



Eastland Group update **October 2008**

Recent Changes to Electricity Regulation **Positive for Eastland**

By Eastland Group chief executive Matt Todd

A piece of key energy-related regulation was finally passed into law in September thanks to concerted efforts by numerous parties locally and nationally over the past few years.

The changes were to the Electricity Industry Reform Act (EIRA), and while it would be easy to overlook this relatively obscure piece of legislation the implications for both the Eastland region and Eastland Group are significant.

The EIRA was a piece of legislation that has its origins back in 1998 when the bundled electricity distribution and electricity retail businesses were forced to split as a way of attempting to get competition into the retail side of the industry. The then Minister of Energy promised that it would deliver lower electricity prices. With the benefit of hindsight we can see that this little prediction was painfully awry and the forced separation has instead lead to huge increases in electricity costs, with most of the margin flowing back to the Government via their 100% shareholding of the three big state owned generator/retailer enterprises Meridian, Mighty River Power and Genesis Energy.

In Gisborne and Wairoa districts the electricity distribution business was retained under local ownership while the retail businesses were sold to publically listed Contact Energy and Trustpower respectively.

Eastland Network owns both the Gisborne and Wairoa electricity networks.

The EIRA provided limitations on and restrictions to the amount of local generation that a local electricity distribution business – in our case Eastland Network – could own, and essentially forbade the output from owned generation to be retailed (sold) to local consumers. It also imposed the requirement for a separated ownership and governance structure for new generation that was unworkable.

Eastland Network applied for an exemption under the EIRA to progress its desire to install wind generation on the East Coast. This was declined.

A lot of lobbying effort went into convincing politicians and bureaucrats that the EIRA was not helping the country to meet its growing energy needs, and local electricity distribution businesses such as Eastland Network

were being stopped from building new generation even though they had a strong desire and the technical and commercial capability to do so.

The Government eventually saw fit to review the EIRA and the process of consultation papers, submissions, cross submissions, meetings with officialdom, industry working groups and select committee reviews ensued, with Eastland Network at the forefront of industry efforts and keen to promote positive change.

Eastland Network would like to thank the local individuals and organisations that supported our submissions – Gisborne District Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Eastland Wood Council being three examples. No other region received as much support as Gisborne.

This, to my mind, made a huge difference. Eastland Network always runs the risk of sounding self serving, but when our view is supported by a strong community, people in Wellington take notice.

The changes to the EIRA are not perfect, the separation rules and governance requirements are still clumsy but they are at least workable.

They mean Eastland Network can build, own and operate local generation and sell the output locally.

Imagine a day when the East Coast is no longer reliant on national gentailers for its energy needs.

They say a journey of 1,000 miles starts with the first step. The strong support from the local community has allowed us to take the first step - thank you. 🌀



A bird's eye view of the port and new Rakaiatane Road from the cockpit of one of the visiting Air Force planes during their visit to the region. The Wiseowl Training Programme visit saw around 100 trainee pilots, instructors and support personnel based at Gisborne Airport for nearly two weeks. Turn to page 5 for the full story. Photograph by The Gisborne Herald.

The quiet King

Roger King isn't big on celebrations... but there was no way either Flightline or his workmates were going to let his 40th anniversary within the company slide under the radar.

The 61-year-old engineer is now working in the rebuild section at the Dunedin Flightline Aviation base, but he's worked throughout and under its many guises too.

Roger started his working career as an apprentice joiner after failing to get into the air force – he was a month too old, but ironically the air force came back to him later with a position. He politely declined.

A little later he decided aviation was where he wanted to be so called the manager of the Dunedin branch of Rex Aviation to make an appointment to see him the next day.

He had to leave his home at 5am to make the long drive for the 10am interview – and only just made it.

That enthusiasm won him the job – he started on August 14, 1968, earning 90 cents an hour. His attitude and skill has stood him in good stead among his peers ever since.

