

# YOUR NETWORK YOUR NEWS



ENABLING THE ENERGY FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Aurora Energy's community update about the electricity network in Ōtepoti Dunedin, Central Otago/Wānaka and Tāhuna Queenstown.



Aurora Energy Smith Street substation project team

# AN UPDATE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## Kia ora koutou,

We're in the final stretch of a five-year programme to modernise our electricity network across Otago. Alongside these upgrades, we've also been laying the foundation for a more intelligent network, and the sustainable energy future that our customers want.

We're actively supporting New Zealand's transition away from fossil fuels.

I'm particularly proud to be the first lines company in the country to double household solar export limits, meaning customers can sell more of their generated energy to the grid.

The change is in response to growing demand for renewable energy across our network. Smart meter data gave us the confidence that the work we'd done to upgrade our network meant it was ready for the change.

We're also working with local businesses to support their electrification journeys, most recently Speight's Brewery and Prens Drycleaners in Dunedin. Building on this commitment, we became the platinum sponsor of the inaugural Electrify Dunedin event last month, on top being the principal sponsor of Electrify Queenstown in May. The success of both events shows there's strong interest from homeowners and businesses to move toward an electrified future.

### Looking back and planning ahead

There was a strong response to our call for submissions on plans for Queenstown's electricity network to ensure it can best meet the area's growth, demand and ambition to have a carbon-zero visitor economy by 2030.

As part of the Energising Queenstown engagement, we partnered with Transpower and PowerNet to seek input on future transmission supply options for the region. All feedback will be considered as part of our planning process. Thank you to those who took time to share their views.

Our Annual Report and public-facing summary of our Annual Delivery Report have both recently been published and show what we've achieved in the past year. Below is a snapshot of our work during the past regulatory year (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025). Both reports are available on our website and I encourage you to read them.

### Safe is a four-metre word

Safety, especially around our electricity network, is one of our core values. That's why we're producing a new campaign focusing on tradies who often work near overhead power lines and underground cables.

We want them to remember that 'Safe is a four-metre word' and to work at least four metres from our assets, or if they need to work closer then contact us for a close approach consent.

It's a simple but important message, and

one we hope will help keep safety front of mind on the worksite. Keep an eye out for our ads online and on the radio soon and let us know what you think of them.

It's hard to cover all the great things we're doing in such a short space, but the following pages will give you an idea of the breadth of work being done to enable the energy future of our communities. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of 'Your Network, Your News'.

As this is our final update for the year, I want to wish you and your loved ones a safe and restful holiday period.

We're looking forward to continuing to deliver a safe, reliable, and future-ready network for you.

**Richard Fletcher**  
Chief Executive



# ENABLING THE ENERGY FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES

The way communities use technology is rapidly evolving, with more people owning electric vehicles and generating their own electricity through solar panels and battery storage. Aurora Energy plays a crucial role in enabling the energy future of our communities by ensuring our network can support the changing energy needs of customers. This includes working with customers to reach their decarbonisation goals.

## ELECTRIFY DUNEDIN

Last month, we were proud to be the principal sponsor of the inaugural Electrify Dunedin event. This one-day event highlighted the increasing demand and interest in electrification in the area. We enjoyed speaking with guests, and having the opportunity to share our vision for Dunedin's electrified future.

This year's event included a showcase of practical solutions to help businesses and households save money, reduce emissions, and future-proof their operations by upgrading from fossil fuel machines to modern electric alternatives. Electrify Dunedin combined workshops, stalls, and an evening public session featuring case studies, Q&A, and clear pathways for action.



## POWERING SKI FIELDS

Visitors from across Aotearoa and around the world come to ski in Otago, with ski areas central to Queenstown's and Wānaka's culture and economy. We work closely with all the ski fields as they rely on electricity to make snow, run chairlifts and power their buildings.

Sustainability is a priority for NZ Ski, with goals including net zero by 2030, protecting biodiversity, and reducing emissions and waste. Steve Hall, Remarkables Ski Area Manager, says, "We're really focused on progressing those things and we'd encourage others to do the same. It feels like the right thing to do and has also been good for our business. Our relationship with Aurora Energy is vital, supplying reliable power from Frankton. It's a great place to be with that relationship, and we want it to continue going forward".



