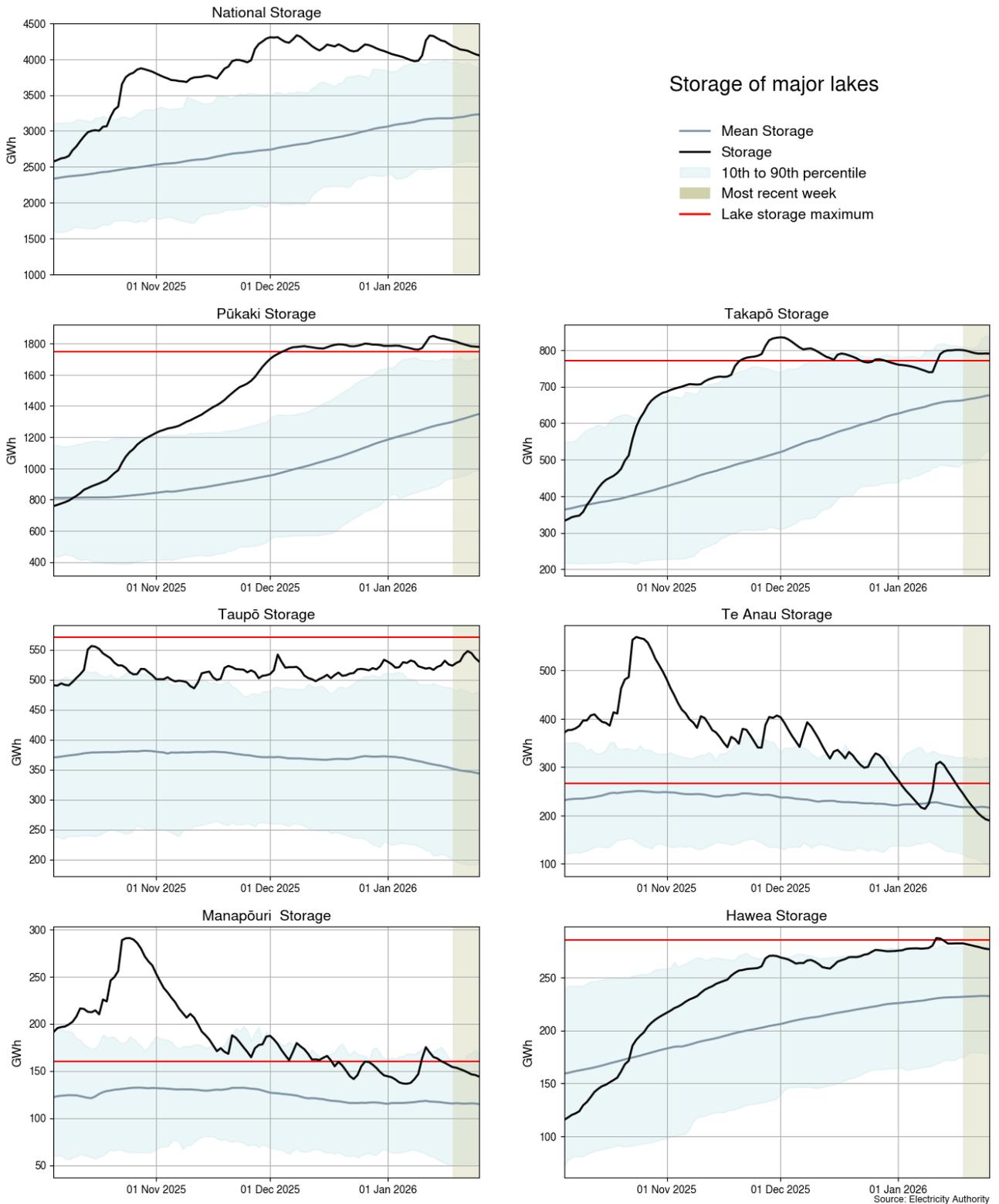
10. Storage/fuel supply

- 10.1. Figure 21 shows the total controlled national hydro storage as well as the storage of major catchment lakes including their historical mean and 10th to 90th percentiles.
- 10.2. As of 24 January, national controlled storage decreased to 98% nominally full and ~123% of the historical average for this time of the year.
- 10.3. Storage at Lake Pūkaki (102% full³) is above its historic 90th percentile, while Lake Takapō (102% full) is now below its historic 90th percentile. Lake Pūkaki and Lake Takapō have both exceeded storage capacity and are spilling.
- 10.4. Storage at Lake Te Anau (72% full) is below its historic mean, with Lake Manapōuri (92% full) below its historic 90th percentile.
- 10.5. Storage at Lake Taupō (93% full) is above its historic 90th percentile for this time of year.
- 10.6. Storage at Lake Hawea (97% full) is close to its historic 90th percentile.

