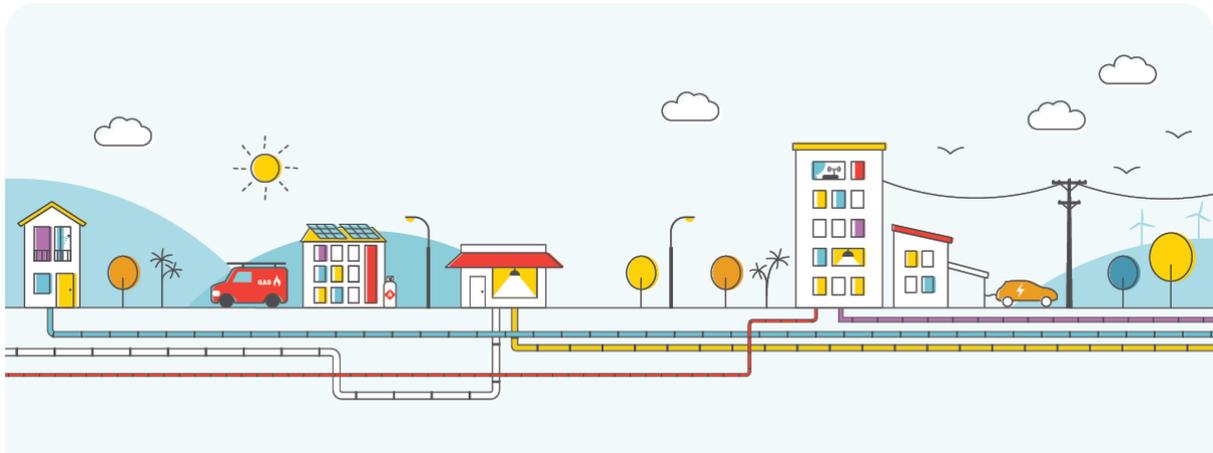


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Kia ora *|FNAME|*



22 December 2021



Kia ora koutou

Welcome to our refreshed newsletter. We still have the same great content with a simple new contemporary design which we hope you like.

This year has been a rollercoaster as we all adapt to Covid-19 in our lives and the impact this has on each of us, our whānau, friends, and colleagues.

For UDL, mid-December saw us move back to our former premises, at Level 6, 22 The Terrace, Wellington, following necessary earthquake strengthening. We enjoyed our time at Aorangi House in Molesworth Street, however we are pleased to be closer to the CBD again.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank our two departing Energy Scheme Advisory Committee members; Sam Huggard, consumer representative and Jason Woolley, industry representative from Meridian. Their contribution to UDL is immeasurable and hugely appreciated. Our Advisory Committees make a significant difference to UDL and its Board and help shape the organisation.

2021 has seen some significant changes in the electricity sector that will benefit all New Zealanders and make things easier for customers who have concerns. These include:

- a change to the Electricity Authority's Code requiring providers to make information about UDL (and Powerswitch) clear and prominent on invoices and all relevant communication
- new Consumer Care Guidelines issued by the Electricity Authority setting best practice standards for providers' interactions with consumers.

UDL constantly looks at how we can improve our services for everyone, and we have a number of initiatives underway for 2022. We are working on a new website that will be easier for everyone to use and find the information they need. We have recently appointed a Māori cultural advisor, Tāwhiao McMaster, who is working with us to improve our cultural capability when carrying out our work and vital to UDL's exciting Te Ao Māori journey ahead. Our community engagement officer, Jessica Niemack, has been busy this year – see below to read about some of her work.

Thank you all for your continued support as 2021 draws to a close. We wish you all a wonderful holiday break.

Me mahi tahi tātou mo te oranga o te katoa. Working together as one for the wellbeing of everyone.

Mary Ollivier

Kōmihana - Commissioner

Tumu Whakarae - CEO

UDL hours over Christmas and New Year

Our office closes **3pm, Friday 24 December 2021** and reopens **8am, Monday 10 January 2022**.

Annual Forum

Our annual forum will now be held on **Monday 28 February 2022**, at Rydges Hotel, Wellington. Please see the [invite here](#) and the [registration form here](#). Don't miss out!

Webinars

UDL provides educational webinars for providers who are registered with us. This includes our induction webinar, which we encourage new staff who have joined a utilities provider to view. Email [communications](#) for access or more information.