## SOLAR EXPORTS

We were the first lines company in the country to double how much solar energy households can export back to the grid, from 5 kW to 10 kW. The change to Single Phase Domestic Connections came into effect on 1 August.

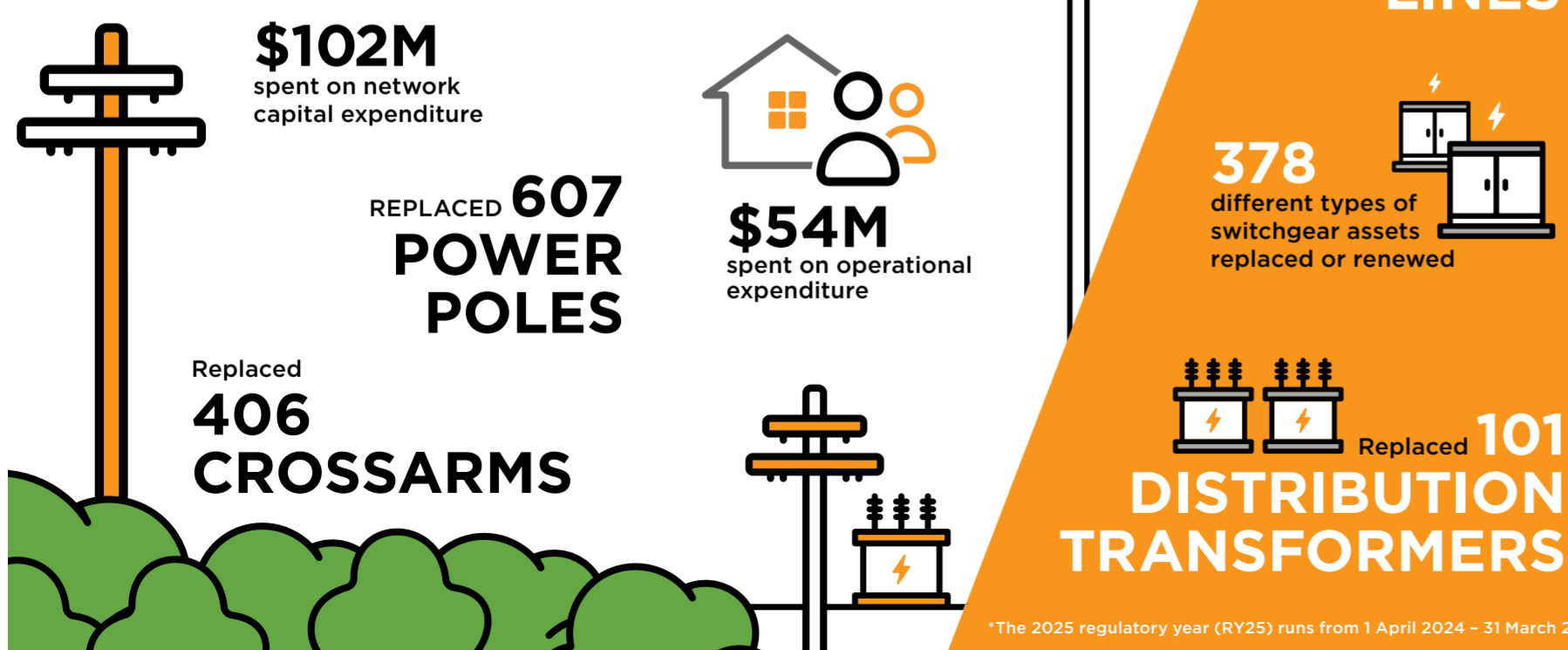
We wanted to encourage greater adoption of renewable energy, like solar and batteries, by making it more appealing for homeowners to generate income.

It seems to be working. We've had strong demand from customers, with many increasing their existing limits, while new customers are choosing to install systems with capacity greater than 5 kW.

