

**Media statement – for immediate release
4.30pm, Thursday 12 September 2013**

Progress to restore power continues

Power remains out to 9,000 Orion customers this afternoon after strong winds on Tuesday night affected power supply across Orion's electricity distribution network.

The areas without power are predominantly in the rural region west of Christchurch, while some smaller areas within Christchurch city are also affected.

"All available crews are working to restore power as quickly and safely as they can. As most lines into our rural substations from the national grid have now been fixed, we have been able today to start to assess and repair the lines that supply power from these substations to customers' premises," says Orion Chief Executive Rob Jamieson.

"We now have power back to all of our major rural substations except for one in the Burnham area where the damage is particularly severe. We expect it will take another two days to get the high voltage supply back to that substation. Our network in this area was weakened by earthquake damage from the Greendale fault," continues Mr Jamieson.

"Given the severity and extent of the damage, it's likely that some customers could be without power until Monday. We have today, having been able to fully assess the extent of the damage, developed a map of expected timeframes for getting power back on to the three main affected areas of our network. The damage is significant and it is not easy repair work and our plan is to restore the network mostly from an east to west direction. Our priority is to reconnect the areas with the most customers first, before moving onto those faults which only affect a small number of customers."

"If a customer is without power at 4pm today they should prepare for another night without power. We appreciate that for customers without power it has been another difficult day, and we apologise and thank them for their patience," says Mr Jamieson.

If you see a fallen power line, or a tree on a power line, please stay well clear and call us immediately on 0800 363 9898. Also, we appeal for people not to try and remove trees and branches from power lines. The lines may still be live. Please leave any works near electricity lines to our staff and contractors.

Unless there are significant developments overnight, our next update will be at 6.30am.

Attached is a map showing our network separated into three areas and our expected timeframes for restoring power to those still without power in each of those areas. This is a guide only.

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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.