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# Customer Charter

1 November 2021



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# 1 About Aurora Energy

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Aurora Energy Limited is New Zealand's sixth-largest electricity distribution company, supplying eastern and central Otago. Aurora Energy is responsible for a major and essential part of the Province's infrastructure. Our distribution network annually delivers around 1,300GWh of electricity, from five Transpower Grid Exit Points and six local power generation supply points, to over 87,000 homes and businesses.

Our responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the safety and reliability of the network;
- Connecting new customers; and
- Extending and upgrading the network to meet growth and expansion.

## 1.1 Our Charter

This customer charter explains our relationship with you, outlines what you can expect from us, and what we will need from you in order to meet your expectations and provide and maintain a safe and reliable electricity supply.

Aurora Energy strives to provide you with courteous, prompt and professional service. We are committed to ensuring that you have comprehensive and relevant information about the supply of electricity to your property.

This Charter forms part of that commitment and we ask that you read it carefully.

## 1.2 Our commitment to you

We are committed to ensuring your safety, service and satisfaction.

### 1.2.1 Your safety

To ensure your safety and the safety of our employees, we will:

- ensure safety is our number one priority and that it underpins all we do as a business;
- provide you with a 24 hour fault and emergency response service;
- inform you if it is unsafe to restore your electricity service, as might occur at night during severe weather, and provide an estimate of when service can be restored.

### 1.2.2 Your service

To provide the best customer service, we will:

- deliver a reliable and quality supply of electricity;
- strive for prompt restoration of your electricity service should you experience a service interruption;
- ensure timely connection to the network and relevant information on our services;
- provide an effective dispute and complaint resolution service;
- be positive, fair, professional and courteous when we deal with you; and
- provide adequate notice of planned power outages (interruptions to your power supply due to planned upgrading or maintenance of the network).

### 1.2.3 Your satisfaction

To ensure your satisfaction with our services, we will:

- take personal responsibility for resolving your concerns;
- listen to your needs and concerns and appropriately address issues raised;

- honour the commitments we make to you;
- be easy to contact, with information that is helpful, accurate, up-to-date and easily understood; and
- regularly review our performance with our customers and employees to identify opportunities for improvement.

## 2 Safety

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We want to keep all contractors, customers and the public safe. Our network is designed and maintained with safety in mind; however, when some activities are carried out near our equipment, lines and cables, extra precautions are required to ensure that you're kept safe, and the integrity of our network is maintained.

### 2.1 Medically dependent customers

If you use medical equipment that relies on a continuous supply of electricity, you need to be prepared for interruptions to your electricity service. We recommend that you have an emergency response plan, which might include always having an uninterruptible power supply (standby battery) or having plans to relocate to another address which has electricity supply.

We recommend that you also register as a medically dependent customer with your electricity retailer.

If there is an immediate health threat, contact your health provider or call 111.

### 2.2 Public Safety Management System

Aurora Energy has a Public Safety Management System (PSMS) to control hazards that present significant risk of serious harm or major property damage. The PSMS consists of a series of documents that detail the systems' structure and extent. At the hub of this system is a register of hazards that Aurora Energy maintains to monitor and assess hazards.

If you notice something on our network that you think is hazardous, you can report it by phoning us on 0800 220 005 or through Aurora Energy's website [www.auroraenergy.co.nz](http://www.auroraenergy.co.nz).

### 2.3 Public safety guide

Aurora Energy has developed a public safety guide that provides advice on the processes that need to be followed, and the safety services Aurora Energy offers, when carrying out work such as digging near poles and cables, working or operating machinery near live lines, and transporting high loads.

The guide can be accessed from Aurora Energy's website.

You should be particularly careful when digging within grass verge areas. You should contact us on 0800 220 005 to organise plans or a cable location before digging near power poles, power boxes or in the grass verge outside your house.

