



15 November 2019

Contact Energy and Nature's Flame heating up this summer

Contact Energy and Nature's Flame have today turned on the system that provides geothermal energy to the wood pellet manufacturing plant based in Taupō.

Contact and Nature's Flame began construction on a new heat plant and supporting pipeline infrastructure in July 2019, and the system has now been established as fully operational.

Contact's Chief Generation and Development Officer James Kilty, says the plant starting to operate is a good news story for the benefits of geothermal energy.

"Contact now provides direct heat energy from our geothermal facilities to the Nature's Flame plant which dries wood fibres for wood pellet production. The wood fibres are a carbon neutral alternative to fuels such as coal, gas and oil. So we are helping to replace an emissions heavy energy source with an environmentally friendly alternative, all while using a renewable energy source."

"We are thrilled by the outcome of this deal with Contact. With our new energy supply system getting to operational status, we are able to increase to 100% of capacity, creating new jobs in the Taupō region. We are now receiving 18MW of heat continuously, which is fuelled by a low carbon renewable source," says John Goodwin, Nature's Flame Operations Manager.

Mr Kilty says, "Partnerships like this one with Nature's Flame are at the core of our ambition to lead the energy sector to a low-carbon future. We believe climate change is real and the greatest challenge of our time, but also our greatest opportunity. We want to be working with other commercial and industrial customers to form partnerships that help to reduce emissions for New Zealand."

– Ends –

Media enquiries

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About Nature's Flame

Nature's Flame produces a carbon neutral wood pellet fuel alternative to coal. Wood fibre in the form of sawdust and shavings is obtained from sawmill operations in the central North Island; the fibre is dried, resized and then compacted to form a durable, low moisture, low ash, energy dense fuel which burns efficiently and cleanly.

About Contact Energy

We're committed to a sustainable, low carbon energy future for New Zealand. To us, this means balancing our commitment to lowering carbon emissions, producing renewable energy, while maintaining reliable access to energy for our customers. We generate electricity from hydro, geothermal and gas and have one of the most flexible generation portfolios in the country.

Geothermal energy can provide reliable, low carbon process heat. The Nature's Flame operation is the latest to join Contact's family of geothermal 'direct use' customers, which includes the Huka Prawn Park aquaculture and tourism business, Wairakei Resort Hotel, Wairakei Terraces geothermal bathing experience and the Tenon Sawmill.