They serviced Cessna 188 Agwagons and he also worked in the rebuild section, repairing Cessna 180 and 185 wings and control surfaces, plus refabricating Piper Cubs and Austers.

Their customers were mainly private operators.

In 1970 he bought his first – and only – plane. An Auster J5F. He had it delivered to Auckland, where he was on loan for four months.

"Avgas was 29 cents a gallon then," he remembers.

When his Auckland time was up he was asked to move to the Masterton branch for three weeks to rebuild a PL12 Airtruck.

"The three weeks turned into three years, during which time I overhauled my Auster and gained a wife."

He and Diane spent their honeymoon restoring the Auster which they sold, using the money for a deposit on their first home back in Dunedin, and he was back in his same old workspace, but under the banner of Dalhoff and King.

There were more company changes to come later – in 1980 it became Motor Holdings and then in 1992 Flightline Aviation. He worked the engine shop, overhauling engines and propellers, then back to servicing and then rebuild.

He has worked on many a major contract for the company and once headed a department but now is happy to be one of the team.

The company's reputation nationwide is second to none, and he likes that.

"This is a company you can work through the sections and really get a broad base of knowledge."

They're a special bunch of guys who can look past "bad hair days".

"No two days are the same here – that's pretty good."

And there's quite a clutch of them who have been there 20-plus years.



*Roger King working on another Cessna wing.
Photograph by Diane King*

"It's a great place to work."

Roger gained his pilot's licence when in his twenties but says that's not where his passion lies.

"I love giving the homebuild guys a hand," he says. "You get a great kick out of seeing a plane emerge from a kitset. Going up in them doesn't interest me, just building them and getting them to that stage."

He's a hands on kind of chap and is often called on to put his joinery skills to good use.

"I'm always building something," he says.

He has also recently returned to photography, keen to capture anything from the "eye of a bug and up".

He and Diane have four daughters and five grandchildren – who need to be kept an eye on to make sure "they're behaving and eating well".

Retirement? He figures he might contemplate it in say 15 years or so.

"What on earth do you do when you retire?"

Roger says he loves his life and his work – so why change any of it.

Investing in the future

There's support available for East Coast students studying engineering.


The Eastland Group has a \$5,000 scholarship available for students studying a Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, who intend to specialise in electrical power engineering.

As well as the \$5,000 scholarship, the successful student may have the opportunity of a summer holiday job with the Eastland Network.

On completion of each academic year, the scholarship recipient will be reviewed and may receive more financial support from the Eastland Group.

Eastland Group chief executive Matt Todd says the engineering scholarship is the perfect way to invest in the future.

Canterbury University mechatronics engineering student Ryan Ainsworth has won the scholarship for the past two years.

For further information visit www.eastland.co.nz or contact Maree Kingsbeer at the Eastland Group. 

Celebrating 20 years

Bruce Easton clearly remembers making the rather brave decision to go with a new Auckland software company to take care of all the company's network billing 20 years ago.

He's still with Eastland Network and some of the software programmers are still with Gentrack – and all were toasted at a special gathering in Gisborne recently when Gentrack managing director James Docking presented a commemorative plaque, Moet and chocolates as a thank you.

Eastland Network, or the Poverty Bay Electric Power Board as they were then, were the first New Zealand network to join Gentrack, who now supply energy, water and airport companies around the world with billing and customer management software solutions.

"It was a bit of a punt to go with Gentrack. There were a few systems around but they were clumsy and difficult to change, so I chose these guys," says network business service manager Bruce. "We became the test bed for the early development of these advanced systems because a network is something very unique."

Gentrack is a record billing data base that holds information on all connections in the Gisborne and Wairoa regions – around 26,000 all up.

There was a lot of testing to be done and the only time the system ever went down was in the first few months of operation. It was Easter, so Gentrack chartered a plane for the necessary personnel and had the problem fully sorted out within a couple of days.

The Eastland Network is a core business of Eastland Group and produces in excess of \$25-\$27 million of the group's turnover.