#### 2.3.1 Safety services

We provide the following services to help you work safely near our equipment:

- Reference maps, which show the location of our underground electricity and communications cables. Reference maps are provided free-of-charge.
- On-site advice, cable locations, and mark-outs. We will physically mark the work area with the estimated location of cables. You will still need to hand-dig to positively identify the location of cables before using mechanical excavators. This service is chargeable, unless our strategic 66,000 volt, 33,000 volt and fibre-optic cables are involved, in which case the mark-out will be provided free-of-charge.
- Close approach approvals are given when you need to work close to Aurora Energy's overhead lines and underground cables. In authorising the close approach, we may impose special conditions that must be observed in order to assure your safety. In most cases, there is no charge

associated with the close approach approval; however, if there is a high risk associated with the work you propose, we may require an experienced safety observer to be used. The safety observation is a chargeable service.

- High load approvals are given when items being transported may come into contact with Aurora Energy's lines. Most commonly, this involves transportation of houses and relocatable buildings. As part of the high load approval, we may require that you take a specified route. In some cases, where the load is very high, we may require the transport vehicle to be escorted by a line crew that can lift lines safely away from the high load. This service is chargeable.

The following service levels will be maintained for safety services:

- Reference plan issue – within 2 working days of request;
- Cable mark-outs and on-site advice - within 4 working days of request;
- Close approach approvals - within 2 working days of request, unless specific safety measures are required; and
- High load approval - within 3 working days of request, unless specific safety measures are required;

Where specific safety measures are required, this typically involves turning off the power to a specific area so that work can be carried out safely. In such cases, Aurora Energy will be required to give at least 10 working days' notice to electricity retailers, so that customers affected by the power outage can receive reasonable notice. Accordingly, it is recommended that you provide as much notice of your need for a close approach or high load approval as is reasonably practicable.

## 3 Your property

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### 3.1 Access to your property

There may be times when we need to access your property to conduct inspections and perform maintenance.

We promise to:

- provide you with reasonable notice, given by telephone, letter or personal visit, when we need to enter your land to inspect or operate network equipment;
- provide you with at least 10 working days' notice, in writing, when we need to enter your land to conduct maintenance;
- tell you when and why we have entered your land, as soon as practicable after the event, if we have needed to immediately access your land in order to remedy probable danger to life or property, or to maintain the continuity or safety of the network and electricity supply;
- treat your property with respect and care, removing all rubbish and debris associated with our work;
- make good any and all damage caused by us as a consequence of performing work on your land; and
- act, at all times, in a professional and courteous manner.

### 3.2 Service lines

Not all electricity lines are owned by Aurora Energy. You are responsible for the maintenance of service lines and cables from the Point of Supply (PoS). Definition of the PoS is explained in greater detail in Aurora Energy' Network Connection Standard, available from Aurora Energy's website; however, the point of supply for your property will generally be:

- In the case of a low voltage underground service cable, the point at which the cable crosses your boundary; or

- In the case of a low voltage overhead service line, the point at which the service line enters your house or building. However, please note that mains-entry boxes and bargeboards (to which the line may be attached) are not maintained by Aurora Energy.

We take a differential approach to service lines and cables, because underground service cables have a much lower risk potential at failure than overhead service lines, owing to the fact that they are buried and generally not exposed to contact by persons.

In certain circumstances, Aurora Energy may have an initial maintenance obligation for your underground service cable. If your service cable was installed before 7 August 2001, then Aurora Energy will inspect the line and, where necessary, bring up to a reasonable standard of repair. After the inspection and maintenance has been performed, Aurora Energy will issue you with formal notice that future maintenance will be your responsibility.

If your electricity is supplied by an overhead service line installed after 7 August 2001, then you will currently have a maintenance obligation for your overhead service line. When your overhead service line is next inspected, we will ask you to assign the ownership and maintenance obligation to Aurora Energy through PoS variation agreement.

### **3.3 Management of vegetation near lines**

Electricity can be dangerous. A branch or tree in contact with high voltage lines can potentially carry enough electric current to kill. If a tree or tree branch contacts or falls on lines, it can cause a fire and/or power outages.

The responsibility for trimming trees and vegetation near electricity power lines depends on where the trees are located and the power line affected. We manage trees and vegetation on our network in accordance with the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003, which outline the responsibility of Aurora Energy and tree owners in managing trees near power lines.

Aurora Energy's website has a section that outlines your rights and obligations with regard to managing trees near power lines.

