



COMMERCE COMMISSION

UNISON INTENTION TO DECLARE CONTROL

CONFERENCE DATES AND PROCESS

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to confirm the conference dates and process for the Commerce Commission's (Commission's) conference on its intention to declare control in respect of the electricity distribution services provided by Unison Networks Limited (Unison).

Conference Dates and Stages

In order to accommodate the number of submissions received in response to the Commission's paper, *Intention to Declare Control, Unison Networks Limited* (9 September 2005), the Commission has decided to extend the amount of time available to confer with interested persons. Also, given the level of interest from interested persons in the regions supplied by Unison, the Commission has decided to hold some sessions of the conference in Hawke's Bay, Rotorua and Taupo.

The Commission proposes to hold the conference in three stages.

- The first stage will be one and a half to two days (17-18 November) set aside for interested persons from outside the Hawke's Bay, Rotorua and Taupo regions. The venue for these sessions of the conference will be the Commission's Wellington Conference Room, at Ground Floor, 44-52 The Terrace, Wellington.
- The second stage, also to be held in the Commission's Wellington Conference Room, will be an additional two days (5-6 December) set aside for Unison, its experts and the Hawke's Bay Power Consumers' Trust, which acts on behalf of Unison's consumer owners in Hawke's Bay.
- The final stage will involve three half-day sessions at locations in each of Hawke's Bay, Rotorua and Taupo respectively. These regional sessions are likely to be held on 12-13 December, but dates and venues will be confirmed soon.

Conference Process

Interested persons have now had full opportunity to present their views in written submissions on the Commission's preliminary reasons for its intention to declare control in respect of the electricity distribution services supplied by Unison. The primary purpose of the conference is to allow the Commission to test the submissions that have been made by interested persons and to further the Commission's understanding of key issues, in order to decide whether or not to declare control.

The Commission does not consider that it is necessary to allow parties time to make detailed oral submissions that would largely repeat material already disclosed in prior written submissions. The Commission will have carefully considered all submissions made by interested parties and identified the key issues that it wishes to address at the conference.

The procedures for the conference will differ slightly for each of the three stages.

In the interests of ensuring that the Commission is best able to explore with participants the issues of most concern to the Commission in the time available, the Commission has decided that each party participating in the first stage of the conference will be allocated 10-15 minutes at the beginning of their allocated time to present an opening statement, and another 5-10 minutes at the end of that time period to present a closing statement. The remaining time will be reserved for questions from Commission Members, Commission staff and experts, and discussion with presenters.

In the second stage of the conference, Unison is being allocated sufficient time for the Commission to explore the large volume of material submitted by Unison.

The final stage will take the form of three half-day sessions to which members of the public will be invited to provide comments to the Commission in relation to the Commission's preliminary reasons for its intention to declare control of Unison's electricity distribution services. The Commission will open each of these sessions with a short presentation summarising the background to the Commission's intention to declare control and the Commission's analysis in forming that intention. The purpose of these sessions is to enable the Commission to ascertain the views of end-users supplied by Unison. Members of the public will be invited to make presentations to the Commission, within allocated times, and may be asked questions by Commissioners or Commission staff.

As it is expected that experts will be attending the first two (Wellington) stages of the conference, the Commission notes that their role will be as experts in their fields. As such, they are not to act as an advocate for any particular party. The Commission requests that parties have their nominated experts available to respond to questions put by the Commission in relation to relevant issues.

Interested persons who have appeared at the Wellington stages of the conference are welcome to attend the regional sessions as observers, but will not be allocated time to address the Commission.

Detailed Conference Timetable and Arrangements

An indicative timetable for the first two (Wellington) stages of the conference will shortly be circulated to submitters who have already indicated that they wish to present at the conference. Once finalised, this timetable will be circulated widely along with the detailed administrative and logistical arrangements for the conference.

As previously indicated, an opportunity to make cross-submissions will be provided for, following the end of the conference.

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