

NZ commits to upgrade Auckland infrastructure

New Zealand Prime Minister John Key has committed the Government to progress upgrades to Auckland's power supply infrastructure following an outage affecting some 74,000 customers in the city's eastern suburbs. "We've made it quite clear we'll spend what looks like tens of millions of dollars to upgrade that equipment immediately," Key says. Transpower Chief Executive Patrick Strange says that an outage of this size in Auckland is unacceptable. "We can appreciate the inconvenience this has caused. Right now, we're focused on keeping the lights on," he says. Auckland electricity consumers were asked to conserve electricity following an outage at a substation in Penrose on 3 February 2009. The outage was caused by a fault in a transformer, one of three at Penrose Substation. One transformer was out due to maintenance. The other two were managing the load until a fault in one caused the third transformer to trip. "There is an extensive program – billions of dollars' worth – to upgrade the security and diversity of electricity supply into Auckland," says Dr Strange. "Projects of this scale take time to be approved and built, but they are underway." Transpower says further power cuts in Auckland are unlikely following repair work to the second transformer which brought it back into service ahead of schedule.

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