

Media statement – for immediate release
11.00pm 10 September 2013

Strong winds and trees on lines cut power

Power has been cut to 28,000 Orion customers this evening as strong winds affected power lines across Orion's electricity distribution network. Most power cuts were due to trees or branches falling onto power lines. Wind gusts of up to 117kmph have been recorded in the city.

Power cuts are scattered across our network, so it will take some time to find and fix each fault. Emergency crews have been recalled until winds die down.

"At first light we will review the situation so that work crews can safely start repairs", says Orion chief executive Rob Jamieson. "We will continue to work as quickly and safely as we can in difficult conditions".

"If you see a fallen power line, or a tree on a power line, please stay well clear and call us immediately on 0800 363 9898."

Our next update will be at 7.00am.

ENDS

About Orion

Orion New Zealand Limited owns and operates the electricity distribution network in Christchurch and central Canterbury between the Waimakariri and Rakaia rivers and from the Canterbury coast to Arthur's Pass.

There are 11 electricity network companies in the South Island, each covering a distinct area. There is no geographical overlap between electricity network companies. Our neighbouring network companies are [Mainpower](#) to the north, [Electricity Ashburton](#) to the south and [Westpower](#) to the west.

Orion delivers electricity to 190,000 homes and businesses. We do not generate or sell electricity – those functions are carried out by electricity retailers and generators such as Meridian Energy and Mighty River Power. In very simple terms we are a 'transport company', tasked with distributing electricity within our region. That electricity is supplied to us from Transpower's national grid and is sold to consumers by electricity retailers.

On any given day there are inevitably some power cuts. The nature of electricity means that it is impossible to keep all of the power on all of the time, and we try to strike the right balance between the cost and inconvenience caused by power cuts and the costs to consumers of trying to prevent them.

The laws and regulations that govern electricity distribution companies recognise that on an average day in our region, power cuts that are equivalent to around 400 customers losing power for an hour are to be expected. The regulations also make allowance for those numbers to increase during snow and wind storms and other big weather events.

To view more information about Orion and what we do please see our website at oriongroup.co.nz.