Public Lighting

Frequently Asked Questions

Public lighting is a vital service for our customers, the community and other stakeholders that provides a safe, secure and attractive visual environment for pedestrian and vehicular traffic during times of low natural light. Ausgrid owns and maintains approximately 260,000 streetlights within our network area on behalf of local councils throughout Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter.

Streetlighting frequently asked questions

Who owns and manages public lighting in the Ausgrid region?

Ausgrid owns, operates and maintains the majority of street lighting assets across its network area. Some streetlights in our network area are owned and operated by other entities such as council and Transport for NSW. Ausgrid's streetlight poles are clearly labelled to distinguish them from council and privately-owned lights. For enquiries about non-Ausgrid streetlights please speak to your local council.

Who pays for public lighting?

Each public lighting customer has an account with Ausgrid and pays for streetlighting services provided by Ausgrid. Public lighting customers are generally local councils, government agencies and some community titled estates.

Who decides where there should be public lighting and what level of street lighting?

The road authority (local councils or Transport for NSW) specifies the category of the road, and the associated lighting requirements.

Is there an Ausgrid standard for public lighting?

Ausgrid's Network Standard NS119 specifies Ausgrid's requirements for the design and construction of all public lighting assets that are to be owned and operated by Ausgrid.

What is the NSW Public Lighting Code?

The NSW Public Lighting Code sets out the requirements for the provision of public lighting services by service providers in NSW such as Ausgrid. It can be viewed on the NSW Climate and Energy Action website.

What is Ausgrid's Public Lighting Management Plan?

Ausgrid's Public Lighting Management Plan provides Ausgrid's customers with the public lighting management framework. It is designed to ensure that Ausgrid's public lighting services meet the standards set by the NSW Government's Public Lighting Code and the needs of Ausgrid customers.

Ausgrid strives to work with its customers to provide them with the best possible service while meeting with the obligations of the NSW Public Lighting Code and other regulatory requirements set out by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). Ausgrid is committed to ensuring the safe operation of its public lighting assets while giving safety the highest priority over all other aspects of network management. You can access our Public Lighting Management Plan on our website.

Public lighting repairs

Who is responsible for streetlight repairs?

Ausgrid is responsible for the maintenance of over 260,000 streetlights across Sydney, the Central Coast and Hunter. Some streetlight maintenance is the responsibility of other parties such as councils and Transport for NSW. For example, councils are generally responsible for the lighting of parks, reserves and car parks, and Transport for NSW is generally responsible for lights in tunnels, on bridges and on motorways.

You can check our Streetlight Reporting Map to identify streetlights owned by Ausgrid. For enquiries about streetlights other than those shown as owned by Ausgrid, please speak to your local council or Transport for NSW.

How do I report a streetlight that is faulty or needs repair?

You can report faulty streetlights in your community via our Report a Streetlight Form.

Any information you provide about your streetlight fault can help us fix the problem as soon as possible. This includes helpful information such as the pole number, the number of lights affected, details of the problem with the light and any other relevant information such as the closest residential address and cross street.

If you have difficulties using the service, **please call Ausgrid Customer Service on 1800 044 808** between 9 am - 4.30 pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays, and we will organise to have it repaired as soon as possible.

If you are reporting an electrical emergency, please call us on 13 13 88. If the matter is life-threatening, please call 000 immediately.

How do you undertake maintenance and repairs on streetlights?

We have night patrols to detect the faults on some of the main roads, but we generally rely on the public to inform us about faulty lights. Upon receipt of a fault report, we send the notification to the responsible maintenance crew in the area to plan the repair. Ausgrid crews then safely conduct the maintenance work in accordance with the service levels specified in the NSW Public Lighting Code.

How long do repairs take?

Ausgrid complies with the service levels specified by the NSW Public Lighting Code and carries out unplanned maintenance when it has received a fault report from its customers or members of the public.

