***Question and Answer Fact Sheet***

***Does WEL have consents for this work?***

Yes. Because we are now downgrading the lines to 33kV, we have submitted the altered plans to the Waikato District Council for approval.

The maintenance and upgrading work that we'll be performing on existing power poles from Cogswell Road through to the Whatawhata Substation is a permitted activity.

***When will construction begin? What's the timeframe involved?***

We expect to start clearing vegetation along the route prior to Christmas. The earliest we would start site works would be February 2010. We must complete the entire transmission route and commission it by October 2010.

***Are the changes to this plan 'visually' different?***

Yes. We believe the new plan is now visually less intrusive for landowners. The main visual differences are:

- The new poles erected will only be 15 metres high on average, as opposed to 17 metres as originally planned.
- Only around 140 poles will now be erected, as opposed to 250 originally planned.
- One-third of the route – 8 kilometres – will now involve undergrounding the cables, so there will be no poles erected along these sections of the route.
- It is most likely that trees along the undergrounded section of the route will not need to be removed.
- At the wind farm site, all gear and equipment will now be fully enclosed in a switching station building.

***Will the any of the maintenance or upgrading work being performed from Cogswell Road to Whatawhata Substation be anything different from a visual perspective?***

To most people, no. The only visual difference that may be noticeable to some is the old wire will be replaced with a new wire that will be shinier for a while, before it is dulled over time by the weather.

In total, maintenance and upgrading work will take place along the 10 kilometres route from Cogswell Road through to the Whatawhata Substation.

***Why are you just getting to the maintenance and upgrading work on the old line from Cogswell Road to Whatawhata Substation now? Why didn't you do it before?***

To perform this maintenance and upgrading work, the safest thing to do is to turn the electricity off to that line. Until now, this has been difficult to plan in a way that would not adversely affect homes, farms and businesses requiring power in the area.

Once the new transmission route is constructed from the wind farm, we'll be able to turn off this old section and perform the maintenance and upgrading work in a safe and efficient manner without loss of power to anyone in the local area.

Once this work is completed, the lines will be brought up to WEL's standards and the security of supply will be strengthened in the local area.

***Are some trees and vegetation still being removed?***

Yes. Where new power poles are to be erected, we will remove vegetation along these areas. WEL has discussed the removal of this vegetation with those landowners affected.

It is most likely that trees will not need to be removed along the undergrounded sections of the route.

***What's the difference between a substation and a switching station?***

When a substation is constructed, all electrical gear and equipment is surrounded by a large fence, but still visible to passersby. A switching station is a fully enclosed building; therefore, no electrical gear will be visible.

***How much of the route will be undergrounded and where will this occur?***

Cables will be undergrounded in the two most densely populated areas along the transmission route – along State Highway 23 from Waituna Valley Road to Cogswell Road and through the village of Karakariki. One-third (8k) of the 25k transmission route will now be undergrounded.

***How many new poles will be erected along the route?***

Around 140 new poles will be erected. The original plan was to erect 250 new poles, so the final plan is substantially less.

***What can I expect during the construction process?***

Before Christmas, we plan to begin removing vegetation along the transmission route. This involves bringing in some cutting and digging equipment onto affected landowners' properties. We have discussed this with each landowner affected.

When the poles are erected, many of the poles require a concrete pad to be laid first. Then, a helicopter will be used to bring in and erect the actual pole. So, it is likely you will see and hear the helicopter overhead from time to time from approximately February to September next year.

Along the two sections where lines will be undergrounded, digging equipment will be used to prepare the trenches required.

Construction of the entire transmission line will be completed and commissioned by October 2010.

***Why can't you underground the entire route?***

Now that we are able to use 33 kV lines, the cost of undergrounding has been reduced, so we've incorporated it into the plan where feasible.

The terrain along much of the route makes it unattractive to underground lines as, in most cases, it is costly to cable in hilly terrain and access is problematic for equipment.

The two stretches of line where we will be undergrounding follows the road. Undergrounding cable along a road means access is not a problem. Plus, undergrounding cable along the roadways also helps us meet the concerns of landowners who would otherwise have more poles on their property.

In general, undergrounding makes the line more reliable and avoids the need to place poles in property boundaries where they will be clear of passing vehicles that could hit poles and cause outages in the event of an accident.