² This outage reflects Contact's intention to decommission TCC.

³ Percentage full values sourced from NZX Hydro.

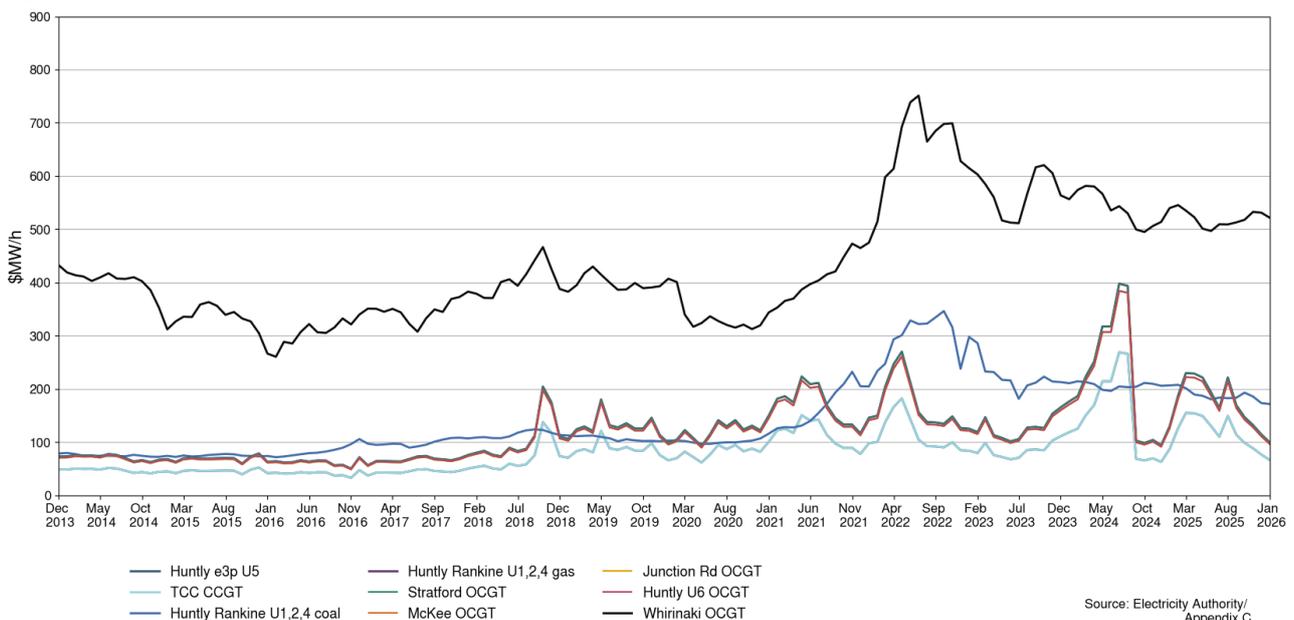
Figure 21: Hydro storage



11. Prices versus estimated costs

- 11.1. In a competitive market, prices should be close to (but not necessarily at) the short-run marginal cost (SRMC) of the marginal generator (where SRMC includes opportunity cost).
- 11.2. The SRMC (excluding opportunity cost of storage) for thermal fuels is estimated using gas and coal prices, and the average heat rates for each thermal unit. Note that the SRMC calculations include the carbon price, an estimate of operational and maintenance costs, and transport for coal.
- 11.3. Figure 22 shows an estimate of thermal SRMCs as a monthly average up to 1 January 2026. The SRMCs for gas- and diesel-powered generation have decreased, while the SRMCs for coal-fuelled generation has remained stable.
- 11.4. The latest SRMC of coal-fuelled Rankine generation is ~\$171/MWh. The cost of running the Rankines on gas is ~\$99/MWh.
- 11.5. The SRMC of gas fuelled thermal plants is currently between \$66/MWh and \$99/MWh.
- 11.6. The SRMC of Whirinaki is ~\$521/MWh.
- 11.7. More information on how the SRMC of thermal plants is calculated can be found in [Appendix C](#).

