

Draft Public Lighting Policy

October 2026

BOROONDARA

Responsible Directorate: Places & Spaces
Authorised By: <Council>
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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Public lighting helps make our streets, parks and public spaces safer, more usable and more enjoyable, and supports a vibrant city after dark. The City of Boroondara is committed to providing public lighting that is smart, sustainable and fit for purpose.

This Policy sets out Council's position on public lighting: where, when and what Council will light, the principles that guide those decisions, and how Council responds to requests from the community. It provides a clear and consistent basis for managing public lighting across the municipality and explains Council's approach to residents, businesses, developers and other stakeholders.

1.2 Scope and application

This Policy applies to public lighting that Council owns or manages, or that is installed on Council's behalf. It covers lighting of public spaces, including open spaces, streets and roads. It does not apply to lighting on private property, and Council will not install lighting to illuminate private property.

This Policy covers:

- Unmetered street lighting
- Off-street unmetered lighting
- Council-owned lighting in parks, car parks and facilities
- Creative/feature lighting

Stakeholders include:

- the Boroondara community
- community groups and sporting clubs that use Council reserves and outdoor facilities
- local traders and businesses
- Council staff responsible for planning, designing, delivering and maintaining public lighting
- electricity distributors that own and maintain most street lighting assets, currently CitiPower and United Energy
- developers, consultants, contractors and lighting designers who design or install lighting on Council's behalf

- the Department of Transport and Planning and other authorities whose lighting networks adjoin or interact with Council's network.

1.3 Corporate framework

This Policy supports Council's vision and the strategic directions in the Boroondara Community Plan 2025–35, particularly the commitments to a safe, accessible and inclusive city; a healthy and active community; and a sustainable, environmentally responsible municipality. Community consultation placed particular emphasis on public safety.

Specifically, this Policy supports the following themes from the Community Plan:

- Theme 1: Our Community – Connected safe and inclusive

  Well-designed public lighting helps people feel safe and move with confidence after dark, supporting access for people of all ages and abilities. By lighting the places where the community gathers and travels, Council helps create welcoming, inclusive spaces that people can use into the evening.
- Theme 2: Our Places – Vibrant, accessible and thriving

  Lighting extends the use of streets, parks, shopping areas and open spaces beyond daylight hours, supporting local activity and amenity. Consistent, fit-for-purpose lighting makes public places easier and more pleasant to use and helps activate them throughout the year.
- Theme 3: Our Environment – Sustainable, resilient and connected

  Council designs lighting to minimise energy use, light pollution and impacts on wildlife, favouring efficient, long-lasting and adaptable infrastructure. This supports a lower-carbon, more resilient municipality while protecting the night environment and local biodiversity.

2 Background

Public lighting plays an important role in contributing to the safety, amenity and accessibility of the municipality. By illuminating public areas, Council can support safe movement at night, reduce the risk of accidents, and extend the hours in which community activities can take place.

On roads and paths, lighting improves the visibility of intersections, crossings, bends and other road users, and supports people who choose to walk, cycle or use public transport. In parks, activity centres and around community facilities. Well-designed lighting improves perceptions of safety, supports evening use of public space, and can help deter antisocial behaviour.

Because public lighting can deliver such a wide range of outcomes, and because it carries real cost and environmental impact, it is important that lighting is well planned, fit for purpose, and provided only where it is genuinely needed. Council's existing public lighting policy was adopted in 2005 and predates significant changes in lighting technology, energy efficiency, Australian Standards and community expectations. This Policy updates and replaces it to provide a current and consistent basis for lighting decisions.

2.1 Policy environment

The Road Management Act 2004 (Vic) establishes Council's authority to provide public lighting on roads and road-related areas such as car parks. As land owner or manager, Council is also responsible for lighting at its reserves, buildings and sporting facilities. Most street lighting in Boroondara is owned and maintained by the Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSPs), CitiPower and United Energy, with Council paying a service charge and guiding where lighting is needed.

