

A powerful advocate for industry



Brodie Easton

Lighting Council Australia increases political pressure and continues to deliver for industry – **Brodie Easton**, Public Affairs & Environment Manager.

Following the May 2019 election, Lighting Council Australia re-affirmed relationships with Senators, Ministers, MPs and staff of all political persuasions. Lighting Council has continued to advocate for sensible regulation, significant enforcement and strong education programs. Lighting Council devoted significant resources to engage with Government on two key industry concerns - The Commonwealth Trajectory for low energy buildings; and the 2019 National Construction Code.

COMMONWEALTH TRAJECTORY FOR LOW ENERGY BUILDINGS

This Commonwealth Department of Energy and Environment project is aiming to reduce the energy used in new and existing buildings. New buildings are the domain of the National Construction Code. The Commonwealth is drafting a report on potential measures to update existing residential and commercial buildings. This report will be presented at a COAG meeting in December, 2019.



Low quality LED's may be unsafe, not provide sufficient light, flicker when dimmed, change colour over time, fail prematurely or not fit into an existing fitting.

The draft reports released in July include proposals to promote/extend the existing state government incentive schemes, add tax incentives and impose costs on landlords/owners through voluntary/mandatory minimum energy standards on rental properties or disclosure of energy performance at point of sale/lease.

Lighting Council made three submissions advocating for: Lighting to be considered separately to other products areas; Acknowledgement that LED MEPS will likely apply in Australia in 2021 (reducing the need for further incentives); Inclusion of the disadvantages involved with Government intervention in markets; and Highlighting that legacy lighting technologies are naturally fading quickly from the market.

A review of the 2017 Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program performance report revealed this program is being adversely affected by significant amounts of non-compliance and fraudulent activity (i.e. over claiming of certificates). Lighting accounted for over 93% of certificates created in 2017, primarily through schedule 34 lighting upgrade activities for commercial buildings.

LCA remains strongly opposed to Energy Efficiency Obligation (EEO) schemes that unnecessarily intervene in free market activities and finance upgrades that would have occurred regardless of these schemes.

NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CODE 2019

The new National Construction Code (NCC) energy efficiency provisions will apply as of 1 May 2020 following the publication of the NCC 2019. LCA lobbied substantially on behalf of industry for improvements in the initial proposed code delivered by the Australian Building Control Board (ABCB), this resulted in a more workable outcome for all sectors.

Following the publication of the NCC 2019, a concise industry guide has been drafted to highlight the ways in which designers, engineers

and contractors can maximise the power allowance for lighting under Section J, *Energy Efficiency*.

LCA in partnership with the International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD) hosted a number of free workshops in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide to present the changes to the NCC Section J6. Keynote presentations were delivered by well-known industry experts, Tim Hanson from GLG, Andrew Parker of Evolt, Simm Steel, David Crossley and Steve Brown from the IALD.

INDUSTRY EDUCATION

Lighting Council Australia has recognised the existing lack of lighting market education material. Government energy upgrade schemes have failed to acknowledge that education plays a pivotal role in the uptake of quality energy upgrades and in turn increases market compliance, promotes product understanding and reduces the fraudulent activity that seems rife throughout the energy upgrade schemes.

Lighting Council released its LED Buyer's Guide earlier this year. This Guide has been designed to help consumers purchase quality lighting products and avoid purchasing non-compliant lighting equipment. LCA will soon release a LED pocket guide modelled off the LED Buyer's Guide to be distributed nationwide for use of lighting wholesalers, electrical contractors, designers and general public consumers.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

The war on waste is a significant topic of discussion in 2019 as Australia's waste creation and inappropriate disposal continues to exacerbate. As of 1 July 2019 Victoria, now enforces a state-wide ban on disposing e-waste to landfill. This follows the ban already in operation in South Australia.

Lighting Council Australia administers two nation-wide environmental programs aiming to increase the recycling rate of end-of-life and waste lighting products while also promoting sustainable recycling practices across the nation. The Fluorocycle and Exitcycle product stewardship schemes respectively aim to increase the recycling rates of mercury containing tubes and end-of-life emergency and exit lighting batteries. These schemes have been in operation for a number of years now as voluntary lighting industry product stewardship initiatives.

As affiliated recyclers continue to advance recycling infrastructure and collection services, the



opportunity to recycle waste fluorescent lamps and tubes through the Fluorocycle scheme are growing. Lighting upgrades from older generation mercury-containing lighting to more efficient LED's will further increase this waste stream. When placed into landfill mercury converts to the toxic methylmercury and spreads through the wider environment posing a risk to both humans and ecosystem. Readers are encouraged to utilise the Fluorocycle website to learn more about recycling fluorescent lamps and tubes.

Similarly, Exitcycle rewards signatories who commit to appropriately disposal of end-of-life emergency and exit lighting batteries. A large percentage of the currently installed quantities contain older generation, toxic heavy metals and pose a serious risk to both the environment and humans when dumped into landfill. The Exitcycle website provides information on how lighting industry participants can become involved in this important initiative as well as guidance on the appropriate disposal of emergency and exit lighting batteries.

NATIONAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN LIGHTING

In 2019 LCA hosted the Inaugural National Awards for Excellence in Lighting at Sydney's Doltone House, Hyde Park. The sell-out gala event celebrated the lighting industry and awarded the companies and professionals who excelled in their chosen operations.

Following the great success of the event in May, LCA will again be hosting the awards in 2020. The Awards will return to Doltone House at Sydney's Hyde Park on June 16.

Businesses wishing to become involved or sponsor the 2020 awards should contact Lighting Council Australia at info@lightingcouncil.com.au ■

LINKS

Fluorocycle Website: <https://www.fluorocycle.org.au/index.php>

Exitcycle Website: <https://exitcycle.org.au/>

95% of mercury-containing lamps and tubes are sent to landfill in Australia.