



Programme

www.nzdownstream.co.nz

Welcome Function | Monday 30 March 2026

5.30pm WELCOME FUNCTION

Introduction

Aaron Clarkson, TOBA Projects
Paul Cannin, TOBA Projects

Sponsored by



WELLINGTON'S ENERGY FUTURE

Special guest speaker

Andrew Little – *Mayor of Wellington*

Day One | Tuesday 31 March 2026

7.30am REGISTRATION OPEN | TEA AND COFFEE IN THE EXHIBITION

9.00am MIHI WHAKATAU

Peter Jackson (Te Atiawa, Taranaki Iwi)

9.05am WELCOME FROM THE DAY ONE CHAIR

Fiona Wiseman, Mercury

9.10am LEADERS' PANEL

In 2026, as New Zealand approaches its next general election, the spotlight sharpens on both the Government and the energy sector to deliver secure, affordable, and sustainable energy solutions. Over the past 12 months, a series of significant interventions have been introduced to stabilise the market, reduce volatility, and accelerate the transition to renewables.

Panelists:

Mike Roan, Meridian
Malcolm Johns, Genesis
Chantelle Bramley, Transpower
David Prentice, Gas Industry Co.

Facilitated by: Jen Nolan, At Large

10.05am INSIGHTS | DEMAND FLEXIBILITY

As New Zealand's electricity demand grows and the adoption of transition to renewable energy accelerates, demand management is emerging as a central strategy for reducing peak loads regionally and nationally and enhancing grid resilience.

Dr Marcos Pelenur, EECA

10.35am THE FLEXIBILITY IMPERATIVE | WINNING THE NEW ENERGY ECONOMY WITH AGENTIC AI

New Zealand's energy system faces unprecedented complexity from electrification, data centres, and the imperative to mitigate dry year risk. Discover how leading organisations deploy Agentic AI- autonomous agents partnering with humans- to accelerate infrastructure deployment, enhance operational resilience, and simplify customer flexibility at scale.

Joe Delaney, Salesforce

Sponsored by 

10.55am MORNING BREAK AND NETWORKING IN THE EXHIBITION

Sponsored by   Official Distributor

11.30am	STREAM 1 – TECHNOLOGY IN ENERGY Powered by Salesforce Tim Penton – Salesforce	STREAM 2 – COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL Ben Young – BusinessNZ Energy Council	STREAM 3 – THE SYSTEM OF TOMORROW Esther Evening, Mercury
11.35am	KEYNOTE AI AT WORK WITH ORIGIN ENERGY Cameron Geason, Origin Energy	KEYNOTE COMPARISONS FROM THE ENERGY USERS’ ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Andrew Richards, Energy Users Association of Australia	TE KANAPU A FUTURE GRID BLUEPRINT James Kilty, Transpower
12.00pm			
12.05pm	UNLOCKING POTENTIAL FROM EXISTING ASSETS TECHNOLOGY, FLEXIBILITY, AND PEOPLE Clare Paynter, Meridian	FIRESIDE CHAT ENERGY PROCUREMENT INNOVATION Panelists: Renée Jens, Dominion Salt David Thomas, Environment and Energy Tim Hampton, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Facilitated by: Shaun Goldsbury, BraveTrace	LESSONS FROM THE NEM REVIEW Ava Hancock – former NEM Review expert panel member
12.30pm			A PERFECT STORM? THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF ELECTRIFICATION IN A CLIMATE-IMPACTED FUTURE Janet Stephenson, University of Otago
12.35pm	FROM LOAD TO LEVERAGE: BATTERIES AND THE NEW ENERGY VALUE CHAIN Jessica Venning-Bryan, Factor		
12.50pm	DISRUPTING THE GRID WITH SMART BATTERIES Tama Toki, Aotea Energy		FUSION ENERGY - CLOSER THAN YOU THINK Kiri Lenagh-Glue, OpenStar Technologies
1.05pm	LUNCH BREAK AND NETWORKING IN THE EXHIBITION Sponsored by 		
2.00pm	STREAM 1 – TECHNOLOGY IN ENERGY Powered by Salesforce Tim Penton – Salesforce	STREAM 2 – COLLABORATION AND OUTCOMES Michelle Polglase, Ara Ake	STREAM 3 – THE SYSTEM OF TOMORROW Esther Evening, Mercury
2.05pm	CASE STUDY FARM SOLAR – COMPLEXITY MADE EASY Matt Lythe, Prism Earth Turi McFarlane, ASB	FIRESIDE CHAT STRENGTHENING EDB COLLABORATION FOR MARKET EFFICIENCY Panelists: Nicki Sutherland, Electricity Engineers’ Association (EEA) Daniel Brown, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Paul Blue, PowerNet Facilitated by: Tracey Kai, Electricity Networks Aotearoa	
2.20pm	BEYOND THE INSTALL MAKING RURAL ENERGY SYSTEMS WORK HARDER Paddy Urlich, Blackcurrent		
2.30pm			PANEL DECENTRALISED ENERGY – NAVIGATING THE BALANCE Panelists: Astad Kapadia, Counties Energy John Clarke, Transpower Hinerangi Pere, Orion Tim Sparks, Electricity Authority Facilitated by: Jamie Silk, Silk Advisory
2.35pm	MAESTRO: TURNING EVERYDAY APPLIANCES INTO GRID-RESPONSIVE ASSETS Kris Sebros, Lastmyle	UPDATE POWER INNOVATION PATHWAY Jono Barnard, Electricity Authority	