If you're interested in increasing your export limit, or installing solar at your place, visit our website or call us on 0800 22 00 05.

## 2025 REGULATORY YEAR AT A GLANCE\* OUR NETWORK

We are pleased with the continued progress we made on asset renewal and maintenance work across the network, to reduce the level of safety risk.



## DELIVERING FOR YOU

We are in the final year of our large, five-year work programme and are investing \$560 million to upgrade our electricity network. Below is a snapshot of major projects either recently completed or currently underway in your area, to ensure future resilience of your electricity supply. Large infrastructure projects can take time to deliver and we hope you enjoy following the updates as they progress.

### ŌTEPOTI DUNEDIN



#### SEVERE WEATHER:

The storm in October caused widespread damage across the Aurora Energy network, leaving more than 16,000 customers without electricity at its peak. Fallen trees and branches brought down power lines and damaged equipment causing widespread faults across the network. We brought in additional crews from Delta, Electronet, NES, Unison, and Asplundh to support the response effort. They attended more than 300 area and single premise faults to restore power to our customers as safely and quickly as possible. Once power was restored to our own customers, we were pleased to assist neighbouring electricity networks in Otago and Southland that were also affected by the storm.

Thank you to everyone for your patience, understanding, and kind messages of support throughout the response.

*Photo: Craig - Delta*

#### DUNEDIN CENTRAL:

A total of 6,000 customers will benefit from two large projects that have recently been completed in the Dunedin Central area. Upgrades at the Smith Street zone substation were commissioned in July, including a new switchroom and electrical equipment. This work was carried out alongside the Smith Street to Willowbank cable intertie project, where we created a ring network to improve the reliability and resilience of supply for customers in the Dunedin Central and Roslyn areas. As part of this project, we installed a new 2.5km 33 kV underground cable across Central Dunedin.

## CENTRAL OTAGO/WĀNAKA



#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY UPDATE - ALEXANDRA AND SURROUNDS:

We're upgrading the Alexandra substation, which supplies electricity to over 4,400 customers across the area. This includes constructing a new building and installing modern equipment that will improve safety and reliability, and provide a more secure power supply.

Extra safety measures are in place until February 2026, when the new network configuration will be completed.

If a fault happens during this time, we may need to briefly turn off power to additional customers (for less than 10 minutes) so contractors can carry out extra checks.

We're also replacing some high-voltage lines in two stages: November 2025 and February 2026. While this work is underway, customers supplied from the Alexandra and Omakau substations will receive power through a single circuit. This circuit can supply all customers.

While it's unlikely, if there's a fault on the remaining line during this time, repairs could take 6-8 hours. We appreciate everyone's understanding as we work to keep everyone safe and ensure a more resilient and future-proof power supply for Alexandra and surrounding areas.

#### POWERING UPPER CLUTHA 2050:

We're currently progressing a number of projects to support short-term growth in the Upper Clutha and Wānaka areas. However, with ongoing population growth and a shift away from fossil fuels, more work will be needed to meet future electricity demand. We're actively exploring several options, including reinforcing existing infrastructure, constructing new lines, and partnering with Transpower to establish a new connection to the national grid for the area. If non-network solutions like solar and battery storage prove effective, they could help defer some of the more expensive upgrades to the local distribution network. We look forward to keeping you informed as plans develop.





**ENERGISING QUEENSTOWN:**

Queenstown's rapid growth is increasing the demand for electricity, and decisions need to be made now to ensure Transpower's transmission infrastructure can support the region's future needs. While alternative solutions like solar and batteries could defer investment, ultimately new infrastructure is still needed. The current transmission system can meet demand until around 2030-2032, and planning now ensures a resilient and secure electricity supply from the national electricity grid through to 2050 and beyond.

Thank you to those who submitted on the recent public consultation. We're now reviewing all feedback and aim to finalise an option to take forward in early 2026.