Public lighting in Boroondara is designed to meet the relevant Australian Standards, particularly the AS/NZS 1158 series, Lighting for Roads and Public Spaces. These standards set recognised minimum requirements for lighting different types of locations.

Although compliance is not legally enforceable for Council, Council applies the standards because they represent accepted best practice for safety, visibility and consistency. Using recognised standards gives the community confidence that lighting decisions are fair, evidence-based and consistent rather than made on a case-by-case basis. Where Council departs from a standard (for example, to protect a sensitive environmental area) it does so deliberately and for a clear reason.

2.2 Policy context

This Policy has been developed to comply with relevant Australian laws and legislation and to complement applicable standards, policies, codes and strategies. A full list is provided in section 6.1, Related documents.

3 Methodology

This Policy was developed using a combination of desktop research, technical review and targeted consultation. Council reviewed its existing 2005 public lighting policy, relevant Australian Standards (including the AS/NZS 1158 series and AS/NZS 4282), and current best practice in sustainable and smart public lighting. This was complemented by a review of Council's strategic framework, including the Boroondara Community Plan 2025-35 and related plans and strategies, to ensure the Policy aligns with Council's broader objectives.

The roles and responsibilities of external parties, including the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and the electricity distributors (DNSPs), were examined to clarify where Council's responsibilities begin and end. Together, this evidence base informed the principles, standards and positions set out in this Policy.

3.1 Consultation

The Policy was developed in consultation with relevant teams across Council, drawing on their operational knowledge and differing perspectives on public lighting. A series of workshops were facilitated with Asset and Capital Planning, Capital Projects, Placemaking, Open Space and Trees, Traffic and Transport, Climate Action and Sustainability, Health and Wellbeing, to understand current practices, test the proposed principles, and confirm responsibilities and processes. The views and priorities raised through these workshops were considered and reflected in the Policy.

The consultation process also included external parties to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities for public lighting. Ongoing discussions with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and the electricity distributors (DNSPs) informed the Policy's description of responsibilities for metered and unmetered lighting and for lighting on declared roads.

Community consultation will be undertaken through Council's Your Say Boroondara consultation website from 17 November until 15 December 2026. Feedback received from the community through this process will inform the finalisation of this Policy.

4 Policy statement

4.1 Objectives of public lighting in Boroondara

Public lighting in Boroondara seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

1. **Create a safe night-time travelling environment**

   Lighting plays a key role in providing safe travel for road users, cyclists and pedestrians.

   Good lighting design enhances people's experiences of the city, helping provide visual comfort and improving the visibility of objects, people and places.

2. **Enhance community use of open space**

Boroondara's comprehensive network of parks and reserves supports an active community and provides important links between destinations.

A growing population and increasing urban density result in greater demand for open space within the city, including at night. Lighting these areas at night promotes health and wellbeing and supports community connections.

3. **Ensure minimal environmental impact**

   Excessive lighting can negatively affect local biodiversity, contribute to light pollution and consume energy, generating greenhouse gas emissions.

   Designing and installing lighting that is holistic, appropriate and fit-for-purpose helps ensure minimal environmental impact.

4. **Use assets that can be managed effectively throughout their lifecycle**

   Public lighting requires significant resources to manage. Using long-lasting, consistent and affordable infrastructure only where it is required will minimise failures, support long-term resilience, and enable the efficient allocation of resources.

5. **Be adaptable to changing needs and circumstances**

   Boroondara is a dynamic city. Through the use of smart technology, lighting can be used to enhance the way Council responds to the ever-changing requirements for lighting across the city.

   Council will consider integrating smart technology as standard in all new lighting as part of best-practice asset management.