2021 topics included:

- Raising awareness of UDL and Powerswitch – Electricity Authority Code changes
- An interview with the Privacy Commissioner, John Edward
- Face to face with digital exclusion: A CAB spotlight report into the impacts of digital public services on inclusion and wellbeing
- Community engagement update with Jessica Niemack from UDL
- Advertising tips - Advertising Standards Authority – with Hilary Souter.

Research Grant opportunity of up to \$25,000

UDL is offering a research grant open to applicants who have an interest in dispute resolution in the utilities sector. Applications close **Wednesday 26 January 2022**.

Please find all the information [here](#).

Give us feedback!

We launched our new feedback surveys in October and have been receiving feedback from both providers and complainants covering all key aspects of our service. While it is still early days, the feedback received so far has been useful in highlighting what we do well, and what we can improve on.

We encourage anyone who receives an invitation to provide feedback to spend five minutes completing the survey as your feedback is vital to make sure our services meet your needs.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Kaimahi / Staff welcome

Nau mai, haere mai to new team members who have joined us since our last newsletter replacing departing staff and those on temporary leave: Blake, Rebecca, Willow, and Catherine are in our wonderful early resolution team and Daniel and Steve (returnee) as Senior Conciliators.

Nau mai, haere mai to Tāwhiao McMaster who joined UDL as our Māori Cultural Advisor - read more below from Tāwhiao.

Interview with Tāwhiao

Name: Tāwhiao McMaster

Nickname: Tawh

Position: Māori Cultural Advisor

Tell us a little about you

He uri tēnei nō ngā wai e rua, Waikato me Whanganui. Ā, he whakapapa tāku ki Kōtirana me Hemeika. Kua tupu ake au ki ngā tahataha o Te Awa Tupua o Whanganui, me ōna mōkai kiore.

I come from the two long rivers of Waikato and Whanganui, and also have Jamaican and Scottish heritage. I was born and raised in Whanganui, cared for by its many people.

Tell us about your Te Ao journey so far

I was born and raised in Te Ao Māori, it is my everything. As a fluent Te Reo Māori speaker I am growing ever aware of how the language is developing with the people, and also how tikanga Māori is being applied and adapted in the world of now. The adaptation and application of Te Ao Māori in mechanisms known to be Te Ao Pākehā is something that I enjoy developing.

What do you see in the future for UDL and Te Ao Māori/what do you hope for?

I see huge potential for UDL to lead the application of Te Ao Māori processes in relevant ADR (alternative dispute resolution), and hope that we continue to adapt and grow as an organisation.

Why is it vital that Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles feed into our workplaces in Aotearoa?

As an organisation that holds the contract for government commissioned mahi, we need to appropriately feed the principles of Te Tiriti and the Treaty in our mahi. As a country, more and more organisations are developing their Treaty capabilities, so it is the right time for us to do so also.

What tikanga values and manaakitanga are important for how UDL manages its business?

Manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and whanaungatanga. In caring, allowing space for guardianship, and building relationships we can develop and grow ourselves.

Community update



**Out, about,
and online in
the community**

Jessica Niemack
*UDL Community
Engagement Officer*

The past few months in Auckland with lockdown has meant a change in how I work with local communities. Finding new ways to communicate and collaborate with colleagues across the sector to support our most vulnerable impacted by utilities issues has been an interesting and wonderful experience. My main aim is to make sure people know we are here to help when they need us.

With the change to the traffic light system, I have again been able to move around Auckland. Some of the groups I have visited are:

- African Communities Forum Inc (ACOFI) - Sudanese Art Exhibition end of year event – I am in korero with Toni to support the team understanding how we can support their conversations in community
- Aotearoa Africa Foundation – couple of hours packing food parcels for whānau every Friday
- Habitat for Humanity
- The Salvation Army, Manukau
- Skills Update Training and Education Group, Mangere
- Ministry of Social Development, Mangere.

I attended a Women's Wellness workshop in East Auckland. We also supported several smaller community groups by holding and attending online hui.

I look forward to carrying on this much needed community work in 2022. If you would like me to visit you, your workplace, or community group, please contact me:

j.niemack@utilitiesdisputes.co.nz



*Meri Kirihimete,
me ngā hararei pai*

from all of us at UDL



Our office closes 3pm Friday 24 December 2021 and
opens again 8am Monday 10 January 2022



Contact us

Website live chat

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