"Consequently it is a very important function to have running correctly

"It's a complex system that involves importing all the metering files from retailers, uploading that into the database, and doing calculations – literally millions of transactions, so it needs to be robust."

Eastland Network has 172 different tariffs so there is plenty of calculating to be done.

With electricity deregulation in the 1990s came a change in need from the Eastland Network.



Gentrack managing director James Docking (left) with Eastland Network business service manager Bruce Easton.

"Eastland became an electricity network company only, so we maintained the Gentrack system but had no need to continue to use the full integrated package for retail electricity sales," says Bruce.

It is Gentrack who downloads and uploads all the information from all over the country's various electricity users and makes that available via the registry data base.

"They really do provide excellent management reporting tools and their robustness is certainly one of their strengths. We simply couldn't function without it."

Gisborne has played host to all sorts of people from all over the globe who have come here to see how this company works alongside Gentrack. 🌐

Upskilling on shipping



Certifiably proud.... Gay Waititi and Deane Crow with their certificates.

Eastland Port's Deane Crow and Gay Waititi are leading the way with top marks in the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers TutorShip certificate in understanding shipping.

The duo were the only two in New Zealand to sit the year-long course, run through a distance learning programme from London with a tutor in Auckland for guidance and assessment, and both attained their certificates with a pass mark over 85%.

The nine unit course covered subjects

including global shipping and trading patterns, types of vessels, extensive information on the shipping business, bills of lading – a document issued by a shipping company acknowledging goods have been received on board as

cargo, the role and authority of a port agency, documentation, chartering, ports and cargoes, and plenty more.

Deane, the port services manager, and Gay, the port services administrator, had to sit monthly tests, and did most of their work via email.

They are the first people from the local port to pass the qualification.

"It was a very interesting course," says Deane. "There was a lot in there that was quite relevant to what we do here."

It proved a real eye-opener for both as to the complexities of the shipping industry. Both could choose to pursue more qualifications through the institute if they wished.

Every year more than 1,000 students worldwide sit Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers examinations. 🌐

History with a view

The opening of the new Rakaiatane Road signifies more than just a new road for the region.

It marks an exciting time for Eastland Port, delivering greater operational efficiencies, has already become a regular route for walkers and tourists keen to see sweeping vistas of the inner harbour area, and it commemorates a very special ancestor of Ngati Oneone.

The \$4.3 million Hirini Street Project, as it was called, is finally finished and was officially opened by a handful of dignitaries, including Progressive Party leader and the Minister of Forestry Jim Anderton, Ngati Oneone's Temple Isaacs and Barney Tupara, Mayor Meng Foon, and MPs Anne Tolley and Moana Mackey, among others, at a special ceremony in late July.

General manager logistics Andrew Gaddum, who oversaw the project for the port, said the increased efficiency of the underpass, which runs from the upper log yard, beneath Rakaiatane Road, and to the port, was immediately evident.

"It allows the integration of the whole port footprint from the upper log yard

to the wharf side," he says. "Having off-road access like that is invaluable and a win-win for the company and our customers."

It also made the port a safer and more enjoyable place to be.

"We're seeing a lot of foot traffic heading over the new road, which offers some stunning views of the wharf, the inner harbour and the cut."

Ngati Oneone ancestor Rakaiatane settled on the Tatapouri Headland in the 1600s. He, his siblings and followers established many a pa throughout the area.

The hapu used to be called Ngati Rakai but common use led to it becoming known as Oneone in later years.


When Rakaiatane's descendant Te Maro, the chief who was reportedly the first Maori to meet Captain James Cook at the base of Titirangi in 1769, was slain by a crewman, Tuapaoa, who was another relative of Rakaiatane, became chief.



Marking a special beginning... Ministry of Forestry Jim Anderton gets a little help from Mayor Meng Foon to cut the ribbon to mark the opening of the new Rakaiatane Road. Photograph by The Gisborne Herald.