2.50pm	CIO FORUM NAVIGATING CONVERGENCE AND COMPLEXITY Panelists: Bharat Ratanpal, Meridian Tighe Wall, Contact Tracey Saunders, Aurora Energy Richard Tims, Vector Facilitated by: Nick Lawrie, Salesforce	SHAPING NEW ZEALAND'S ENERGY FUTURE Dr John Small, Commerce Commission	
3.15 pm		ADVICE FROM THE POINTY END UNDERSTANDING ENERGY HARDSHIP Brittany Goodwin, Good Shepherd New Zealand	HEAVY TRANSPORT ELECTRIFICATION Pam Walklin, Kwetta Fabian Lloyd, Fonterra
3.35pm	AFTERNOON BREAK AND NETWORKING IN THE EXHIBITION Sponsored by EAGLE TECHNOLOGY esri Official Distributor		
4.05pm	STREAM 1 - MAIN PLENARY SESSIONS Welcome back from the MC	STREAM 2 - PPA MASTERCLASS Hosted by Chapman Tripp	STREAM 3 - MEDIA MASTERCLASS Hosted by At Large
4.05pm	FUEL SWITCHING - LESSONS FROM REAL JOURNEYS Toby Stevenson, Sapere Research Group Kyle Nicol, Aurecon Facilitated by: John Hancock – <i>independent consultant</i>	POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENTS Power Purchase Agreements play an important role in project development, by securing long term line of sight to project revenue and unlocking access to project financing. Join the Masterclass to learn more about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structures • trends • challenges including credit support and firming • bankability considerations • future proofing 	MASTERING MEDIA EXPOSURE IN 2026 For better or for worse the energy sector is firmly in the media spotlight this election year. At Large will talk you through how to maximise or minimise media exposure depending on your position. Sometimes you are keen to grow the profile of your organisation and its position and sometimes you'd rather not comment. At Large will set out the strategies that work in both instances.
4.20pm	HUNTLY EVOLVING FOR THE FUTURE Tracey Hickman, Genesis	Lauren Curtayne, Chapman Tripp	Jen Nolan, At Large Liam Hansen, At Large
4.35pm	SPOTLIGHT VECTORING TOWARDS SUCCESS Chris Blenkinsop, Vector		
4.50pm	INDUSTRY UPDATE WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN Nicki Sutherland, Electricity Engineers' Association (EEA) Sheree Long, Energy Resources Aotearoa		
5.05pm	FIRESIDE CHAT HON SHANE JONES Hon Shane Jones – <i>Minister for Resources, and Associate Minister for Energy</i> Facilitated by: Adelia Hallett, Energy News		
5.30pm	CLOSING REMARKS FROM THE MC		
5.35pm	TRANSPower WELCOME TO NETWORKING BREAK		
5.40pm	NETWORKING BREAK WITH REFRESHMENTS AND CATERING Sponsored by TRANSPower		
7.10pm	NETWORKING FINISH		

Day Two | Wednesday 1 April 2026

7.30am REGISTRATION OPEN | TEA AND COFFEE IN THE EXHIBITION

9.00am WELCOME FROM THE DAY TWO CHAIR

John Hancock – *independent consultant*

9.10am KEYNOTE | MAKING CONTACT

Contact Energy has been exceptionally active over the past 18 months, delivering on its Contact26 strategy – a bold roadmap focused on growing renewable development, growing demand, decarbonising its portfolio, and enhancing customer experience. A major strategic milestone was the acquisition of Manawa Energy in mid-2025, significantly boosting Contact's generation assets and customer base.

