

Councillors' Office



31 May 2021

Shane Ellison
Chief Executive Officer
Auckland Transport

Adrienne Young-Cooper
Chair of the Board
Auckland Transport

CC: Jim Stabback, Chief Executive, Auckland Council

Tēna kōrua,

It has been brought to our attention that there may be ethical issues associated with the acquisition of a fleet of new electric buses by Auckland Transport.

On 25 May 2021, Auckland councillors received an email from an organisation called Uyghur Solidarity Aotearoa NZ requesting we confirm that Auckland Council has no involvement with companies using unethical labour practices.

The email was prompted by media articles linking Chinese company CRRC, who manufacture electric buses and diesel trains, with alleged forced labour.

International media reports and academic research indicate that forced labour is a part of the oppression of the ethnic and religious minority Uyghur people in Xinjiang. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) found CRRC was one of 82 companies "potentially directly or indirectly benefiting from the use of Uyghur workers outside Xinjiang through abusive labour transfer programmes".

Having ordered 98 electric buses from CRRC, Greater Wellington Regional Council is now investigating whether the claims of forced labour are valid; whether the council completed proper due diligence; and whether their code of conduct for suppliers adequately addresses human rights abuses.

Included in Auckland Council's Long-Term Plan (2021-2031), is a \$152 million climate package which aims to move 50 per cent of Auckland's bus fleet to zero emissions by 2030. We recently received confirmation from Auckland Transport's Decarbonisation Manager that some of the new fleet of electric buses which will be purchased from CRRC.

'We note that Variations or new bus service contracts with fleet purchased by bus operators or leasing company. The new electric buses have been manufactured by CRRC in China, Yutong in China and ADL / BYD in UK/ China.' 26 May 2021

Engagement with this company is of significant concern to us as there appears to be credible evidence to suggest that the allegations are legitimate.

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In light of these allegations, we the undersigned urge Auckland Transport to:

- Monitor the outcome of Wellington City Council's investigation into their involvement with CRCC
- Review Auckland Transport's involvement with CRCC unless it can be proven that no links to forced labour exist.
- Commit to a more robust process to ensure there is no future involvement with companies using unethical practices.

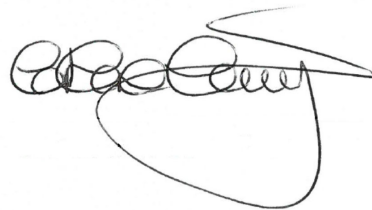
We look forward to reading your response on this matter.

Ngā mihi nui



Chris Darby

North Shore Ward Councillor |
Planning Committee



Cathy Casey

Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa Ward Councillor |
Deputy Chair of Parks, Arts, Community,
and Events Committee



Shane Henderson

Waitākere Ward Councillor |
Deputy Chair of Finance and
Performance Committee



Richard Hills

North Shore Ward Councillor |
Chair of Environment and Climate Change
Committee



Pippa Coom

Waitematā and Gulf Ward Councillor |
Deputy Chair of Environment and Climate
Change Committee



Efeso Collins

Manukau Ward Councillor |