

Media statement

12pm, 29 September 2014

Orion continues to progress earthquake rebuild work

After suffering severe quake damage to its electricity network, Orion continues to make excellent progress on restoring network resilience and reliability.

Orion CEO, Rob Jamieson, says “the most important thing for Orion is to keep the power on and reduce the risk of long power cuts, particularly to those communities still vulnerable and suffering since the earthquakes.”

“To achieve that, we’re undertaking a number of major projects which we aim to complete by 2019. We’re on track to meet, and are confident of achieving, that date and remain totally focused on ensuring our community has a robust, resilient and reliable power supply.”

One of the major projects Orion is undertaking to keep power on is laying new high voltage underground cable in Christchurch’s north east. This includes cable that will connect the suburbs of Papanui, Harewood, Marshlands and New Brighton.

Other underground cables are being laid to replace the high voltage temporary overhead lines installed in the eastern suburbs post the earthquakes as an emergency measure. Orion can take these overhead lines down once the replacement cables are established underground.

Completion of the cables is linked with two key bridges in the area that are being replaced by SCIRT. The cables need to be attached to the bridges, at Gayhurst Road and Bridge Street, to cross the Avon River. The bridges repairs are taking longer than expected and as a result Orion will not be able to remove the overhead lines by December as it had previously hoped.

Mr Jamieson says “As a result of the bridge delays, the temporary overhead lines that run past approximately 400 homes in the eastern suburbs will remain in place for longer than hoped. This is to make sure there is a secure supply of power to thousands of households in

the area. The overhead lines will be removed as soon as the underground cables are complete and commissioned.”

“Given the bridge delays, the company is renewing its consent for the temporary lines, and we are keeping local communities informed of progress and revised timelines. Whilst unfortunate, such delays are not unexpected given the sheer scale of the rebuild, and overall progress by Orion on our rebuild is excellent.”

ENDS

About Orion

Orion New Zealand Limited:

- owns and operates the electricity distribution network in central Canterbury between the Waimakariri and Rakaia rivers
- is owned by the Christchurch City Council (89.3%) and the Selwyn District Council (10.7%).