

**Media statement – for immediate release**  
**8.30am, 21 February 2014**

## **Orion continues to progress electricity cable project in eastern Christchurch**

Good progress is being made installing almost 20km of high voltage underground cables in eastern Christchurch after damage sustained in the area in the February 2011 earthquake. The cables, which are expected to be completely installed by late 2014, will replace the temporary high voltage overhead lines that were installed in the area under Civil Defence emergency works provisions in 2011. The cables will provide a secure supply of power to the eastern suburbs, says Orion, the central Canterbury electricity network company.

The temporary high voltage overhead lines are scheduled to be removed in November 2014. This is prior to the expiry of resource consents for the lines.

The cables Orion is laying, in order to ensure an ongoing secure supply of electricity to the area, will form part of a ring of high voltage cables that encircle Christchurch. This ring network enables Orion to re-route power supply should one route fail.

The cables are being laid in a three stage process. The last stage, which involves crossing the Avon River at the Gayhurst Road bridge, is now not expected to be completed until late 2014. The bridge is not scheduled to fully repaired until 2015, however, Orion will complete the cable runs either side of the bridge in advance and attach its cable as soon as the bridge repair is sufficiently advanced to allow placement.

When Orion installed the temporary lines in early to mid-2011 it stated the lines would be in place for three years. The bridge repair timing now means that the three year timeframe will be missed by a few months. Residents along the route of the overhead line have been informed of this.

Orion CEO Rob Jamieson says “We have been working hard on replacing the overhead lines with underground cables. These cables will allow us to remove the overhead lines while ensuring the community still has an acceptable level of electricity network reliability. We are pleased we will be able to remove the temporary overhead lines this year. Keeping the lines in place this winter will help us ensure people do not live in colder than necessary homes.”

### **ENDS**

#### **About Orion**

Orion New Zealand Limited owns and operates the electricity distribution network in central Canterbury (including Christchurch) between the Waimakariri and Rakaia rivers and transports electricity to approximately 190,000 homes and businesses in this area. Orion charges electricity retailers for this service (including recovery of charges from the national grid operator Transpower), and retailers then on-charge homes and businesses.