4.1.1 Guiding principles

Council's decisions about public lighting are guided by the following principles, which are balanced against one another in every design:

- minimising negative impacts on the environment, including on biodiversity, trees and the night sky
- maximising energy efficiency and minimising climate impacts, including the continued transition to LED
- making better use of open space by supporting appropriate evening activity
- assisting walking, cycling, the use of public transport and safe driving
- improving safety and security of public spaces
- ensuring lighting assets are economically sustainable to install and manage
- showcasing urban and natural features in an effective and selective way.

4.2 When, where and what Council will light

Council provides lighting only where it supports the objectives of this Policy. Lighting must be appropriate for the location and operate at the required level and times. The table below sets out Council's general approach for common locations. Council always considers site-specific factors and applies the detailed requirements through Councils Public Lighting Guidelines.

Location	Council's general approach
Roads and streets	Lit from dusk until dawn to the level appropriate for the road type and use, in line with Australian Standards, with light dimmed during quieter periods where smart controls allow.
Shared paths, including greenways	May be lit where they form genuine travel routes. Controls are used to reduce lighting when paths are not in use.
Regional, Municipal and Neighbourhood parks	Only paths and thoroughfares are lit, not open lawns, and usually only where a path is a genuine through route or supports valued evening activity. Controls are used to reduce lighting when paths are not in use.
Local, Small Local parks and Local Links	Not lit, unless a path provides an important link to a destination such as an activity centre or transport stop.
Biodiversity sites and habitat areas	Not lit because of the impact on wildlife, unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case the most sensitive lighting solution is used.
Playgrounds	Not lit, as playground activity is best suited to daylight hours.
Car parks	Lit where there is night-time activity, together with pedestrian links to the facility the car park serves. Controls are used to reduce lighting when car parks are not in use.

Location	Council's general approach
Laneways	Not lit, unless a laneway is a logical, well-overlooked pedestrian route where lighting can be installed and maintained appropriately.
Activity centres, shopping strips and shopping centre interfaces	Relies on existing street lighting; additional or feature lighting and car park lighting will be considered to support placemaking and safety. This will support the local economy.
Sports grounds	Lit where there is demand, designed to the relevant sporting standards, with extended community use considered on a case-by-case basis.
Recreation areas	Basketball courts and skateparks are generally not lit unless they are used for organised competitive sport. Push-button controls may be used where suitable.

Council lights public spaces where they are genuinely needed for safety, access and use, considering how a place functions and how busy it is, not simply because an area is dark. When lighting operation is matched to need, where available, Council uses smart and adaptive controls to dim or switch lighting during quieter hours while maintaining the right level when activity is higher.

These decisions also reflect Council's commitment to minimising light pollution and energy use. Poorly directed or excessive lighting causes glare, spill and sky glow and can disrupt wildlife, so Council directs light only where needed and uses efficient LED luminaires and controls to keep energy use, cost and carbon emissions as low as practicable.

4.3 Following recognised standards

Council designs and installs public lighting to meet the relevant Australian Standards and recognised industry guidance as provided in section 0. This ensures lighting provides an appropriate and consistent level of safety and visibility for the way each location is used. Applying recognised standards also allows Council to assess requests and complaints objectively, by comparing existing lighting against an accepted benchmark rather than relying on individual judgement.

4.4 Sustainable and smart lighting

Council uses energy-efficient LED technology for all new lighting installations. New and upgraded lighting is designed to support smart technology so that light levels can be tailored to need, faults identified quickly and energy use reduced over time. By directing light only where it is needed, smart lighting helps reduce glare, light spill and sky glow and limits impact on residents, wildlife and the night environment. Council also favours durable products that are commercially supported in Australia and can be reused or recycled at the end of their life.

4.5 Responding to community requests and complaints

Council assesses requests and complaints fairly, consistently, and transparently. Requests for improved street lighting are considered under this Policy and Council's *Priority Lighting Program*. Requests for improved lighting in other public spaces are considered under this Policy. Council will advise residents directly affected by a lighting change in writing.

