

7.2.3 Notice of Motion #1097 - Community Engagement following Council's April 2022 resolution to item 6.4.1 - Mercury Vapour Street Lighting Upgrade

Responsible GM: Debbie Tyson
Author: Brett Munckton

Recommendation(s)

That Council notes the response to Notice of Motion number 1097 – That a report is presented to Council regarding all aspects of Community Engagement following Council's April 2022 resolution to item 6.4.1

Attachments

1. 558125 Cardinia A 4 DLX Mailout- Proofs (003) [7.2.3.1 - 1 page]
2. 670653 A 4 DLX Mailout (003) [7.2.3.2 - 1 page]

Executive Summary

This report is in response to a Notice of Motion from Councillor Davies heard at the June 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting, being that a report is presented to Council regarding all aspects of Community Engagement following Council's April 2022 resolution to item 6.4.1

On 11 April 2022 Council delegated authority to the CEO to enter into agreements to purchase materials to replace mercury vapour lights with LED lights through the MAV procurement process in the Ordinary Council Meeting under item 6.4.1. The report highlighted that this was required as the mercury vapour lights were becoming unserviceable due to the Minamata Convention that bans their import, export and manufacture.

The report outlined that the street lighting upgrade program had been coordinated with Councils Communication and Engagement team, the report informed that a Communications Plan was being developed to support the projects communication and engagement requirements to ensure the community is kept informed on the projects intent and direction.

Installation of the Ausnet approved light fittings commenced in May 2024. Community members raised concerns regarding the replacement light fittings heritage style being different to that originally installed within the Heritage Springs Estate. Subsequently Notice of Motion #1097 was passed at the June 2024 Council Meeting, requesting a report be presented to Council regarding all aspects of community engagement in relation to this program.

A communications plan for the project was finalised for the upgrade works in May 2022, and this plan has informed communication activities. Discussions with the Communications and Engagement team identified there was no opportunity for residents to influence the decision on the replacement lights, a community engagement plan was not appropriate, and an inform only approach was followed. This is consistent with Council's Community Engagement Policy which was adopted in February 2021. Communication activities to inform the community

regarding the upgrade have included a media release, mail outs, social media posts, connect and newsletter articles and leaflets.

Background

Mercury vapour lighting was one of the main technologies traditionally used for street lighting in Cardinia. In recent years energy efficient alternatives have seen the replacement of many of these lights to reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. In 2021 an audit of our street lights identified that 1900 mercury vapour street lights remained in the Shire. The lights that remained as mercury vapour were generally those lights that could not be easily retrofitted to alternative technology.

The use of mercury has negative impacts on human and environmental health, and the multilateral Minamata Convention prohibits the manufacture, import and export of new mercury vapour lighting products. AusNet services have advised they will not be servicing mercury vapour lights in the future and have developed a program to assist Councils to replace mercury vapour lamps.

In the 2022-23 financial year 845 mercury vapour lights were replaced with LED lights. These included standard lights, and decorative light fittings. Decorative lights are more attractive lights installed by developers to provide a point of difference for an estate. No concerns were raised regarding the 2022-23 works. Following these replacements, 1055 post top lights remained to be retrofitted, and 637 lights were purchased to install in the 2023-24 financial year in Heritage Springs Pakenham, Lakeside Pakenham, and Garfield. Works commenced on these installations in May 2024, with 375 lights changed over in Heritage Springs until works ceased due to the concerns raised by the community.

Policy Implications

The 2017 Cardinia Safer Communities Strategy outlines that Council has a key role in maintaining public lighting.

The 2014 Aspirational Energy Transition Plan sets the direction for Council to continue to replace inefficient street lighting with efficient alternatives as replacement options become available. The replacement of the remaining mercury vapour lights is consistent with these policies.

The Community Engagement Policy 2021-24 outlines that an inform approach to community engagement is appropriate if there is no ability for the public to influence the outcome or decision. Due to this, an inform approach was followed in relation to community engagement for this program.

Relevance to Council Plan

1.1 We empower our communities to be healthy, connected and resilient

1.1.4 Facilitate a partnership approach to create safer communities.

2.1 We support the creation of liveable spaces and places

2.1.2 Plan and maintain safe, inclusive and connected open spaces, places and active travel routes.

2.1.5 Upgrade Council's road network to improve safety and connectivity while considering traffic demand and freight transport needs.

