



## Govt under fire after Auckland power blackout

By New Zealand correspondent Peter Lewis

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Civic and business leaders in Auckland say yesterday's blackout has undermined the city's reputation around the world.

The outage left 750,000 people without power and cost business an estimated \$70 million in lost trade.

A single substation earth wire that snapped in high winds triggered a system-wide power failure across Auckland and other parts of the North Island.

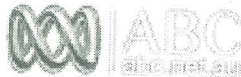
It took about eight hours to bring most consumers back on line and caused chaos reminiscent of 1998, when the D's electricity network collapsed completely.

Alisdair Thompson of the Employers and Manufacturers Association says investment and jobs will bypass Auckland until it develops reliable infrastructure.

Auckland's Mayor says the city is a laughing stock over what he calls its "Third World" power supply

Energy Minister David Parker shares their concerns, but says there is no magic wand to fix the problem.

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