Tuapaoa was far more war like and staunchly re-established tribal boundaries around Kaiti and the Turanganui River.

The name Rakaiatane was chosen for the new road by kaumatua Toko Te Kani who felt it was appropriate because it linked Ngati Oneone back to its roots, and in particular Te Aitanga A Hauiti, who also claim Rakaiatane as one of their own.

There are some exciting new plans afoot for the future. Andrew is hopeful of linking the footpath on Rakaiatane Road through to Kaiti Beach, while Ngati Oneone are keen to place plaques outlining the history of the area in several places along the road. 

Swim challenge laid

It's time to brush the cobwebs off the budgie smugglers and get into some training for the Eastland Port Harbour Swim.

Eastland Group has revived an event from days gone by, giving it a fresh new face with plenty of enthusiasm.

The December 28 event features races of 1,000m and 2,000m for individuals – both men and women, with a 1,000

metre swim for two-person teams.

There's plenty of prize money up for grabs and lots of fun to be had for the early evening event.

Entries are expected to come in from racers as young as 10, right through to grandparent age.

Whatever the age or the intent, it's bound to be a fun way to spend an evening. For more information call

Eastland Group or check out the website – www.eastland.co.nz .

What: 2008 Eastland Port Harbour Swim

When: Sunday, December 28

Where: Eastland Port boat ramp

Time: 6pm, with registration from 3pm 

Save the date


Mark Sunday January 25, 2009, in your diary as a day to enjoy.

Eastland Group is pulling out all stops for a jazz and blues fest around the inner harbour area. It is an opportunity for Eastland Group to showcase, not

just some of the local musical talent, but also the bars, restaurants and cafes around Eastland Port.

It's also a chance for people to cruise the inner harbour area, savour the sounds, soak up the sun and

just have an awesome afternoon with your friends.

The fest is set to start at 1pm and will run through until 5pm, with the inner harbour's many fine hospitality establishments open well after that. 

May the force be with you all

Thousands of people, young and old, headed to Gisborne Airport for a chance to get up close to all sorts of planes, courtesy of the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

The Air Force and around 100 trainee pilots, instructors and support personnel were based at the airport for nearly two weeks as part of their 91st Wiseowl Training Programme.

Airport manager Murray Bell says the twice yearly pilot training squadron deployment - the second to have come to Gisborne this decade - was a huge success from all angles.

"We love having them here and they love coming," he says.

Many were captivated by the eight bright yellow two-seater CT-4E air trainers that filled the sky during their training days, and Murray says thousands headed to the airport for the open day."

Trails of white crisscrossed the sky from the formation flying displays.

Also paying visits were an Air Force P3 Orion, a Bell UH1H "Iroquois" or "Huey" and a Bell 47 Sioux.

Many people had called by to watch during the training days too.




Planes and people were the order of the day at the Air Force open day at Gisborne Airport. Photograph by Gisborne Herald.

"It's great for the airport to have the Ohakea squadron here and good for the region to see the airport buzzing like that. It's ideal for the trainee pilots as they are flying out of a controlled field but have uncontrolled airspace within a very short distance from the air field.

"It is totally different terrain to what they are used to at this point in their training."

They flew up and down the coast during their training runs.

The Air Force sets up camp in a similar way to how they would when deployed overseas, complete with surface safety teams and fire and medic crews. The exercise is considered an important part in the trainees' preparation for life in the Air Force. 

High opportunity for students

There's a new aviation scholarship on offer for students from the Gisborne region, thanks to Eastland Group.

Flightline Aviation, which is owned by Eastland Group, has joined forces with Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology's School of Aviation to offer two annual \$3,000 scholarships.

The scholarships are available to students studying the Certificate in Advanced Aircraft Maintenance Engineering and include money to help with study costs, but also the possibility

of holiday employment with Flightline Aviation in Dunedin or Ardmore in South Auckland.