If you are uncertain about responsibility for clearing vegetation from powerlines, please contact us for advice.

### **3.4 Your electricity meter**

Your electricity meter measures and records your consumption of electricity. Aurora Energy does not own metering equipment. Under New Zealand regulations, your electricity retailer is responsible for ensuring that metering equipment is properly installed and accurate, although your electricity retailer may contract those functions to a metering equipment provider.

If you believe that there is an issue with your electricity meter, you need to discuss the problem with your electricity retailer.

### **3.5 Disconnections and reconnections**

Generally, Aurora Energy will not disconnect the electricity supply to your premises unless required to do so for safety reasons, including prevention of damage to property.

Your electricity retailer may disconnect your power supply in accordance with the terms of their contract with you. The retailer may be able to do this remotely if you have an advanced meter installed at your premises, otherwise they will use a contactor warranted by Aurora Energy as competent to safely perform disconnection/reconnection work. Aurora Energy, despite having warranted such a contractor, is not liable to you for the consequence of any disconnection ordered by your electricity retailer.

Aurora Energy has legal obligations to ensure that livening or reconnection of power supply does not pose a safety risk. If your property has been disconnected for a period of 6 months or longer, you will be required to have the premises inspected by a Registered Electrical Inspector and:

- provide us with a copy, or show us, the inspection certificate; and

- provide us with written confirmation that you have not engaged anyone to carry out general or high-risk prescribed electrical work while the premises has been disconnected before the premises will be reconnected.

## 4 Service levels

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Aurora Energy aims to meet high standards of customer service. This section details our service levels.

### 4.1 Responding to you

You can call us 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in New Zealand on Freephone 0800 220 005. We will acknowledge phone calls and emails within 24 hours and letters within 2 working days – sooner if we can.

### 4.2 Reliability of power supply

We will provide you with a reliable power supply; however, power outages, both planned and unplanned, can and do occur at times.

The predominant measures of reliability of electricity networks are the System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) and the System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI). In simple terms, these measures indicate the average duration and frequency of power outages, respectively, experienced by customers in a given network area. As these are average measures, individual customers will experience power outages more or less frequently than the average, and/or interruption durations that are longer or shorter than the average.

In general, customers in rural parts of the network can expect more power outages than average, since rural customers are generally supplied by a single circuit and there are no adjacent circuits that can be switched in to provide an alternative supply. In addition, rural supplies are mostly delivered via overhead lines that are exposed to harsher environmental conditions over a comparatively longer distance. Rural customers can also expect power outages that are longer than the average, as it takes longer for service crews to identify and repair faults, owing to the longer distances involved.

Aurora Energy aims to meet the forecast reliability targets stated in schedule 12D of its annual Asset Management Plan disclosure.

Aurora Energy will use its best endeavours to ensure that:

- no customer in the urban areas of Dunedin, Mosgiel, Queenstown, Wanaka, Cromwell and Alexandra has more than 4 unplanned power outages in any 12 month period. The urban areas are defined as being generally within the 50km/h speed zone boundaries;
- no customer in the rural area is subjected to more than 10 unplanned power outages in any 12 month period; and
- no customer in a remote-rural area is subjected to more than 20 unplanned power outages in any 12 month period. Remote-rural areas are defined as being 50km or greater from Aurora Energy's service bases in Queenstown, Wanaka, Cromwell, Alexandra and Dunedin.

Aurora Energy will, subject to safety requirements, meet the following service levels for restoring service after an unplanned power outage:

- within 4 hours in the urban areas of Dunedin, Mosgiel, Queenstown, Wanaka, Cromwell and Alexandra. The urban areas are defined as being generally within the 50km/h speed zone boundaries.
- within 6 hours in all other areas.

If we fail to restore service within those timeframes, you may be eligible for a charter credit, as described in section 7, below.

### 4.3 Quality of supply

Aurora Energy will maintain your power supply voltage within  $\pm 6\%$  of 230 volts (between 216.2 volts and 243.8 volts), except for momentary fluctuations, when measured at the Point of Supply:

Please note that voltage, can swing between the limits when electricity demand fluctuates. Greater demand causes voltage to drop, following which various items of network equipment, including transformer tap-changers and voltage regulators, will operate to maintain voltage levels. This variation will be more pronounced in rural areas due to the greater impedance of relatively longer lines, and may be particularly noticeable by customers near the edge of the network.