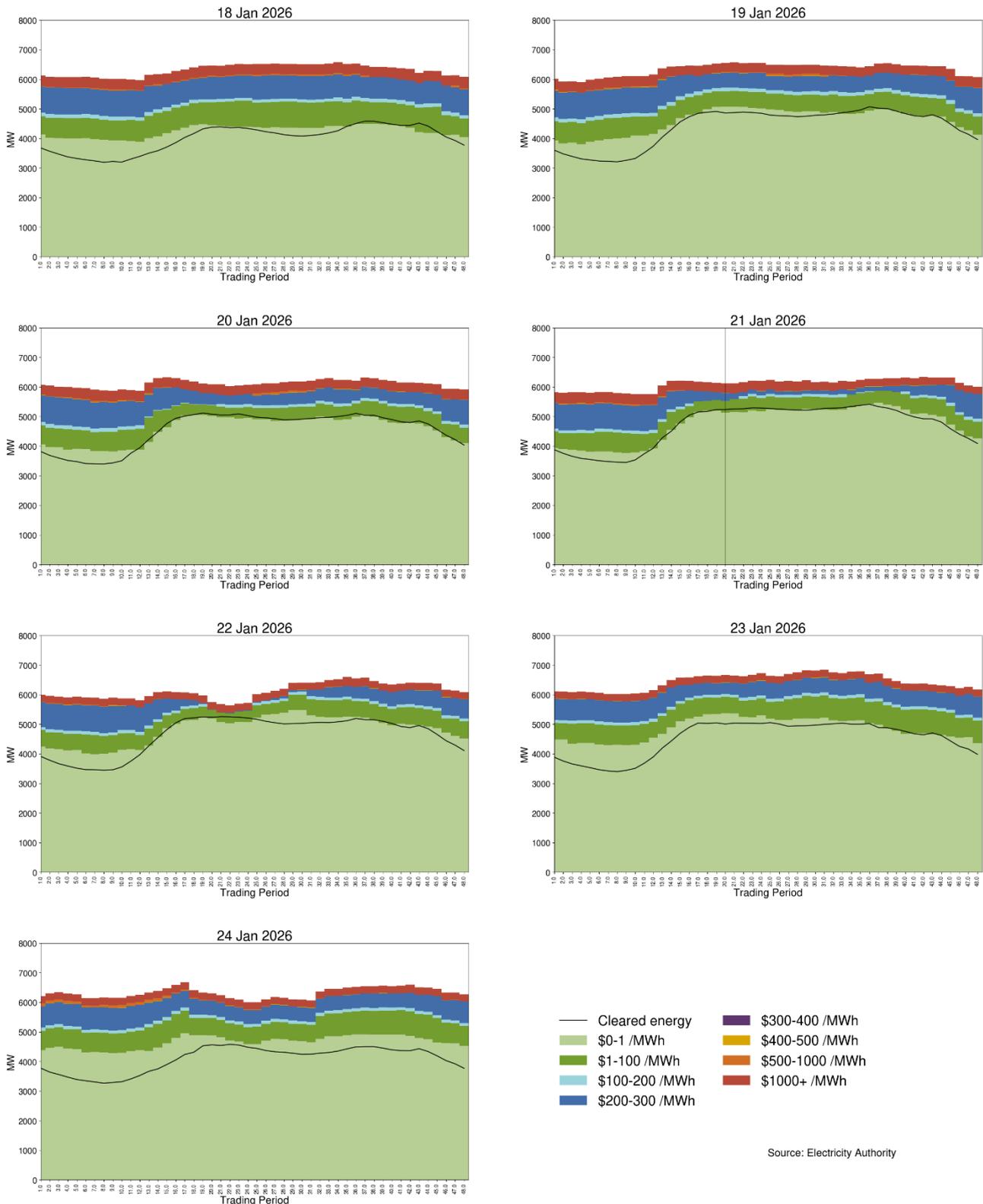
Figure 22: Estimated monthly SRMC for thermal fuels



12. Offer behaviour

- 12.1. Figure 23 shows this week's national daily offer stacks. The black line shows cleared energy, indicating the range of the average final price.
- 12.2. This week, most offers cleared below \$100/MWh. On Thursday morning, offers between \$100/MWh and \$300/MWh were reduced as two Clyde units went on outage.