Ausgrid aims to repair general faults within 8 business days from the day the report is received. Sometimes a repair is complicated and we need more time to fix a fault. On average, it takes us 25 business days to fix these more complex faults. Faults that could represent higher risk to public, such as faults on pedestrian crossings or fault of more than 3 lights on a major road are attended as priority on average within 4 business days.

Can a public lighting fault be given priority?

Ausgrid carries out unplanned maintenance when receiving a fault report from its customers, the public, and through internal fault detection mechanisms. Ausgrid endeavors to comply with the service levels specified by the NSW Public Lighting Code.

Maintenance of faults is prioritized if the outage involves pedestrian crossing floodlights or a group of three or more consecutive lights on major roads. For these priority faults, Ausgrid will as soon as reasonably possible, take the following steps:

- notifies the road owner (council or Transport for NSW) about the outage
- informs the road owner of the expected timeframe for repairs
- informs the road owner when the repair is completed.

How do I request an additional streetlight?

You need to raise this request with your local council. Councils pay for the street lighting service via tariffs for energy use, capital costs and maintenance. Therefore, only your local council can approve and request the installation of new streetlights. The council undertakes an assessment and review of your request, and, if it's deemed necessary to have an additional or new streetlight, the council will contact Ausgrid to arrange for its installation.

Who is responsible for tree trimming around a streetlight?

Ausgrid is responsible for tree trimming around a streetlight to facilitate safe access to the light. As per the NSW Public Lighting Code, customers are responsible for vegetation management beyond the safe clearance zone to ensure effective public lighting.

Ausgrid publishes a 'Tree Safety Management Plan' to minimize the impact of vegetation on the management of public lighting assets and helps to prevent bushfires from fallen wires and reduce supply interruptions caused by vegetation.

For more information download the Tree Safety Management Plan from our website.

LED Upgrade Program

What is the Smart Street Lighting Upgrade Program

Ausgrid, along with the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) and 33 local councils are partnering to deliver the largest and most advanced smart street lighting upgrade in Australia. The partnership will see more than 90,00 additional LEDs deployed by 2026. The streetlighting upgrade is using latest smart cities technology that will help to detect faults, optimize maintenance, measure energy use and

facilitate off-peak dimming as part of future capabilities. By updating community centered assets such as streetlighting and allowing installation of sensors for parking and air quality, communities can experience safer, more liveable cities with smart city solutions.

What are LEDs?

LED is the short form for 'Light-emitting diodes. Effectively they are semiconductor devices which produce light when an electrical current is passed through them.

The LEDs luminaires being installed are much more energy efficient and reliable older streetlights and each LED is expected to last for up to 20 years.

How long has Ausgrid been using LEDs?

Ausgrid was one of the first Australian utilities to widely deploy LEDs beginning in 2013. With the support of the Southern Sydney Regional Organization of Councils (SSROC) and the 33 councils that Ausgrid serves, more than 190,000 have been deployed since then. LEDs are now Ausgrid's standard for all categories of road lighting and its LED deployment is believed to be the largest in Australia.

Which types of old streetlights are being replaced?

There are a range of older lighting technologies being replaced as part of Ausgrid's continuing LED rollout program, including large numbers of high pressure sodium and mercury vapour lights. Most of the lighting on residential roads has been replaced, with the focus now on replacing the legacy lighting on main roads.

What is the smart street lighting control?

Each of the old streetlights uses a photoelectric cell that contains a small sensor which turns the light on at dusk and off at dawn. Ausgrid's latest initiative on main roads is to instead use smart street lighting controls. These devices are connected to a telecommunication network and can detect faults, optimize maintenance, measure energy use and facilitate off-peak dimming in the future. The lights will also be able to accommodate future smart city sensors.

How many lights are being changed to LEDs by Ausgrid?

More than 190,000 legacy streetlights have been converted to LEDs by Ausgrid in recent years. The partnership with councils will see more than 60,000 additional LEDs deployed over the next three years, mostly on main roads.

When will the streetlights in my area be replaced?

Ausgrid is aiming to finish the LED rollout by 2026 and is working with local councils on individual delivery plans.

Will traffic be disrupted in my area during installation of the new LED streetlights?