Customers that believe that they have a problem with the quality of their power supply should contact us on 0800 220 005 to have the matter investigated. Within 7 working days of receiving your power quality complaint, we will investigate and respond to you detailing the nature of the problem. If the investigation cannot be completed within 7 working days, we will provide, within 7 working days, an estimate of the time it will take to complete the investigation and the reason for requiring extra time.

If we fail to respond to your power quality complaint within 7 working days, you may be eligible for a charter credit, as described in section 7, below.

#### **4.3.1 Protecting sensitive equipment**

Circumstances or events beyond Aurora Energy's control may cause unplanned power outages or transient voltages (these are momentary fluctuations in voltage, sometimes called 'surges' or 'spikes'), potentially damaging equipment or appliances. These events include motor vehicle incidents damaging network equipment, lightning strikes, and storm damage.

Customers with sensitive equipment or appliances that may be affected by an unplanned power outage or transient voltage, which may include computers, televisions, phones, computerised appliances and whiteware, should consider appropriate protection. Normally, this is achieved by installing back-up devices or surge protectors, which can be plugged into appliances or wired into the installation mains. Customers are also advised to arrange insurance that covers damage from transient voltages.

#### **4.3.2 Protection against unbalanced voltage**

The possibility exists for one or two fuses of a 3-phase set protecting mains or a transformer to operate, resulting in Customers receiving an unbalanced or reduced voltage supply. If a Customer has equipment that is vulnerable to damage by unbalanced or reduced voltage, such as three-phase motors and pumps, they are advised to install their own protection that will automatically disconnect the appropriate equipment. Aurora Energy will not accept responsibility for any damage to a Customer's equipment caused by unbalanced voltage.

## **5 Planned power outages**

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Aurora Energy is committed to providing a safe and reliable electricity supply. To do this, there may be times when we need to interrupt your power supply - usually for upgrades of the electricity network to meet future demand, to ensure the quality of supply, to connect new customers, or for planned maintenance of the network, which minimises the risk of future unplanned power outages.

When we plan work in your area that will result in a power outage, we will provide advice to your electricity retailer at least ten working days beforehand. Your electricity retailer will, in turn, provide you with notice of the power outage in accordance with your energy supply contract with them. On some occasions, we may hand-deliver a notice to your letterbox. From time-to-time we will also notify you via local newspapers and/or radio advertising.

The times advised on notices of planned power outages are our best estimate of the duration needed to complete the work. We won't turn off your power before the notified time, but there may be times when the length of the power outage is longer than notified. Generally, this is a result of unforeseen circumstances that could not be reasonably planned for.

The notice you receive will specify an alternative day for the power outage and, if for any reason we cannot perform the work on the notified date, the work will generally be performed at the same time on the alternative date.



On rare occasions, we may be prevented from carrying out the work on both days and need to cancel the work. This could be due to extreme or persistent weather. Because work often is cancelled at short notice, we will be unable to specifically notify you, and we apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

You can check Aurora Energy's website on the morning of the notified interruption to check if the work will proceed as planned. Visit [www.auroraenergy.co.nz](http://www.auroraenergy.co.nz) for further details.

If we conduct a planned power outage, and we have not correctly notified your electricity retailer, you may be eligible for a charter credit, as described in section 7, below.

If a planned outage runs over time, as may occasionally occur when service crews encounter unforeseen issues, we do not provide a charter credit, unless the over-run exceeds 4 hours.

We understand that power outages can be inconvenient, and we notify you in advance, so you can plan ahead and make alternative arrangements. We do not compensate customers for planned outages, or provide alternative supplies (generation). If you are reliant on a continuous supply of electricity, for business or other reasons, we recommend that you consider uninterruptible power supplies or standby generation.

## 6 Unplanned power outages

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In delivering power to our customers, we maintain a network with more than 5,800 kilometres of wires and cables across a supply area of approximately 9,800 square kilometres. While we are diligent in maintaining this infrastructure, when power outages occur on such a large network, it can take time to locate and fix the fault.

