



## EDPR 2026-31

### Forum for local government and VicGov on public lighting

#### Summary Notes

Details	Attendees		AusNet Staff
<b>9.30am to 11am</b> <b>Wednesday 24</b> <b>September 2025</b> <b>Online (MS Teams)</b> <b>Chair: Kyle Olsen</b>  <b>Secretariat:</b> AusNet	Abdul Ahad	Paul Brown	Craig Velt
	Adrian Gasperoni	Paul Oakes	Jess Naylor
	Amy Gregorovich	Preeti Verma	Kyle Olsen
	Andy Hodges	Purnima Wilwara Achchige	Mark Elvins
	Beck Squires	Rachael Frampton	Sara Shaik
	Brett Munckton	Rachel Robertson	Eliza Cochrane
	Bronwyn Chapman	Rebecca Lamble	Justin Betlehem
	Carole Hammond	Roland Rozario	Lucy Holder
	Ceri Hurley	Sam Sampanthar	
	David Chow	Sarah Twyford	
	Derek Beautyman	Scott McKenry	
	Faye Adams	Shaun Langlands	
	Grace Davis	Steven O'Brien	
	Hassan Abdullahi	Sudeep Pokhrel	
	Hugh Dixon	Sunil Gautam	
	Ian Culbard	Thomas Hardie-Cogdon	
	Isla Fitridge	Tom Sheahan	
Jack Donkers	Vasili Nicolaidis		
James Alcaniz	Vincent King		
James Wilkin	Will Jackson		
John Edwards	Yuanyuan Li		
Justin Schreuder	Zaylee Saint-James Turner		
Keith Harwood			
Khushpreet Singh			
Ling Qian			
Marvam Khodi			

## Key outcomes

19 councils and the Department of Transport and Planning were represented at the meeting.

- a) **Efficient lighting** – No disagreement from participants on the proposal to transition to 100% efficient lighting.
- b) **Simplifying prices** – No disagreement from participants on the proposal to remove location-based pricing to simplify prices for all councils.
- c) **Smart lighting** – No disagreement from participants on the proposal to replace all major lights to smart lighting and provide an opt-in approach for minor lights.
- d) **Warm light options** – No disagreement from participants on the proposal to provide opt-in warm LED lighting options for designated areas and councils.

Council specific feedback on all topics will be provided via follow-up survey.

## Agenda

Time	Item	Lead presenter
9:30am	Welcome and introduction	Kyle Olsen
9:35am	<b>Near-term public lighting changes</b> Public lighting portal enhancements	Jess Naylor
9:50am	<b>Longer-term changes to public lighting</b> Revising our Electricity Distribution Price Review 2026-31 public lighting proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Efficient lighting</li> <li>b) Simplifying prices</li> <li>c) Smart lighting</li> <li>d) Warm light options</li> </ul>	Justin Bettleheim & Eliza Cochrane
10:55am	Next steps & close	Kyle Olsen

## Summary of discussion

Topic	Discussion points
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<p>Kyle Olsen opened the meeting.</p> <p>Kyle noted the two main purposes for the session – updating users on changes coming to the Public Lighting Portal, and seeking feedback on changes AusNet is proposing to its 2026-31 public lighting plans in response to councils' feedback.</p>
<b>2. Public lighting portal enhancements</b>	<p>Jess Naylor spoke through upcoming changes to AusNet's Public Lighting Portal. Jess noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The changes are scheduled to go live in late October, exact date TBC</li> <li>• Training will be made available</li> <li>• The Greenhouse Alliances will help distribute updates to Councils.</li> </ul>

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**Discussion included:**

- Nil
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**3. Revising our  
EDPR public  
lighting  
proposal**

**a) Efficient lighting**

Eliza Cochrane introduced the next agenda item, focussing on four changes AusNet is proposing to make to its EDPR 2026-31 plans based on council feedback:

- Accelerating the transition to efficient lighting
- Simplifying prices across the AusNet network
- Transitioning to smart lighting for major roads
- Warm LED lighting options

Eliza acknowledged the joint local government submission to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER), made in early 2025 via the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances (VGAs). She noted that the changes proposed today are a direct response to that submission, specifically addressing:

- Accelerating the transition to efficient lighting
- Transitioning to smart lighting for major roads

Eliza introduced our revised proposal to accelerate the transition to efficient lighting. With all remaining inefficient lights being replaced with efficient lighting and average prices not increasing from the current period. The additional costs to replace inefficient lights are expected to be offset by the energy savings from the switch.

