

Media statement – for immediate release

12.00pm, Mon 16 Sept 2013 - next update at 5.00pm

Progress to restore power slowing as contractors hit areas of extensive storm damage

The number of Orion customers without power this morning has reduced to 1,500 from the original 28,000 customers that lost electricity supply on Tuesday night due to gale force winds.

“As the work continues it has become clear that the damage to our network from trees is so extensive that there are numerous repairs needed with each repair typically restoring fewer than 20 customers”, says Orion’s CEO Rob Jamieson.

“This wind storm is proving far more damaging than any other wind storm event we have experienced in recent memory”, continued Mr Jamieson.

“Contractors from throughout the South Island and Wellington have been assisting us since last Tuesday’s violent storm. They have been working tirelessly to restore power as quickly and safely as they can, unfortunately the damage is such that some customers will remain without power for a few more days,” said Mr Jamieson.

We appreciate the support and patience of those customers affected by the power outages and our contractors are making every effort to have power supplies restored as soon as possible.

We ask any residents using generators to get them installed by registered electricians to ensure the safety of the linesmen repairing the network. An incorrectly installed generator may send power back into the electrical network while it is being worked on by a linesman resulting in electrocution.

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

Our next update will be at 5.00pm today.

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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