Mike Fuge, Contact

9.40am VIEWS FROM THE OPPOSITION

With current polling showing the government and opposition neck-and-neck, there is a possibility of a change in government by the end of 2026. What could a centre-left coalition mean for the energy sector? Which policies might be reversed? What is likely to remain in place? What new initiatives could emerge?

Hon Dr Megan Woods – *spokesperson for energy and resources, Labour*

Scott Willis – *spokesperson for energy, Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand*

Facilitated by:

Georgina Stylianou, BRG

10.10am FIRESIDE CHAT | ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY

The Electricity Authority (Te Mana Hiko) core mission is to promote a competitive, reliable, and efficient electricity industry for the long-term benefit of consumers.

This interactive session with the chief executive, will provide the latest insights into the work the Electricity Authority is doing to deliver on its mission.

Sarah Gillies, Electricity Authority


Facilitated by:

Toby Stevenson, Sapere Research Group


10.40am KEY INSIGHTS EMERGING FROM OPEN ELECTRICITY

Exploring how the concept of Open Electricity is unlocking new ways for customers, retailers, and technology providers to interact. How can secure, standardised data sharing pave the way for smarter and more customer-focused energy solutions?

Tina Groark, Middleware

Sponsored by 

11.00am MORNING BREAK AND NETWORKING IN THE EXHIBITION

Sponsored by  **aurecon**
Bringing ideas to life

11.30am ENERGY TRANSITION – WHY A PIVOT TO REGIONAL THINKING IS NEEDED

Aotearoa is at a crossroads in its energy transition. In the past, centralised government agencies formed a strategic planning approach to guide the industries we would support, for growth and prosperity. This provided certainty for investors, labour force development and international trade policies. Without various levels of investor certainty, we will not transform our economy.

John Duffy, Beca

Sponsored by  **Beca**

11.50am	STREAM 1 - ROUND TABLES John Hancock – <i>independent consultant</i>	STREAM 2 - ENERGY MIX Andrew Wallace, BECA and YEPN	
11.55am	ROUND TABLES – See the topics and presenters listed on Pg 6.	ENERGY MIX WIND Kevin Hart, New Zealand Wind Energy Association	
12.20pm		ENERGY MIX GEOTHERMAL Kennie Tsui, New Zealand Geothermal Association	
12.45pm		ENERGY MIX BIOGAS IN ACTION Dr Trevor Stuthridge, Cetogenix	
1.10pm	LUNCH BREAK AND NETWORKING IN THE EXHIBITION Sponsored by  worley <small>DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE</small>		
2.00pm	STREAM 1 - SECTOR INSIGHTS John Hancock – <i>independent consultant</i>	STREAM 2 - ENERGY MIX Andrew Wallace, BECA and YEPN	STREAM 3 - GROUND HEAT WORKSHOP Hosted by the New Zealand Geothermal Association Kennie Tsui, New Zealand Geothermal Association
2.05pm	EV CHARGING LESSONS OF THE PAST DECADE AND THE ROAD AHEAD Danusia Wypych, ChargeNet	ENERGY MIX LNG Alan Young, Enerlytica	INTRODUCTION AND BUSINESS TOOLS TO SWITCH YOUR BUSINESS TO GEOTHERMAL This interactive workshop will provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an overview of the Geoheat resource and its applications • practical business tools to help you assess the feasibility of switching to Geoheat • real-world examples showcasing successful Geoheat projects across Aotearoa
2.30pm	PANEL UNLOCKING THE ENERGY INVESTMENT CONTINUUM Panelists: Kate Gunthorp, EECA Cristiano Marantes, Simplicity Ralph Chang, Motion Capital James Paterson, ASB Facilitated by: Carrie Gage, ASB	FIRESIDE CHAT THE BUSINESS OF BIOMASS Panelists: Oliver Howitt, EECA David McGregor, Carbona Brian Cox, Bioenergy Association of New Zealand Marcus Musson, Forest360 Facilitated by: Dave Binnie, Genesis	
3.15pm	SHORT BREAK AND NETWORKING IN THE EXHIBITION Sponsored by  aurecon <small>Bringing ideas to life</small>		
STREAM 1 - FINAL SESSIONS			
3.35pm	PRIZE WINNERS ANNOUNCED		
3.40pm	PANEL THE FADING FLAME – WHERE TO NEXT FOR GAS? Indigenous gas supply continues to fall, and in New Zealand’s closed-loop gas market this forces a corresponding decline in demand. Petrochemical and industrial users have borne the brunt, with multiple plant closures. Power generators now dominate gas purchasing, supported by a stronger ability to pay. The government has also begun a procurement process that could support an LNG import terminal. This panel will explore gas’s role in New Zealand’s future energy mix, assessing options, trade-offs, transitional pathways and implications for industry, policy and consumers. Panelists: Nathan Turner, Fonterra; Mark Macfarlane, Todd Energy; Erwin Kroell, OMV New Zealand; Harry Crighton, Greymouth Petroleum Facilitated by: John Kidd, Enerlytica Sponsored by:  GREYMOUTH PETROLEUM		
4.25pm	FIRESIDE CHAT MINISTER FOR ENERGY Hon Simon Watts – <i>Minister for Energy</i> Facilitated by: John Carnegie, Energy Resources Aotearoa		
4.55pm	CLOSING REMARKS		
5.00pm	DOWNSTREAM 2026 CONCLUDES		