We'll keep people updated via the Energising Queenstown website: [www.energisingqueenstown.co.nz](http://www.energisingqueenstown.co.nz). Anyone who would like to go on the mailing list to get updates can email: [future@energisingqueenstown.co.nz](mailto:future@energisingqueenstown.co.nz)



**QUEENSTOWN ZONE SUBSTATION UPGRADE:**

The Queenstown zone substation upgrade is now complete! This two-year project has been a major undertaking and involved constructing a new control room and switchgear building, followed by installing new indoor 11 kV switchgear and replacing the electrical protection and control systems. These upgrades also pave the way for future improvements, including replacing outdoor 33 kV switchgear when a new indoor switchgear building is constructed (planned for after 2030). The substation, located at the base of the gondolas, supplies power to over 2,600 customers in Queenstown and Glenorchy.

**OUR COMMUNITIES**

We're in our community every day - connecting power to new homes and businesses and working on the poles, wires and substations that carry electricity to customers. Our community relations programme helps us connect with and understand customers' needs now and in the future. We value feedback and are dedicated to making a positive difference in the communities we serve.



**2025 AURORA ENERGY OTAGO SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY FAIR:**

We were privileged to be the prime sponsor of the Aurora Energy Otago Science & Technology Fair for the 21st year. This year's fair attracted 280 entries from Year 7-13 students across Otago, once again showcasing the incredible talent, creativity and innovation of our region's young scientists. A few weeks after the prizegiving, we were pleased to host a group of 39 winners and parents for a behind the scenes tour of Aurora Energy. The tour is a great opportunity to showcase what we do and the exciting opportunities at Aurora Energy. Thanks to everyone who came along - it was great to meet you all!



**WINTER EVENTS:**

As part of our sponsorship programme, we were excited to support both the Dunedin Midwinter Carnival, and Light Up Winter Cromwell. It was great to see members of the community coming together for these events, which reflect the values we stand for: community, collaboration and resilience. We enjoyed having the opportunity to contribute to something that has a positive impact and brings people out during the dark and cold winter months. We look forward to supporting both these events again next year!



**NEW PUBLIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN:**

Did you know you can get an electric shock, or worse, if you work less than four metres from overhead lines or underground cables? You don't even have to touch them. That's the message of our new safety campaign 'Safe is a four-metre word' that's targeted to contractors and tradies who work near our electricity network. We recently filmed our three new ads and would like to thank Fulton Hogan and Naylor Love for their support in producing this campaign.

Keep an eye out for them online and on the radio soon.

**OUR PEOPLE**

We're a friendly team of over 160 people, bringing together talent and experience from more than 20 countries, working in diverse roles including engineering, planning, project management, finance, digital transformation, communications and more. Get to know the people behind the scenes at Aurora Energy and find out why we enjoy working in the electricity industry.



**Douglas**  
Lifecycle Lead (Stations & Underground)

**What does a typical day in your role involve?**

I analyse asset performance and condition data and make risk-based investment decisions. I also help develop and review strategies for asset maintenance and renewal. The best part of my job is taking a whole-of-life approach to managing assets. Being involved in every stage of electricity distribution asset management lets me take a long-term view when setting objectives and planning strategies to meet the needs of our customers and other stakeholders.

**Why did you choose to work at Aurora Energy?**

I chose a career in Electrical Engineering because I wanted an exciting and challenging field with interesting problems to solve. Aurora Energy offered a role where I could apply my skills and learn new ones. With many capital projects planned, it was a fantastic opportunity. I also enjoy living in Dunedin, with its heritage buildings and stunning scenery.



**JOIN THE TEAM**

Aurora Energy is a great place to work! Head to our website to view our current vacancies: [www.auroraenergy.co.nz/careers](http://www.auroraenergy.co.nz/careers)

# DOING DIY? CHECK FOR POWER LINES

When planning DIY jobs around the home, always put safety first and check your surroundings for overhead lines and underground cables. Before you start work you can submit a 'close approach request' or ask for a temporary disconnection via our website. This process is quick and easy, and it could save your life. As your local lines company, whatever work you're doing, we want you to do it safely.

**Check for electricity cables before you dig**

**Look for power lines before you start work**

**Need a close**

[auroraenergy.co.nz](https://auroraenergy.co.nz)

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