

## Minutes

### Customer Advisory Panel

**When:** 2:30pm – 4:30pm, Tuesday, 27 February 2018

**Where:** Boardroom meeting room - Orion - 565 Wairakei Road

**Attendees:** **Danny Wilson**, Acting GM Retail at Meridian; **Leeann Watson** CEO, Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce; **Caroline Shone**, CEO Community Energy Action; **Simon Templeton**, CEO Age Concern, **Tim Baker**, Burwood and Coastal Community Board; **Pat McEvedy** Selwyn District Councillor and farmer.

*Orion:* **Rob Jamieson**, CEO; **David Freeman-Greene**, GM Commercial; **Steve Macdonald**, GM Infrastructure; **Linda McGregor**, Communications and Engagement Manager; **Andrew Mulligan**, Network Planning Engineer; **Jessalee MacLean** (*Minutes*)  
*Facilitator:* **Carrie Cooke**, pwc

**Apologies:** **Tania Wati**, CEO of Mahaanui Kurataiao

Item	Item overview
Welcome and Introduction	Orion CEO Rob Jamieson welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked them for their attendance and talked about the importance of the panel to Orion.
Getting to know each other exercise	<p>Panel members introduced themselves and shared what was important to the people they represented in relation to their electricity service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of having a reliable power supply</li> <li>• How businesses rely on power for business productivity</li> <li>• Imminent huge increase in numbers of frail elderly in the 80s and 90s age range: high usage during the day and feel the cold</li> <li>• How cost is barrier to many people's use of power</li> <li>• Cost is particularly an issue for business</li> <li>• Need to recognise our customers are not a single homogeneous group and have very diverse needs</li> <li>• We need to increase education around people managing their homes to keep warm – so they can help themselves</li> </ul> <p>The panel provided one big question or point their group would like to tell Orion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost for supplying power to a new dwelling, why is it so high?</li> <li>• Provide a clearer understanding of what Orion does</li> <li>• What is Orion thinking about for the future? Not just reactive but proactive. Compare what other countries are doing to see if it's something Orion could adopt.</li> <li>• What is Orion actively doing and how will it manage the introduction of new technology?</li> <li>• Need to communicate Orion's role in the community</li> <li>• You used to pay so much more for people returning power to the grid, why has this price dropped?</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Orion to consider these questions and if not answered during this meeting to provide a response at the next meeting.</p>

<p>What is Orion's Customer Advisory Panel?</p>	<p>Orion outlined the background to the formation of the panel, its purpose and Orion's commitment to the panel members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide all the information you need to form a considered view</li> <li>• Listen to what you have to say</li> <li>• Let you know how your views have been considered in our decision making</li> <li>• Respect your opinion</li> <li>• Respect your privacy and confidentiality</li> </ul>
<p>Orion: who we are, what we do</p>	<p>Orion outlined its role and strategic direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network has more than 200,000 customers and it is community owned</li> <li>• How a distribution company like Orion plays an important role in a chain of organisations that deliver electricity from the point of generation to the customer's door</li> <li>• How retailers fit into the picture</li> <li>• Orion provides a level of service based on what our customers and community want</li> <li>• Orion is regulated and held accountable for various things such as pricing and quality, by the New Zealand Commerce Commission</li> <li>• What Orion charges for their step in the process, currently about 26% of the average electricity bill</li> <li>• The electricity sector is going through an era of transformation</li> <li>• Orion's strategy is to be an enabler</li> </ul> <p>It was also discussed how much Orion has changed over the years, pre and post-earthquake, and now with electric vehicle and solar panels on the market. Orion continues to assess how to meet customer needs. Orion wants to continue to get closer to customers. Orion is open to trying new things and to continue to be innovative and proactive.</p> <p>A discussion followed and the following points were made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people don't understand what Orion does until the power goes out</li> <li>• Orion to be brave and bold in our view of the future</li> <li>• More collaboration with local community groups and businesses would help educate people about Orion</li> <li>• Orion's customer base is diverse and it means different things to different people</li> </ul> <p>Question asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orion is at the tail end of its post-earthquake recovery programme, what is Orion's next big step?</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Orion to respond to this questions at the next meeting.</p>
<p>"Powerful Conversations"</p>	<p>Orion outlined what it had learned already in its engagement programme canvassing customers' views on <b>Reliability, Resilience, Safety, and Future Networks</b>, and sought panellist's views.</p> <p>A discussion took place around shared thinking on each of Orion's four focus areas.</p> <p><b>Reliability:</b> generally customers are happy with the current levels of reliability and they are willing to accept a price/benefit trade-off for outages. The panel agreed with this view.</p> <p>Everyone was asked what the most inconvenient thing about the power going out for their respective groups:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food going off</li> <li>• Communications with friends and family.</li> <li>• Making a cup of tea especially after a significant power outage event.</li> <li>• Difficulty in running a business</li> </ul> <p><b>Resilience</b>, was defined as how quickly Orion bounces back following a significant event e.g. a major weather storm or major earthquake. Generally customers trust Orion’s approach to resilience and most residents want the power back on quickly after a major event and are prepared to pay more of their power bill for that. The panel agreed with this view.</p> <p><b>Safety</b>: Generally customers want Orion to take a balanced approach to risk and weigh up the costs against the risks. The panel noted that they would have expected Orion to already have a low risk approach to safety.</p> <p><b>Future networks</b>: Customers want a network that is ready for new technology. 75% of people surveyed said Orion should take mainstream or leader approach. The panel encouraged Orion to devote attention to new technology to prepare the network for future customer needs.</p>
<p>Money in the jar exercise</p>	<p>This exercise asked the panel members to allocate how they would spend Orion’s money in four key areas.</p> <p>The panel were given 10 make-believe 100 dollar notes and were asked to divide the money across the four key areas, the results, expressed as percentages, were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilience                    21%</li> <li>• Reliability                    27%</li> <li>• Safety                            12%</li> <li>• Future networks            40%</li> </ul> <p>In discussion the panel agreed that resilience, reliability, and safety are seen as things that Orion should be doing anyway and future networks was seen as naturally needing additional investment or perhaps focus.</p> <p>Questions asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long would it be before solar and batteries are worth doing for customers?</li> <li>• What is Orion currently focused on?</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION</b>: Orion to respond to this questions at the next meeting.</p>
<p>Wrap-up and close</p>	<p>Everyone was thanked for making the commitment to be there for the afternoon and representing their respective organisations.</p> <p>Panel members were asked to email David Freeman-Greene with any ideas for the next meeting’s agenda.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b>: Orion to establish the agenda and timing for the next meeting.</p>