Day Two Round Tables | Wednesday 1 April 2026

11.50am

STREAM 1 - ROUND TABLES

- 1 OPEN ELECTRICITY: UNLOCKING KEY STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS – Middleware
- 2 HOW BATTERIES ARE REDEFINING ELECTRIFICATION AND SUPPORTING THE GRID – Simply Energy
- 3 EPC VS. MULTI-CONTRACT APPROACHES FOR LARGE-SCALE RENEWABLES: WHAT WORKS BEST IN THE NZ MARKET? – Chapman Tripp
- 4 RE-ENERGISE 2026 | ACTIONING THE ACTION PLAN – EEA + Energy Resources Aotearoa
- 5 COMPLEXITY SCIENCE IN ACTION | TOOLS FOR NAVIGATING THE ENERGY SYSTEM – Jeet Sheth
- 6 THE ROLE OF DIGITALISATION IN A SMARTER NZ ENERGY SYSTEM – Ara Ake
- 7 EDB CONSOLIDATION AND COLLABORATION: OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES – Chapman Tripp
- 8 UNLOCKING BILLIONS IN GRID SAVINGS: HOW CAN WE POWER NZ WITHOUT BUILDING ANYTHING NEW – Lastmyle
- 9 ADAPTING REAL-TIME OPERATIONS TO MANAGE INCREASING COMPLEXITY | THE CONTROL ROOM OF THE FUTURE – Transpower
- 10 THE ROLES OF DSOS IN NEW ZEALAND | HOW DO WE MAXIMISE CUSTOMER VALUE AMID ELECTRIFICATION UNCERTAINTY? – Powerco
- 11 MOVING FROM INTENT TO INSTALLATION | SCALING HOME ELECTRIFICATION IN NZ – Cogo
- 12 SCALING COMMUNITY ENERGY | LESSONS FROM THE ACTIVATOR PROGRAMME – Community Energy Network
- 13 REGULATORY SANDBOXES | TEST-DRIVING IDEAS FOR A MORE FLEXIBLE ELECTRICITY SYSTEM – Electricity Authority



Registration

www.nzdownstream.co.nz

Conference - early bird
(closes 5pm, 24 Feb)

\$2590*
SAVE \$200

Conference - standard

\$2790*

Conference - YEPN members

\$1499*

*Prices above are exclusive of GST.

Thanks to our sponsors and supporters

Platinum Plus



Platinum



Gold



Sponsors



Exhibitors



Foundation Partners



Supporting Organisations



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

James Wardhaugh

+64 21 636 819

james.wardhaugh@freemanmedia.co.nz

freeman.

Freeman Media Ltd
t/a Freeman
Level 4, 85 The Terrace
PO Box 24349
Wellington
www.freemanmedia.co.nz