**Discussion included:**

- A participant noted their executive will be looking for the actual costs comparing AusNet-led programs vs a council-led program.
- It was noted that smart lighting would be discussed in detail further in the presentation.
- A participant asked whether AusNet would have an approved LED globe to replace the compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) globes in decorative light fittings.
- An attendee noted that their council is in the process of considering decorative upgrades and would value more information on the estimated costings of the option for AusNet to complete these upgrades.
- A participant noted their council street lighting is unmetered and energy charges (and operation, maintenance and replacement (OMR) charges) are based on light type in the database. They asked what sort of time lag is expected for updating the AusNet database and assurance the database will be accurate to avoid being overcharged for energy & OMR? AusNet noted it is working through the process to make sure these changes happen on the same day as part of our system design.

**Through the discussion, AusNet confirmed:**

- Decorative poles can be retrofitted but the fittings that house decorative lights will eventually fail and may not be able to be replaced with the same light, instead with a LED light without decorative features. Additionally, the alternative "corn cob" globes being considered are less efficient.
  - VicRoads' cost-shared lights are included, and that the upgrades include high-pressure sodium (HPS) lights to be replaced.
  - CFLs are considered obsolete lights and will be replaced, as AusNet does not have retrofit globes and lamps. AusNet will consider engineering solutions for decorative CFLs.
  - There are some efficiencies that could be achieved by replacing lights in bulk (e.g. an AusNet-led program) but also some that could be achieved by replacing lights at end-of-life, so we cannot directly compare. This would vary significantly by council.
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## b) Simplifying prices

Eliza introduced AusNet's proposal to remove the location-based pricing split. The only split in pricing remaining would be between councils who have started their LED replacement programs and those who have not. This is being proposed to simplify prices for all councils.

**No participants made comments on this item.**

## c) Smart lighting

Justin Bettleheim introduced the proposal to introduce smart lighting, noting it is the largest and most exciting change coming to public lighting in some years.

He spoke through two trials underway in Manningham and Bass Coast Shire LGAs testing various smart lighting products, and the competitive process underway to procure the best-value technology solution to offer councils.

Justin spoke through the benefits of smart lighting, including the environmental benefits, cost savings, making roads safer, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved asset visibility making it easier to detect and repair faults. Justin also noted Ironbark's advice that councils will save ~\$30 per light per year by moving to smart lighting. He noted the cost per light will increase for the AusNet proportion of the bill but this would be offset by cost savings in usage charges.

Justin noted that this proposal responds to Council's submission via the VGAs and reflects changes being introduced by DEECA. As this is the final opportunity to submit a proposal on public lighting before the AER makes its final decision, we want to make sure it delivers value and aligns with Council expectations.

### Discussion Included:

- A participant noted AusNet's proposed approach is in line with the other four Victorian distribution businesses.
- A participant asked if the cost of smart lighting would be added to the OMR charge.
- A participant asked questions regarding the programming on dimming and trimming for these lights and who would have access and control over this.
- A participant asked whether AusNet expects the increase in the cost would exceed the cost saving, and whether the price increase would be ongoing, or be eventually paid off.
- There was discussion around the variation in OMR charges per installed light, depending on the type of light and the specific circumstances of its replacement.
- A participant commented that a benefit to having the smart lighting system funded through AusNet is that it removes the challenge of working with VicRoads on co-funding agreements. i.e. the ongoing billing already covers the cost recoupment.
- A participant commented that considering they will pay more to AusNet through the OMR charge and possibly less to our energy retailer – noting prices will also rise - it would be ideal that AusNet inform council of the anticipated increase in each years OMR costs to prepare operational budgets.
- When prompted to comment on whether they'd prefer to be proactive in initiating smart lighting or whether they'd prefer AusNet to initiate:
  - A participant said they'd prefer AusNet to initiate and attend Council meetings.
  - Another participant noted councils have asked collaboration to be coordinated via VGAs and MAV.
- A participant asked whether AusNet is looking into sourcing LEDs from overseas to seek competitive pricing. Another participant added there should also be consideration to support local manufacturing where practical.

