Minutes
Customer Advisory Panel

When: 2:00pm – 3:30pm, Friday 5 November 2021

Where: Online via TEAMS

Attendees:
- **Dennis Carter** – Managing Director at Carter Seed Management (NZ) Ltd
- **Abigail Field -** UC Electrical Engineering student
- **Lisa Hannifin -** Chief Customer Officer at Meridian Energy
- **Matthew Mark -** CEO/City Missioner at Christchurch City Mission
- **Kathryn Peat -** Partnerships Manager at Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce
- **Caroline Shone –** CEO at Community Energy Action
- **Janetta Skiba -** Director of Nursing / Education Coordinator at Rural Canterbury
- **Vanessa Winning** – CEO at Irrigation New Zealand

Orion:
- **David Freeman-Greene** - General Manager Future Network
- **Steve Macdonald** - General Manager Electricity Network
- **Paul Deavoll** - Head of Customer & Communications
- **Dayle Parris** - Head of Regulatory and Commercial
- **Dave Brannigan** - Head of Network Transformation & Investment
- **Stephen Godfrey -** Network Transformation Lead – Customer Solutions
- **Casey Carass** - Sustainability Coordinator
- **Michelle Flanagan** - Community Engagement Lead.

Apologies:
- **Bebe Frayle -** Burwood and Coastal Community Board
- **Simon Templeton –** CEO at Age Concern
- **Cherie Tirikatene** – CEO at Seed New Zealand

Item	Item overview
Welcome and Introduction	Michelle Flanagan welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed our new members, Lisa, Kathryn and Vanessa.
	Michelle introduced the four presenters from Orion; David, Paul, Stephen and Casey, and the other Orion staff present at the meeting.
	Michelle set out the theme of today's session – 'Looking Forward'. Orion have been leaders in delivering a safe, reliable and resilient power network, and there is now a realisation that we have more to give. Orion wants to leave a legacy for future generations that is much greater than simply keeping the lights on, and our Purpose of 'Powering a cleaner and brighter future for our community is a key part of this'.

Looking forward - the Future Network	David Freeman-Green shared his thoughts about the Future Network and how Orion is positioning itself to power a cleaner and brighter future.
	David talked the panel through how the power network is changing. Traditionally we had a linear network flowing from large-scale generation, transmission, local distribution to customers. In the future the network will be much more integrated with a larger number of smaller generators, greater use of renewables, more customer involvement and power flows to and from the network.
	David also talked about changing customer expectations; the energy trilemma; the constant tension between an affordable, reliable and sustainable energy network; and how our future network will be a platform for connection.
	This future environment means that Orion needs to understand more about our customers and their behaviour, we need to optimise investment in our network and reduce emissions, and make sure we keep the lights on while doing this.
	David talked through Orion's recent internal change process to have a future focus and deliver on our Purpose of 'Powering a cleaner and brighter future for our community'. David shared his aspirations for the Future Network Team in that it is a force for good, an exceptional performer, and that we have people who are driven to make a difference.
	David asked the Panel's thoughts on three purpose statements for Future Network team purpose:
	1. Architect the future network in service of achieving our purpose and impacts 2. Enabling a sustainable and innovative energy future that improves community prosperity 3. To enable our customers to get the power they need, when they need it, in a sustainable and affordable way.
	The feedback was seven votes for statement two and four for statement three.
Energy Accelerator – fostering new ideas in energy	Paul Deavoll shared his experience with the Orion Energy Accelerator Programme, a partnership between Orion, Ministry of Awesome and Ara Ake (https://www.orionaccelerator.nz/).
	The Energy Accelerator bought together ten start-ups to work on the energy innovations. The start-ups were paired with experienced mentors, learned from experts-in residence, and were introduced to investors and partners.
	The winners of the Energy Accelerator were announced at the end of October. Empower Energy claimed the Impact Award for their work on targeting energy poverty through a new solar sharing scheme. RedPhase claimed the Most Innovative prize for their work in making solar panels more efficient through phase balancing.

What are some of the future challenges Orion are facing?	Stephen Godfrey shared with us a new piece of technology that could help resolve some our future network challenges around distributed energy, peak load management, electric vehicles and affordability. Stephen asked the panel to indicate what price they would be comfortable paying for a piece of technology that would potentially eliminate outages at home. In a show of hands, six people would be prepared to pay less than $1000 and three would be prepared to pay between $1000 - $2000. Stephen then talked through Vehicle to Grid technology (V2G) where a customers' home is powered by their EV. This means that during a power outage an EV could power critical elements of a home. Re-charging the EV would then take place when power is restored, or the driver could recharge the EV in parts of the city that aren't affected by the outage. V2G technology also has benefits for both Orion and our customers in terms of managing peak periods, as the EV could power the home at 6pm peaks and be recharged in cheaper off-peak periods saving the customer money. Using V2G to help manage load on the network potentially means that we don't have to heavily invest in expanding the network, saving our customers money. V2G can also be used as a flexibility tool to help intermittent renewable generation to be integrated into the NZ generation market. At the moment vehicle to grid technology is not mainstream and is expensive (about $10K) to install. Within the next decade the price could potentially fall (to about $1-2K) and the technology will become widely available.
Partnering with our Community	Casey Carass shared the Orion Schools Project with the panel. Orion are developing a partnership with Kia Kotahi Ako and schools to grow energy efficiency knowledge. Through the We Share Solar Project we are working with Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery in Christchurch City. This project will have multiple benefits for students and the community in terms of encouraging STEM career options, encouraging students to act on energy efficiency and climate change, and improving the resilience of schools.
Questions	Paul Deavoll facilitated a Q & A session. The following questions were raised (note some of these came during the presentations above). - In Empower, does the donor (the house producing the solar energy) share the credit with those in energy poverty? This sharing of the energy is via an app and a third party passes on the donor credit to the receiving party. - Would a V2G system power your typical household from 6-9pm with a full charged battery? Yes. - How does a company pay for the electricity on company cars? It will be easier and cheaper for people to charge company cars at home rather than having charges in the car park. Technology (e.g. software) will enable employers to know how much power has been used for charging and compensate the employee accordingly. - Will it be cheaper to recharge EV in off-peak periods, i.e. will there be incentivized charging? Yes, there will be pricing signals that encourage people to charge off-peak.

	Paul then asked the panel whether Orion are sharing our future focus story well with our customers and community? General feeling was that Orion was a progressive lines company but that we could do more in sharing our story.
Wrap up and close	Michelle then closed the session and thanked all the panel members for their time. Michelle advised that the panel will continue to run next year, and we have topics such as pricing, load management, the energy trilemma, energy needs and sustainability to work through.