



NEW ZEALAND ELECTRICAL INSTITUTE (INC) AUCKLAND BRANCH

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Dear Members,

You should have received the latest Nov/Dec 2011 edition of Electrical Technology magazine. In the NZEI pages you will see the “Back from Bahrain” article with information on our October branch meeting at MIT. I can tell you that there was much more detail and information available during John Lamb’s presentation – a truly eye-opening insight into the culture and ideas in that part of the Middle East. It was great also to chat with some of our newest student members at MIT and learn of their backgrounds and aspirations. Good luck to them all with their careers.

Also in the magazine is Alan Cuthbert’s update on changes and amendments to ESR 2010 (plus amendment No.1) and AS/NZS 3000 (plus amendments No.1 and A). If you want anything clarifying then please do contact Alan direct or any of your branch executive members and we will do our best to answer or find answers for you. Remember the only dumb question is the one that doesn’t get asked!

Our last branch event of the year (comes around fast doesn’t it) was a fascinating tour and explanation of the operations of the National Transport Operations Centre at Smales Farm on 3rd November. (A FREE wireless hotspot is provided at Smales Farm by TelstraClear – if you are in the area and want to know how to access this then let me know in advance). During the talk we were watching some very interesting and sometimes amusing events all around Auckland’s motorways.

This Traffic Operations Centre, based at the Smales Farm Technology Park at Takapuna has a primary focus on Auckland, but it is also the hub to deliver NZTA’s services for drivers throughout New Zealand.

It delivers information that all drivers can use – safety, speed and travel time updates – to the places where they need it most – their cars, vans and trucks. It has a wall of video screens, the electronic eyes used by operators to manage over 8,000 kilometers of Auckland roads and motorways, as well as roads in Wellington.

The centre operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. More than 200 closed circuit cameras transmit live images into the control room for operators who monitor traffic flows, manage roadway incidents and adjust the region’s 700 sets of traffic signals. The centre also provides information for traffic updates for radio and the web, and roadside and motorway electronic messages. It has a direct link into the police communications network for reporting accidents, breakdowns and suspicious and dangerous driving activities.

The centre provides the information service for drivers that displays at roadside, the estimated travel times to key destinations around Auckland. It’s also where the radio stations get their information from.

Providing reliable travel information helps to avoid crashes, clears those that do occur more quickly and safely, and makes more efficient use of the existing motorway system by reducing travel times, energy consumption and pollutants.

Traffic congestion is a significant issue for Auckland, estimated to cost the region up to \$1b a year. The NZTA believes the services provided by the Traffic Operations Centre reduce the cost of congestion by at least \$53 million per year. At a cost of \$6.5 million, it seems a very shrewd investment.

The Northern Bus way and Northern Gateway Toll Road operations are also run from the centre, and the NZTA has designed the new facility so that it can be integrated more effectively with other regions.

Outside of Auckland, the centre manages Wellington's roads at nights, and it controls roadside electronic messages on the State Highway network.

Some facts and figures:

- 12,200 million vehicle kms travelled each year in Auckland
- Controls: 700 sets of traffic signals; 30km plus of network cabling; 192 km of fibre optic linking the centre to a backup site; 27m² of video wall
- 6T of steel in the server room (that doesn't touch the floor!)
- Cameras atop Sky Tower can read number plates at ground level
- Dangerous drivers can be tracked throughout the city network to assist the police

So that's it for another year. We have consolidated again by providing refresher courses thanks to Bob Hanham and Co., Christine Heapey has done a great dual role and is now handling the Treasurer's duties since John Brothers has taken on the Secretary's duties from September, the exec committee stays active and noisy thank you very much, and we are looking ahead to keep growing our membership through recruitment and providing networking and assistance, particularly with students of all ages.

Our itinerary for next year is well underway; please see the tentative 2012 diary as follows:

- 9th Feb the new Redeal/Ideal Electrical Suppliers facility in Penrose and equipment technical update
- 1st March Pre Conference discussions at MIT including regs/standards changes
- 9th/10th March AGM in Wellingtons (TBC)
- 5th April post AGM meeting and discussions, Q&A / and a Baggage Handling Technology presentation from our new branch committee member Allan Hill.

So on behalf of the Executive Committee let me once again thank you the members for your continued membership and feedback, and be one of the first to wish you a very Merry Christmas, a happy New Year and a safe and enjoyable summer.

Kind Regards,

Phil Dayson, President