## Through the discussion, AusNet confirmed:

- Dimming and trimming of smart lighting would be controlled by AusNet but would be set in collaboration with councils. Deployment of smart lighting is proposed to commence from January 2027, with engagement and planning to occur with councils from June 2026.
- The cost would be incorporated into the OMR charge for efficient lights and meter data charges for the specific lights with the smart lighting, with no significant step change to the existing cost of replacing lights and prices remaining smooth as these costs are spread over a longer period.
- Over 10,000 high pressure sodium lights are to be changed over to efficient lighting, and when this occurs, smart lighting technology will also be installed.
- The proposed price increase is offset by the energy savings enabled by the introduction of smart lighting technology. The expected asset life for these lights is 15 years, which is the payback period for councils. If these smart lighting assets are lasting longer than 15 years and don't require replacing, the replacement program would be deferred and councils would see cost reductions until the next wave of replacement begins.
- Final prices can't be confirmed until a decision on our proposal is made by the AER. AusNet confirmed that its proposed OMR prices are going down on a per light basis in the first year and draft prices will be available in December when the AER publish AusNet's Revised Proposal.
- VicRoads pays for replacement of major lights to smart lighting through the OMR charge.
- There is always consideration to support local manufacturing where practical. A reliable supplier and reliable source of assets is important. If a product meets high quality and reliability standards then that product and supplier would be considered.
- Different OMR charges would apply based on the type of light and the circumstance for replacement. For minor lights, charges vary when replaced with efficient lighting and councils may choose to opt-in for smart lighting. Major lights will all be upgraded to smart lighting, and their OMR will be based on light type and circumstance.

## d) Proposing to make warm light options available to councils

Justin introduced AusNet's proposal to make a warm (i.e. yellow) LED lighting option available to councils, noting AusNet has received a number of requests for this. Justin pointed to an example in the Bass Coast Shire Council area where warm lights have been installed.

Justin noted warm lighting options are best suited to typical residential areas, where streets are less busy and traffic moves at a slower speed.

We will seek council specific feedback on warm lighting in the survey following this meeting.

## Discussion included:

- A participant asked whether the \$2 indicative fee would be revisited if there was mass uptake (i.e. it is the norm for residential streets) in a given region for warm lighting.
- A suggestion that all category P lights to be warm lights (3000k), given the benefits for residents' sleep and less light pollution, and these all being low speed local streets.
- Noted councils are responsible for lighting outcomes (i.e. achieving lighting outcomes).
- A participant noted that a small additional cost in OMR to be able to have 3000K lights as a standard product would be preferable compared to the current situation where councils must provide the fitting.

## Through the discussion, AusNet confirmed:

- Its responsibility for warm lighting is just to service the light that is chosen by councils.

- The \$2 fee presented is currently indicative and subject to change, if there was a mass uptake from councils the fee would be revisited. The current price reflects the cost to meet council expectations for warm lighting.

## Close

Kyle Olsen thanked participants and closed the meeting, key points included:

- Confirming the follow-up survey will be sent next week, and open until 24 October 2025.
- The survey will cover some additional questions on the implementation of efficient/smart lighting not covered during the meeting.
- We are seeking specific councils' views and preferences to support this proposal - so the AER approves it - and to better estimate work volumes and timings.
- We would like to see one consolidated response from each council, incorporating feedback from any teams you need to engage with internally.
- We will continue engaging with the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances on your behalf, before finalising and submitting our final proposal to the AER on 2 December 2025.
- The EDPR process also covers topics such as network capacity, reliability and resilience. If councils would like to be kept in the loop on other aspects of our proposal and how they're changing, please let us know.

Action	Responsible	Due date
Distribute minutes, slide pack and post-meeting survey	AusNet	3 October
Provide feedback on revised proposal via post-meeting survey	Councils	24 October
Consider engineering solutions for decorative CFLs	AusNet	2 December