

Power network takeover

EASTLAND Network will take over the region's high voltage electricity transmission from Transpower at the beginning of April.

This includes the steel towers and poles which run from Tuai substation to Wairoa and Gisborne, as well as the substations.

Eastland Network will also own the tower lines between Gisborne and Tokomaru Bay.

"The transfer of the Transpower assets will add around \$14 million to Eastland Network's existing asset base, as well as providing additional regulated revenue via the Commerce Commission's pricing processes.

Eastland Group's general manager Brent Stewart said the impacts of this change were positive, with the main factor being the region's entire electricity lines network, including Wairoa, being locally owned from April 1.

"This means we can plan for maintenance and upgrades with the future of our region at the forefront of our minds," he said.

"This decision was made for three main reasons — one being the company saw the electricity lines network now being locally owned as an important factor.

"Other important reasons included the Transpower assets adding around \$14 million to Eastland Network's existing asset base which is approximately \$110 million.

"Also the transfer of the Transpower assets gives Eastland Network the opportunity for additional regulated revenue via the Commerce Commission's pricing processes."

Mr Stewart said the company was currently recruiting for lines mechanics to work in Wairoa and Gisborne.

"There is a national shortage of these specialists. We will continue to seek new staff and also continue to use contractors to help us maintain the network," he said.

Mr Stewart said the transfer of the 110kV network was an exciting opportunity for Eastland Network.

It provides the opportunity for us to continue to resource Eastland Network for both operational and engineering work and to meet the ongoing challenges of regulation."

Mr Stewart said the company was committed to spending around \$15 million on the new 110kV assets over the next five years, and around \$1.5 million a year on operations.