

## **NZ electricity consumption declines in downturn**

A sizeable downturn in New Zealand's electricity consumption has been highlighted in the latest energy statistics released by Energy Minister Gerry Brownlee. The latest data from the New Zealand Energy Quarterly for the March quarter shows total electricity generation down five per cent compared with the same quarter last year. "This is the lowest figure in over five years and is a reflection of the economic downturn dampening electricity consumption, and the reduced usage at the Tiwai Point aluminium smelter," says Brownlee. "On the flip side 73 per cent of the electricity generation was from renewable generation – the highest level for a March quarter since 2005. Wind and geothermal generation is continuing to grow," he says. "In fact if the current trend continues this year, it's likely geothermal generation will supply over 10 per cent of our annual electricity generation for the first time on record." The data also shows a drop in greenhouse gas emissions, down 31 per cent from the previous March quarter and the lowest quarter of carbon emissions from electricity generation since March 2004. "This really is a reflection of the high levels of electricity generation from renewable sources and a consequent drop in generation in generation from gas, coal, and oil," says Brownlee.

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