Eastland Group sector general manager aviation Gavin Murphy says the company is very keen to support quality training.

It is the first time aviation engineering students have been offered a scholarship and it's been welcomed by NMIT School of Aviation programme leader Steve Holtum, who described it as an amazing opportunity.

"To have a company the calibre of Flightline Aviation choosing to support

NMIT's aviation engineering programme is fantastic aircraft engineering apprentices."

Preference for the scholarships will be given to applicants from the Gisborne/East Coast, Dunedin/Southland or South Auckland regions which are key staffing areas for Flightline Aviation and Eastland Group.

Flightline Aviation is one of the largest suppliers of light fixed wing and rotary aircraft, engineering services and parts support to the general aviation industry in New Zealand. The company has been established for more than 50 years and has bases at Ardmore Airport in Auckland and Dunedin's Momona Airport. 

Kiwi can-do impresses

It's a long way from Arizona to Gisborne...but ask MD field service rep Barry Beegle if it was worth the trip and he doesn't miss a beat.

"It's awesome to be out here and actually meeting the guys who are flying our machines," he says.

Barry is based in Mesa, Arizona but responsible for New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Guam, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Russia and India.

The trip was a chance for him to "let the operators know we are back in business" – big time.

"It's one thing to talk to people on the phone, but coming out here is a real opportunity to meet people face to face and see the situations they are using our helicopters in. It's good to put a fact to a serial number."

He spent 13 days touring New Zealand, escorted by Skysales chief engineer James McNutt for much of that, and calling in to catch up with key customers along the way.

It was his first trip to New Zealand. While he has a fixed wing licence, he

doesn't get to do so much flying himself these days, instead working alongside helicopter pilots.

Barry started with the company in 1994 as an inspector on the production line.

"MD started in 1999 so the joke is that I've been around longer than the company. There are 30 or so of us who go back past 1999."

He's been involved with aviation for decades, having joined the Air Force in 1973.

"MD is a new identity but the product goes back more than 30 years to the days of Howard Hughes."

Ruling out countries that use MDs for their military, New Zealand has one of the highest number of helicopters per head of population, when compared to the rest of the world.

MD is the choice in New Zealand because of the combination between the size of the aircraft, the maneuverability and strength.

"Where other helicopters may be good for two or three things, MDs are really



MD field service rep Barry Beegle.

adaptable and safe."

Kiwis liken it to the one-tonne ute – it does everything.

His visit came on the back of that from MD chairman Lynn Tilton who Barry says has been at the forefront of encouraging her technical reps to get out around the world and see the customers.

"It's been a long time since that happened." 

Toys for all


The Toys for Big Boys Expo was the only place to be for any blue-blooded male.

With cars, boats, motorbikes and Faram's MD520 Notar helicopter all on show at the inaugural expo, Toys for Big Boys turned even the staunchest of blokes into a veritable kid. Flightline Aviation marketing and sales manager Chris Barry hailed the expo as a great success.

He flew the new Cessna 400 to Gisborne for the two day event, and used the opportunity to encourage local students to look at the Eastland Group aviation and engineering scholarships on offer.

Chris also coerced the really keen to come to Gisborne Airport the following day for a close look at the new Cessna, which he describes as the top of the


range single engine piston aircraft on the market today.

"It was outstanding and had such a diverse range of products on display," says Chris. "Between the MD520 helicopter, Sapphire engine, Eastland Group scholarships, and the new Cessna 400, the display gave the public a great insight into the businesses of the Eastland Group". 

Introducing Eastland Group Raceway

Eastland Group is the proud new sponsors of Eastland Group Raceway.

The group has committed its major sponsorship for the year to the Gisborne Speedway track – an agreement that will continue for the coming three seasons.

Group chief executive Matt Todd says the company is excited to be backing the very popular track and a top-notch crew that run it who have been nationally recognized for their efforts and achievements. 

So, what do you think?

We'd love to hear from you. Please send your comments to admin@eastland.co.nz

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