Figure 23: Daily offer stacks



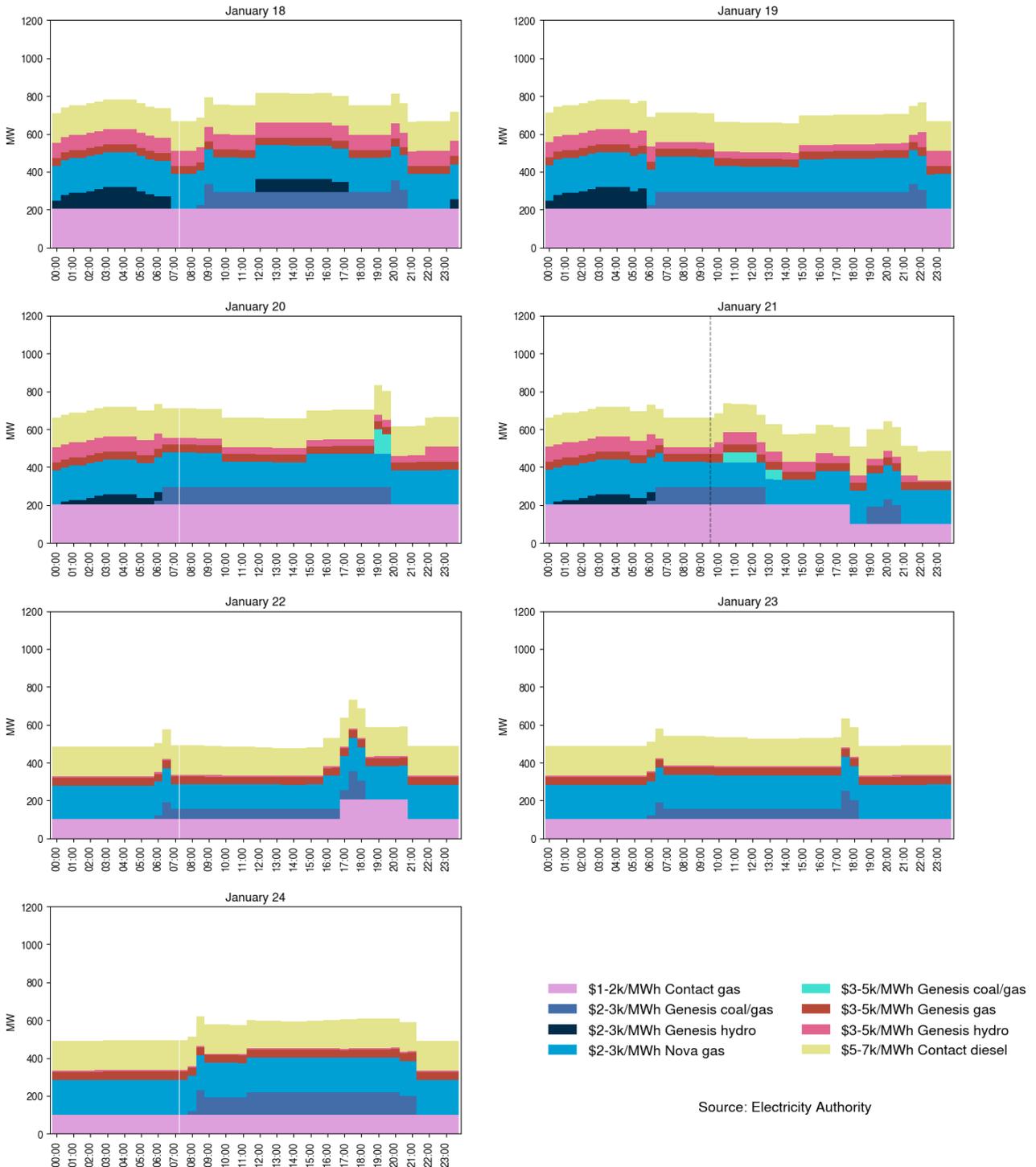
12.3. Figure 24 shows offers above \$1,000/MWh in each trading period this week. The largest proportion of these offers are fast start thermal operators.

12.4. If forecast prices are lower than thermal operating costs, this signals some generators may not be needed in that half-hourly trading period. Thermal generators may then price their units high, as they aren't expecting to run. These high prices reflect increased operating

costs of running for only a short time. So, if demand is unexpectedly high, wind generation dips, or other generation fails, these high-priced thermal generators may get dispatched, sometimes resulting in a high spot price.

12.5. On average 624MW per trading period was priced above \$1,000/MWh this week, which is roughly 13% of the total energy available.

Figure 24: High priced offers



13. Ongoing work in trading conduct

13.1. This week prices generally appeared to be consistent with supply and demand conditions. The monitoring team is looking further into Stratford peaker 2 generation and Waikaremoana offers this week.

13.2. Further analysis is being done on the trading periods in Table 1 as indicated.

Table 1: Trading periods identified for further analysis

Date	Trading period	Status	Participant	Location	Enquiry topic
8/12/2025-11/12/2025	Several	Further analysis	Contact/Manawa	Coleridge, Cobb, and Matahina	Offers
12/01/2026-17/01/2026	Several	Further analysis	Mercury	Waikato	Offers
12/01/2026-17/01/2026	Several	Further analysis	Genesis	Huntly	Offers
21/01/2026	23	Further analysis	Contact	Stratford	Generation
21/01/2026-24/01/2026	Several	Further analysis	Genesis	Waikaremoana	Offers