Always be prepared for a power outage at home. Keep your smartphone and other devices charged, and have a battery-powered radio and a torch handy. We recommend against using candles, as they can cause fires if left unattended. We have more advice on how to be prepared in the event of a power outage and how to keep safe around electricity on our website [www.auroraenergy.co.nz](http://www.auroraenergy.co.nz).

Power outages may be due to:

- the effects of severe weather conditions such as damaging winds, lightning or flooding;
- issues with equipment that is damaged by contact with vegetation or animals, or that fails unexpectedly; or
- motor vehicle accidents.

Whatever the cause of an unplanned power outage, Aurora Energy is committed to restoring your power as quickly and as safely as possible. If we are taking emergency action to prevent, rectify or avoid a major fault, we are unfortunately unable to notify you in advance.

### 6.1 What to do if your power goes out

If you experience an unplanned power outage, you should report it to your electricity retailer in the first instance. They will collect your details and pass them to our network operation centre. We also provide your electricity retailer with regular updates on the nature of the problem, the area affected and the expected time of restoration. You should phone your retailer for updates.

Always keep well clear of fallen power lines or damaged electrical equipment and treat them as live at all times. Always treat all electrical equipment, sockets and appliances as live as power may be restored at any time.

You can also check Aurora Energy's website from your smartphone.

We recommend that you:

- turn off stoves and heaters to avoid starting a fire when your electricity service is restored;
- keep your refrigerator doors closed as much as possible;
- keep a torch handy, with charged batteries or spares;
- keep your smartphone charged;

- know how to manual operate your electrically operated garage door; and
- have an action plan prepared, and advise your electricity retailer, if you are a medically dependent customer.

We have more advice on how to be prepared in the event of a power outage and how to keep safe around electricity on our website [www.auroraenergy.co.nz](http://www.auroraenergy.co.nz).

## 7 Charter credits

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Where we have been unable to meet certain service levels, Aurora Energy will provide you with a charter credit. Charter credits are refunds of network charges, made to your electricity retailer, who is contractually obliged to pass these on to you in your electricity account. Because these charter credits are made through your electricity retailer, it may take a couple of months before these appear on your electricity account.

### 7.1 Notification of planned power outage

If we fail to give proper notice, via your electricity retailer, of a planned power outage, then we will pay you a charter credit.

#### 7.1.1 Service standard

We will provide electricity retailers with a list of all customer connections affected by a planned power outage at least 10 working days in advance of the power outage taking place.

#### 7.1.2 Exclusions

No charter credit is payable when your electricity retailer has been notified in accordance with the service standard, but has not adequately communicated with you.

#### 7.1.3 Charter credit

We will pay \$20 in respect of each customer connection not notified in accordance with the service standard.

### 7.2 Restoration of electricity service

If we fail to restore your electricity service within the service standard timeframes, following an unplanned power outage, then we will pay you a charter credit.

#### 7.2.1 Service standard

Restore the electricity service:

- within 4 hours of becoming aware of the interruption in the urban areas of Dunedin, Mosgiel, Queenstown, Wanaka, Cromwell and Alexandra. The urban areas are defined as being generally within the 50km/h speed zone boundaries.
- within 6 hours of becoming aware of the power outage in all other areas.

#### 7.2.2 Exclusions

No charter credit will be paid when the unplanned power outage:

- is the consequence of substantial damage caused by a third party;
- is the consequence of weather-related damage to the network and the power outage forms part of a major event day, as defined by price-quality regulation determined by the Commerce Commission;
- has been caused by the Transmission Provider (Transpower New Zealand Ltd); or
- has been extended because service crews have been prevented from making repairs; e.g. by police at accident scene.

### 7.2.3 Charter credit

We will pay either:

- a \$50 charter credit in respect of each customer connection on residential pricing, or;
- one month's line charges in respect of each customer connection on general pricing.

## 7.3 Investigation of power quality complaints

If we fail to investigate and respond to power quality complaint within the service standard timeframe, then we will pay you a charter credit.

