****

***HOW DO CONSUMERS CHOOSE ELECTRICITY PROVIDERS?***

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

**What is the Aim of the Project?**

The aim of this project is to study how households choose their electricity provider.

**What Types of Participants are being sought?**

We are looking to recruit200participants who are at least 18 years of age, and who are involved in making decisions for their household about what electricity provider to use.

If you take part, we will pay $40 to [insert name of organisation e.g. school, church, sports club]. Taking part may also help you to consider whether you can save money on your electricity bill by finding a cheaper provider.

**What will Participants be asked to do?**

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to do the following.

You will attend a research session held in a computer laboratory at the University of Otago [insert room details]. This session will take no more than one hour.

Prior to attending you will need to email [insert name and email address of RA], our research assistant a copy of a recent power bill for your household.

At the session you attend, you will be asked some survey questions (including your postal address, age, whether your household income is above or below a certain amount, etc). You will also be asked to use one of the computers in the computer lab to visit a website that provides information on how much you could save by changing electricity providers. We will give you instructions on the night on how to use this website.

About one month after the session we will send you an email asking a small number of follow-up questions.

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself. If you decide to take part, but change your mind during the session, you are free to leave without any disadvantage to yourself. However, for the $40 payment to be made to [insert group name] you need to stay till the end of the session.

**What Data or Information will be collected and what use will be made of it?**

The survey questions will be completed using pen and paper. Your answers, and the electricity bill you provide us with, will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, other than when they are being worked on. This written information will be destroyed at the completion of the project. Your written answers will be entered into an electronic spreadsheet stored on password protected computers at the University of Otago. Any identifying information (e.g. names and addresses) will be deleted from this spreadsheet at the completion of the project.

The results of the project may be published in an academic journal(s). If you would like to be sent a copy of the results please email one of the researchers listed below. It is likely the journal(s) the research findings are published in will require that we make our data available to other researchers. Please be assured that these data will be fully anonymised (they will not contain any identifying information such as your name or address) and we will not release to other researchers the names of the people who took part in the research.

**Can Participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?**

As noted above, you may leave the session at any time, but you need to stay to the end of the session for [insert name of group] to receive the $40 for your participation. If you decide after the session you would like to withdraw from the project, please let us know within one week of the session and we will destroy your answers.

**What if Participants have any Questions?**

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Dr Peter Gibbard Professor Stephen Knowles

Department of Economics Department of Economics

peter.gibbard.otago.ac.nz stephen.knowles@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the Department stated above. However, if you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph +643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.