We expect the replacement of LED streetlights to be carried out with minimal disruption or outages. In some instances we may need to organize traffic control services, temporary road closures or detours to ensure the safety of our workers and the community While the work is taking place. No civil works or excessive noise is envisaged as part of this activity.

How much will the upgrading to LED streetlights cost?

The cost of the lighting service and the replacement program is approved by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). For most councils, Ausgrid will be funding the capital costs of the upgrades with councils repaying this cost over 10 years. In general, the energy and maintenance savings more than cover the cost of the LED upgrade. Please contact your council if you would like to find out the cost of the LED streetlights being installed in their area.

What are the benefits of LEDs in terms of energy reductions and cost-saving?

Compared to Ausgrid's previous mixed portfolio of lighting, LEDs are reducing energy consumption by about 60% and significantly cutting maintenance costs. By using much less energy than older streetlights, LEDs deliver significant savings on council lighting costs which are ultimately paid by ratepayers.

How long will the LED replacement project take to complete?

The delivery of the latest LED upgrade program, mostly focused on main roads, commenced in 2023 and is expected to be complete by 2026. The actual work in each area will be completed in phases in consultation and collaboration with councils.

Do LEDs increase or decrease light pollution?

The LEDs chosen by Ausgrid have similar total maintained light output as compared to the older streetlights they are replacing but LEDs are better at directing light where it is wanted and not where it shouldn't go. Ausgrid's LED replacement project is expected to dramatically reduce upward waste light compared to the old streetlights being removed. The LEDs are chosen by Ausgrid to meet Australia Standards with respect to glare and obtrusive light beyond the road reserve.

Are LED streetlights harmful and can they disrupt my sleep?

Latest study from Queensland University of Technology, known as Assessment of Blue Light Hazards and Correlated Colour Temperature for Public LED Lighting, suggests that all parameters of LED luminaires are well below exposure limits that would have the potential to disrupt sleep. The study also noted that the circadian stimulus values recorded for common interior nighttime activities (e.g. smartphones and laptops) were between 10 and 100 times higher than those recorded for road users at night under all street lighting technologies.

What is colour temperature and what colour temperature of LED streetlights does Ausgrid use?

Colour temperature refers to the appearance of the light emitted from a luminaire. A colour temperature of 4000K is generally considered neutral white, while a colour temperature of 3000K is considered warm white. Ausgrid generally uses 3000K LEDs on residential roads and 4000K LED on main roads to maximize safety outcomes.

What will happen to the old streetlights that are being removed?

Ausgrid undertakes an environmentally and economically appropriate recycling program for lamps and luminaires that are removed. Ausgrid is also a signatory to the FluoroCycle scheme, which is a national scheme to encourage recycling of mercury-containing lamps.

Why aren’t you replacing these streetlights with solar?

Although solar streetlighting is an evolving technology that advanced over past few years, its use on Ausgrid network is not preferred. As solar streetlights require direct sunlight to operate, they are not suited for most locations across Ausgrid network. Solar Streetlights also require higher maintenance that would increase the cost to Ausgrid’s public lighting customers.

Glare from streetlights

How do I request a glare shield for a streetlight?

Residents seeking to have a glare shield installed on a streetlight should contact their local council. It's the council's responsibility to investigate any complaints about glare issues against the potential impacts that any modification to the existing lighting installation might have on the lighting level, compliance with standards and public safety.

Ausgrid’s recently published 'Public Lighting Management Plan' includes guidelines on glare (light spills) in Section 8.1 and section 11.3, and outlines the process we adopt to address concerns. In summary, if the complaint is substantiated, the council may contact Ausgrid with a request for a glare shield.

The available options will be provided to the council as a quoted service. The council has the option to accept the scope and quoted fee for the project to be delivered by Ausgrid. Otherwise, the council also has the option to engage a third-party lighting designer and contractor to address the glare through a contestable path.

More information

If you have an enquiry about Ausgrid Streetlighting please complete a general enquiry form on our website or call Customer Service on **1800 044 808.**