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MEDIA RELEASE

TITLE: Niue power solar installation

We were all advised that the contractors they were to install the batteries and link them to the grid as part of the solar project funded by New Zealand.

Maybe they used the wrong adjectives but when they alluded to testing then it became very serious.

I had been reading the email exchanges between our officers and the contractor, project manager and MFAT Wellington

Our officers wanted to know the details of the link up and initially were not given much to go on. The contractor was here, the battery suppliers were here but the project manager appeared to be missing.

Then the power at Matavai was impacted and stopped. They had to use their backup generator to continue.

But that particular night the lights dimmed and we knew that there power surges.

After further testing and more problems I considered stopping any further tests till we had figured out what was happening.

I made that decision today. In my view we can cope without the new solar till they sort their issues out. Live testing of gear like that is unacceptable.

We will be holding further discussions before I make a decision to proceed or not. Testing is fine but not live here. It's too risky. They should do their tests elsewhere before installing the new equipment here after they have ironed out the problems.

This is serious and pose a huge risk to us all.

[ENDS]

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