



SOUTH ISLAND ENERGY INTERN SUMMER EVENTS PROGRAMME 2025/26



ABOUT THE SOUTH ISLAND ENERGY INTERN PROGRAMME



Building on the very successful Taranaki energy intern summer programme we now have the same opportunity for the South Island. This programme brings together a collaboration of leading electricity and energy companies to support interns and recent graduates as they begin their career journeys. Through workshops, site tours, mentoring, and a Hackathon, participants gain hands-on experience and insights into the full energy value chain—generation, transmission, distribution, and emerging technologies.

The programme not only equips interns with practical skills but also provides valuable opportunities to build networks with industry professionals, peers, and mentors. By engaging directly with the complexities of the sector, interns develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing New Zealand's energy system and are encouraged to envision bold, practical solutions for its future.

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SESSION ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Wednesday, 10 December 2025

ChristchurchNZ, BNZ Centre, Level 3, 101 Cashel Street, Christchurch

10:25am Welcome & Introduction to the Summer Intern Programme

Sheree Long, Director Workforce Development, Energy Resources Aotearoa

John Carnegie, CEO, Energy Resources Aotearoa

10:40am A foundational overview of the Energy & Electricity sector; Perspectives of a Senior Leader

Nigel Barbour – Chief Executive Officer, Orion

Nigel will provide a foundational overview of New Zealand's electricity system, demonstrating the entire value chain from generation, to transmission, all the way through to distribution and retail. As a senior leader, Nigel will also provide his unique perspective on the significant challenges and opportunities he faces in today's energy sector.

11.10am The Political & Economic Landscape

Jonathan Young, Ara Ake (New Zealand's National Energy Center)

Jonathan will provide an outline of New Zealand's current political and economic settings, how policy decisions shape New Zealand's energy sector, what it means for industry decision making and how the nation's economy shapes investment.

11.40am Energy & Infrastructure in Canterbury

Martin Cudd, GM Innovation & Business Growth for Christchurch

From the broader view of New Zealand's economic landscape, Martin will focus our gaze on the Canterbury economy, discussing how energy and infrastructure developments are driving innovation, business growth, and regional opportunities.

12:00pm Getting the most out of your internship

Lucy Northcote, Orion Energy

Lucy will share some practical tips to maximise your internship experience, build networks, and explore career pathways. She will also provide some information on Orion's exciting Power Youth programme that supports school-aged children of employees to develop early interest in the energy sector.

12:30pm Lunch

networking with industry, interns & sponsors

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SESSION TWO: BIG PICTURE OVERVIEW & THE ENERGY SYSTEM

Tuesday 13 January 2026

Connetics, 11 Islington Street, Islington Christchurch

09:00am Feeding into New Zealand Electricity System

Transpower Team

The Transpower team will host a session and share how they fit within New Zealand's energy landscape and share the vital role they play in enabling our energy future - all in an interactive and engaging session.

10.00 am The role of Hydrogen in our energy mix

Kadie Smith, Graduate Engineer and Amelia Rentzios Senior Engineer, Hiringa Energy

Hydrogen is emerging as a potential clean fuel in New Zealand's energy sector, particularly for decarbonising heavy transport, industrial heat, and backup power where electrification is difficult. Kadie and Amelia will explain the opportunities hydrogen could provide in helping balance the country's renewable-heavy electricity grid.

10:30am Morning Tea Break

11.00am Electrification: How & Why and the future skills we will need

Nicki Sutherland, Chief Executive Officer, Electricity Engineers Association

As cars, buses, and industries increasingly switch to electricity, the way we power our world is changing, and so are the jobs that support it. What new skills will be needed as New Zealand electrifies? How can we prepare workers to help electrify sectors that are harder to shift? And what opportunities can we create now, while emerging technologies continue to develop?

12:00pm Lunch

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SESSION THREE: INSIDE THE ELECTRICITY SECTOR

Tuesday 13 January 2026

12:45pm A Day in the Life of a Graduate Engineer

Gareth Stewart - Network Transformation Manager, Orion Energy

TBC - Graduate, Aurecon

TBC - Graduate Transpower

These speakers will talk about their roles as Electrical engineers and share their journey from studying Electrical Engineering at university into the electricity sector. Through real-world projects and lessons learned, the speakers will give an inside look at the challenges and opportunities of starting out in this dynamic field.

01:45pm Making the Most of Employment Opportunities

Candice Maree, People, Culture & Safety GM - Aurora Energy

What are industry employers looking for? How do you put your best foot forward and make the most of every opportunity? Candice along with Aurora's people and culture team will use their experience of recruitment to give you all the tips and tricks on entering the job market.

02:15pm Networking: An Essential "Soft Skill"

Mitchell Davis, Young Energy Professionals Network (YEPN)

The Young Energy Professionals Network will explore how to navigate the often daunting, but essential practice of "networking." They will offer advice on how to navigate key industry events and create opportunities and talk a little about what YEPN does.

Networking & Close

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SESSION FOUR: COMPANY SITE TOURS

Tuesday, 20 January 2026

Orion energy, Norwood Site & Lake Coleridge Hydro power station

8.00am – Convene outside Te Pae, Christchurch

Join us for an unforgettable day of site tours showcasing New Zealand's electricity system in action. We'll kick off at Orion and Transpower's Norwood site with an exciting live drone display, offering a unique look at how technology is transforming grid operations.

From there, the journey continues to the iconic Lake Coleridge hydro power station, where you'll step inside one of the country's oldest renewable energy facilities and learn about its history, engineering, and role in powering communities for over a century. This is a rare opportunity to experience innovation and heritage side by side.



5.00pm – Drop off back at Te Pae, Christchurch

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SESSION FIVE: SOUTH ISLAND HACKATHON

Thursday, 29 - Friday, 30 January 2026
Rātā Core, Faculty of Engineering, University of Canterbury

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What will it take to deliver an efficient, secure, affordable, and sustainable electricity system in New Zealand by 2040?

This programme is for all energy interns and recent graduates.

Using the **energy trilemma**, or **quadlemma**, as your framework, you'll explore how to balance four critical priorities: ensuring energy security and reliability, maintaining affordability for consumers, advancing environmental sustainability, and enabling social equity.

Over two days, you'll work in teams alongside industry mentors, collaborating to design bold, practical ideas for what New Zealand's electricity system could look like in 2040 and what needs to happen to get there. You'll consider infrastructure, technology, regulation, investment, and workforce, while weighing the trade-offs and synergies between these goals.

Teams will present their findings to sector professionals, with a winning team selected to present their vision to the broader energy industry in 2026.

This is your chance to shape the future of New Zealand's electricity system. Are you ready to take on the challenge?

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INTERESTED IN YOUR INTERNS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAMME?

**Contact: Sheree Long, Director Workforce
Development to register**

If you have interns that would like to register for the programme (it is completely free to attend) thanks to our wonderful sponsors. Please contact Sheree on the number/email below.

Mobile: +64 21 119 3362

Email: sheree.long@energyskills.co.nz