3.1 We value our natural assets and support our biodiversity to thrive

3.1.1 Partner with community, business and industry to take action on, and adapt to, climate change.

5.1 We practise responsible leadership

5.1.1 Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision-making.

5.1.3 Strive to be a customer focused organisation and be a great place to work.

Climate Emergency Consideration

Street lighting electricity has shifted to a 100 percent renewable energy contract from 1 July 2022, so the energy used will not generate carbon emissions. Reducing this energy use however will free up renewable energy on the network providing an indirect environmental benefit.

Consultation/Communication

AusNet Services is the governing authority for electricity and streetlight network across the Shire, only AusNet approved products can be utilised when undertaking upgrades related to the streetlight network. Due to this Council and the Community are not in a position to influence the outcome of this program, therefore, engagement with the community has followed an inform approach. Consultation did not occur as there was no opportunity for the community to influence the works.

Council Officers utilised various methods of communication to inform the community in line with the prepared Communications Plan, the below table details the methods utilised to inform the community about the works to replace the AusNet owned mercury vapour lights.

Table 1: Communications Activities - Mercury Vapour Street Lighting Upgrade program

Date	Details
2 May 2022	Media release - Council welcomes additional funding for vital community infrastructure projects including street lighting upgrade
2 May 2022	Facebook post on Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding including street lighting upgrade
15 July 2022	Facebook post on sustainability projects including street lighting upgrade
Winter 2022	Connect article on street lighting upgrade "The Future is Bright"
20 September 2022	FAQ sheet 2022 – this is something the installers carry and can provide to community members who approach them
28 September 2022	Mail out to residents – Sent to 1611 residents who live near the lights being replaced in 2022/23 in various townships including Pakenham, Garfield, Lang Lang.
7 March 2023	Environmental newsletter article "Mercury vapour street lighting upgrade"
Autumn 2023	Connect article on street lighting upgrade "Lighting the way"
Winter 2024	Connect article on energy improvements including the street lighting upgrade
5 February 2024	FAQ sheet 2024 – this is something the installers carry and can provide to community members who approach them
22 February 2024	Mail out to residents – Sent to 1792 residents who live near the lights that were planned to be replaced in 2023-24 in Lakeside and Heritage Springs Pakenham.

Conclusion

Due to the limited options available to replace the existing mercury vapour lights, an inform approach was followed in relation to community engagement. Various communications have occurred to inform the community regarding the upgrade program.



28 September 2022



032 1

To the resident

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PAKENHAM VIC 3810

Dear Resident,

Re: Street Lighting Upgrade

This financial year street lights in your area are being upgraded with energy efficient LED lights, as part of a staged upgrade of 1900 mercury vapour street lights across Cardinia Shire. The upgrade will improve the energy efficiency of the lights, leading to reduced council expenditure on energy for street lighting. The upgraded lights will also require less maintenance providing an additional cost saving. The replacement lights have improved light quality, generate less glare and better direct light towards the ground where it is needed. They also have a lower degradation rate, improving light output over time.

The works are required to maintain lighting levels, as the mercury vapour lights being replaced are becoming unserviceable as parts are no longer being manufactured for them. Replacement lights of a similar style to the existing lights have been selected. You may notice contractors working in your area undertaking the replacements.

The lighting upgrade is consistent with Council's direction towards zero net emissions, as outlined in the Aspirational Energy Transition Plan. The lighting upgrade is being funded by Council, AusNet Services and the Australian Government (Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program). If you have any questions about the lighting upgrade or would like any additional information, please contact Council's Sustainable Facilities Officer, Brett Munckton on 1300 787 624.

Yours faithfully,

Cr Jeff Springfield
Mayor

Cardinia Shire Council
20 Siding Avenue, Officer
ABN: 32 210 906 807

PO Box 7
Pakenham 3810
(DX 81006)

Phone: 1300 787 624
Email: mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au

www.cardinia.vic.gov.au



22 February 2024



032 1

To the resident

[REDACTED]
PAKENHAM VIC 3810

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Yours faithfully,

Cr Jack Kowarzik
Mayor