When Council receives a request to install, improve, remove or relocate lighting, it considers the need, whether lighting is suitable and feasible for the location, and how the request compares with recognised standards. If lighting is warranted, Council will consult affected residents where appropriate before proceeding. If a request is not supported, Council will explain why.

Complaints about over-lighting or light spill may be assessed against the relevant standards and the circumstances of the site, and may be resolved through measures such as dimming, shielding or other treatments. Complaints about lighting being obscured by trees are referred for assessment and pruning where appropriate.

Council's detailed procedures for assessing requests and complaints are set out in its Public Lighting Guidelines, which staff apply when responding to enquiries.

4.6 Decorative/non-standard unmetered lighting

Council will install new decorative or non-standard unmetered lighting only by exception.

Non-standard assets carry additional financial risk and higher ongoing costs because Council must procure replacement luminaires, as DNSPs do not hold non-standard stock. Standard equipment keeps lighting reliable, cost-effective and consistent across the municipality.

Where decorative or non-standard lighting already exists, Council will seek to maintain it within reason for the remainder of its usable life. At the end of its life, Council will prefer a transition to standard assets.

5 Implementation and monitoring

5.1 Evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed in 2032, when there are significant advances in lighting technology, or when significant changes to Council's internal roles and responsibilities for public lighting occur.

5.2 Accountabilities

For questions or feedback about this Policy, contact the responsible department below.

Position title	Contact number	Contact department email
Coordinator City Assets	9278 4444	strategicassetmanagement@boroondara.vic.gov.au

6 References

6.1 Related documents

External related documents:

- AS/NZS 1158 Series – Lighting for Roads and Public Spaces
- AS/NZS 4282 – Control of the Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting
- Electricity Distribution Code of Practice
- National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife
- Asset Plan Guidance 2022 – Local Government Victoria
- Traffic Engineering Manual Volume 1– Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)

Council plans, policies and strategies:

- Boroondara Asset Plan 2025-35
- Boroondara Community Plan 2025-35
- Boroondara Greenways Plan 2026
- Boroondara Greenways Implementation Plan 2026-2035
- Public Toilet Strategy 2025

- Healthy Ageing in Boroondara 2020
- Bicycle Strategy 2022
- Boroondara Bicycle Strategy Implementation plan
- Climate Action Plan 2021
- Open Space Strategy 2013
- Urban Biodiversity Strategy 2024-34
- Balwyn Access Plan 2013
- Camberwell Junction Access Plan 2014
- Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan 2024
- Graffiti Management Strategy 2020
- Laneways Strategy for Shopping Centres 2016
- Road Management Plan 2026
- Traffic Management Procedures 2018

6.2 Definitions

Term	Definition
Decorative lighting	Refer to 'non-standard'.
DNSP	Distribution Network Service Provider, also known as Energy Distribution Business (EDB), also known as distributor.
LED	Light emitting diode.
Luminaire	A complete lighting unit comprising the light source, fitting and control gear.
Non-standard lighting	Lighting that is typically not held in stock by DNSPs, sometimes also referred to as 'decorative'.
Priority Lighting Program	A transparent, strategic multi-year program that prioritises street lighting improvements using four criteria: • road category, such as local access, link or secondary road • proximity to high-activity paths, such as those near schools or aged-care facilities • location on a public transport route, such as a bus or tram route • the current lighting level compared with Australian Standards.

Term	Definition
Private lighting	Lighting that contributes to the illumination of the public realm but that is not owned, managed or controlled by Council. This might include shop awning lighting, shop front lighting, business security lighting or supermarket car park lighting that is owned by the supermarket itself.
Standard lighting	Lighting that is typically held in stock by DNSPs and is found on their list of products approved for use.
Street lighting	Lighting provided along residential streets and main roads.
Smart lighting	Lights connected to a smart lighting system that allows remote adjustment of light levels, automatic fault reporting and the use of additional sensors.