

Media statement – for immediate release
7.00am 11 September 2013

Good progress to restore power after strong winds cause cuts

By 6.00am today power had been restored to 9,000 of the 28,000 Orion customers affected by power cuts after strong winds brought power lines down. Most power cuts were due to trees or branches falling onto lines.

19,000 homes and businesses are still without power. Areas affected include parts of Annat, Bankside, Brookside, Darfield, Highfield, Leeston, Rolleston, Weedons and western parts of the city.

“Our crews continue to make good progress. We’re working as quickly as we can, while making sure we don’t compromise the safety of our teams,” says Orion chief executive Rob Jamieson.

Orion urges anyone in Christchurch and central Canterbury who sees a fallen power line to stay well clear and call 0800 363 9898 immediately.

Our next update will be at 11.30am.

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.