

Ted Daniels

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

28 April 2024

Dear Councillors?

I **oppose the sale of Aurora** for several reasons that I believe significantly impact the future well-being of our community.

Aurora holds a monopoly over our city's electricity supply network, leaving us with few alternatives aside from expensive investments in solar or wind energy for personal use. Without ownership of the electricity lines, we relinquish control over our future power supply, a critical factor in the long-term sustainability of our city.

Past experiences with the sale of essential infrastructure, such as railways, have demonstrated the risks associated with privatisation. Initial promises of improvement often result in neglect and stripping of assets by subsequent operators. I fear that Aurora may face a similar fate if sold, jeopardising our access to reliable electricity and potentially leading to economic setbacks for local businesses.

While the council justifies the sale with the burden of maintenance costs, it is essential to recognise the value Aurora brings to our city. Despite borrowing for maintenance, Aurora has steadily improved asset value, expanded its customer base, and increased returns. The impact of COVID-19 on revenue and operations should also be considered, as Aurora has managed admirably given the circumstances.

Moreover, selling Aurora would mean forfeiting our ability to influence decisions about future infrastructure, technological advancements, and improvements in electricity generation and supply. It is crucial to consider the long-term consequences, especially for future generations who will inherit the outcome of our decisions.

On another note, the council's ownership of Aurora could benefits such as preferential line charges or discounts. Additionally, important assets like street lights, water pumping stations, and council-owned buildings rely on Aurora for maintenance and supply. The transition to a new owner could disrupt these services, potentially leading to increased costs and reduced efficiency.

The impending reset of electricity distribution services default prices, scheduled for March 2026, will likely result in substantial price increases. If Aurora remains under council ownership, we may have more control over these price hikes. However, under new ownership, the pursuit of profit could lead to significant increases, exacerbating the financial strain on residents and businesses.

Furthermore, the sale of Aurora would place us in the minority among New Zealand councils, most of which value community ownership of essential infrastructure. It is essential to understand why the council is considering this sale and whether the community's voice is being adequately heard in this decision-making process.

Electricity is fundamental to our city's functioning, and we cannot afford to entrust its control to profit-driven entities. I urge you not to sell our most valuable asset, as the short-term gains are not worth the long-term risks. Please explore alternative options to safeguard our electricity supply for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Ted Daniels