

Media statement – 8.00am, 24 September 2012

Orion’s network rebuild accelerates with the arrival of 16km of cable

What weighs about 270 tonnes, stretches nearly 16 kilometres and will take 18 road trips over three days?

The answer is a massive logistical challenge which will see 18 enormous drums of high voltage cable moved from Lyttelton into Christchurch where it will be used to strengthen the power supply to the north-eastern suburbs.

The 66,000 volt (high voltage) cables arrived into Lyttelton on Friday 21 September. This is Orion’s largest cable purchase since 2000 and is stage one of a three stage project to deliver a more secure supply to eastern Christchurch. This three stage project is just one of \$870m worth of projects planned over the next 10 years to improve and enhance electricity supply in the Orion network area.

The final destination for the cable is underground between Orion’s McFaddens zone substation to Dallington zone substation. While that distance spans just over five kilometres of road, Orion will use nearly 16 kilometres of cable for the project. That’s because it will use three lengths of cable to maintain a three phase system in the power supply network.

“This new high voltage underground circuit will mean a more secure power supply and fewer power cuts for those in the north-eastern suburbs of Christchurch,” said Rob Jamieson chief executive of Orion. “Importantly for the rebuild of Christchurch, this circuit will be part of a high voltage power ring that will both restore the reliability of power supply and provide for growth.”

The cable is split into sections each about 900 metres which are wound onto individual drums. “There will be 18 drums of cable to be transported from Lyttelton to Christchurch,” explained Chris Birkett Managing Director of Christchurch based General Cable New Zealand Ltd.

“Each weighs around 15 tonnes and is nearly 4 metres high. Specialised low loader trailer units will be used but the choice of route is restricted by the size of the load. The Lyttelton tunnel is not big enough and Evans Pass is still closed due to the earthquake so the trucks will need to come to town via Gebbies Pass. We will be working closely with Orion throughout this project to support this important step in the Christchurch rebuild,” continues Mr Birkett.

To minimise disruption, Orion is working alongside SCIRT who are repairing other underground services and roads along the same route. Mr Jamieson said, “This collaborative approach will mean fewer disruptions to our customers and create cost savings by avoiding digging up the road twice”.



SCIRT has been contracted to excavate the cable route. Laying the cable is expected to begin in early October and finish in April 2013. "Those residents directly affected will have work notices put in their letterboxes in advance of the works beginning" says Duncan Gibb, SCIRT General Manager. "We are working with Orion and other utility providers to maximise opportunities for collaboration and cost-saving. It makes sense to do this whenever we can."

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For further information, please contact:
Orion Media Phone: 0275 055 761

Note:

Orion New Zealand Limited owns and operates the electricity network in Christchurch and central Canterbury. Our network covers 8,000km² between the Rakaia and Waimakariri rivers and from the Canterbury coast to Arthur's Pass. We deliver electricity to more than 190,000 homes and businesses across this diverse geographical area.

General Cable New Zealand Ltd is the leading manufacturer and supplier of cable solutions for power, communications, industrial and specialist applications in New Zealand. Our track record of excellence spans several decades. General Cable New Zealand delivers quality products, locally manufactured or sourced from a number of the vast array of General Cable global manufacturing facilities. Established in New Zealand since 1946, General Cable New Zealand is a major contributor to New Zealand's infrastructure and economic development. Manufacturing operations cover a 7 hectare site in Christchurch and employ more than 300 people.

General Cable New Zealand is part of the US-based General Cable Corporation, one of the world's largest wire and cable manufacturers. As part of a global business we are able to draw on innovative engineering developments and the best research and technical support available, ensuring our customers are offered a competitive edge.

SCIRT (Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team) is rebuilding the city's earthquake damaged roads, fresh water, wastewater and stormwater networks. The head contractual agreement within SCIRT is an alliance between owner participants (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch City Council and New Zealand Transport Agency) and non-owner participants City Care, Downer, Fletcher, Fulton Hogan and McConnell Dowell. There are also many other Christchurch-based companies, which are part of SCIRT, playing a vital role in delivering the programme of work.