### 7.3.1 Service standard

We will investigate and respond within 7 working days of receiving your power quality complaint.

### 7.3.2 Exclusions

No charter credit is payable if we have provided you, within 7 working days, with an estimate of the time it will take to complete the investigation and the reason for requiring extra time.

### 7.3.3 Charter credit

We will pay a \$50 charter credit for exceeding the service standard.

## 8 Electricity and land complaints

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Aurora Energy is a member of the free and independent Utilities Disputes Limited complaints resolution scheme and is committed to providing a free and accessible process for the management and timely resolution of electricity related disputes and complaints, including those where a land owner's rights or land occupier's rights may have been unlawfully affected.

Electricity customers, or land owners or land occupiers, wishing to make a complaint to the Utilities Disputes Limited Commissioner must first complete Aurora Energy's complaints process. The Commissioner will redirect any complaint made to it directly that has not first been referred to Aurora Energy. The Utilities Disputes Limited Commissioner cannot investigate any complaint where the "act or omission giving rise to the complaint" occurred before 1 October 2001.

### 8.1 Making a complaint

The following contact details are provided, if you wish to make complaint regarding Aurora Energy or your power supply:

Aurora Energy  
0800 220 005  
Postal Address: PO Box 5140, Dunedin Central, Dunedin 9054  
Website: [www.auroraenergy.co.nz](http://www.auroraenergy.co.nz)

Within 2 working days of receiving your complaint about Aurora Energy or its agents, we will acknowledge your complaint in writing.

Within 7 working days of receiving your complaint, we will write to you outlining the action that is intended to be taken to resolve the complaint. In many cases, this will be explained in the letter of acknowledgement, and separate correspondence will not be sent. The objective is to resolve your complaint within 20 working days. Where it is clear that the timeframe required to produce an outcome will extend past 20 working days, we will advise you of this in writing, setting out the reasons why. The delayed status of the complaint will also be brought to the attention of Aurora Energy's Chief Executive Officer.

Where your complaint is not resolved within 40 working days of receipt, or any extended time period approved by the Commissioner, or the above procedure has not been followed, or you are dissatisfied with the solution proposed, then you have the right to refer the complaint to Utilities

Disputes Limited for determination. You must refer the complaint to Utilities Disputes Limited within twelve months of the act or omission that is the subject of the complaint.

You also have the right to refer the complaint to Utilities Disputes Limited for determination, before 20 days have elapsed, in the following circumstances:

1. If we have advised you that we do not intend to do anything about your complaint; or
2. The Commissioner is satisfied that you would suffer unreasonable harm from waiting any longer; or
3. The Commissioner is satisfied that it would be otherwise unjust for you to wait any longer.

## **8.2 Referring your complaint to Utilities Disputes Limited**

The following contact details are provided, if you need to refer your complaint to Utilities Disputes Limited for determination:

Utilities Disputes Limited  
Phone: 0800 223 340  
Postal Address: PO Box 5875, Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145  
Website: [www.utilitiesdisputes.co.nz](http://www.utilitiesdisputes.co.nz)

## **9 Certification**

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This customer charter was prepared and certified in accordance with clause 2.9.5 of the Electricity Distribution Information Disclosures (Aurora Energy Limited) Amendment Determination 2021 on 27 October 2021. A copy of the Director's Certificate can be found in Appendix A.

## **10 Changes to Charter**

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There has been no material change to the previous version of the customer charter as published on our website. The only changes are to incorporate section 9 and Appendix A, relating to Board certification, and this section 10.

We intend to consult on the contents of this customer charter, and for any changes that may arise from that consultation to come into effect during 2022.

## Appendix A Directors' Certificate

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### Schedule 18 Certification for Disclosures

Clause 2.9.5

We, Stephen Richard Thompson and Margaret Patricia Devlin, being directors of Aurora Energy Limited, certify that, having made all reasonable enquiry, to the best of our knowledge, the information prepared for the purposes of clause 2.5.3 of the Electricity Distribution Information Disclosure Determination 2012 in all material respects complies with that determination.



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Stephen Richard Thompson



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Margaret Patricia Devlin

27 October 2021