

MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY – SECTOR SPECIFIC GUIDENCE

Technical Bulletin

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is an international treaty designed to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The Convention aims to eliminate this source of mercury pollution by prohibiting the manufacture and trade of certain lamps containing mercury. Australia is expected to ratify the Minamata Convention by the end of 2021 and implement by March 2022.

The Convention will not affect the ongoing sale, installation or operation of these lamps (until domestic supplies run out).

In short, the Minamata Convention is expected to alter the lighting market in the following ways:

- Fluorescent lamps – No change is expected in the fluorescent lamp markets due to manufacturers and Australian suppliers already complying with the lower mercury limit requirements since around 2018.
- High pressure mercury vapour (HPMV) lamps:
 - Countries that ratify the Minamata Convention (the majority of countries globally) will no longer be able to manufacture, import or export HPMV lamps.
 - HPMV lamps will not be able to be imported into Australia after March 2022 (noting also that no manufacturing of HPMV lamps occurs in Australia).
 - HPMV lamps imported into Australia before March 2022 will be grandfathered indefinitely and so able to be sold and installed until stocks are exhausted.
 - The global manufacture of HPMV lamps has decreased over recent years and this has caused an increase in HPMV lamp prices.
 - The Australian Government has flagged since 2013 that it will likely ratify the Minamata Convention and it is expected that the market will continue its transition to LED luminaires.
 - Many public street lighting luminaires and some industrial luminaires use HPMV lamp technology.

Lighting Council Australia notes that high quality LED luminaires are widely available to replace HPMV luminaires and there are significant energy, emissions and bill savings advantages to installing LEDs. Also, there are significant maintenance savings (i.e. 50% savings due to long life LEDs) and



environmental savings (i.e. LED luminaires do not contain mercury) when LEDs replace HPMV luminaires. Find reputable LED suppliers [here](#).

Lighting Council Australia recommends that electrical contractors consult with their lighting suppliers regarding suitable LED replacements for HPMV luminaires. LED lamp replacements are available in some cases; however, LED luminaires are the better option due to being a longer-life, high-quality, high efficiency product.

Lighting Council Australia also encourages installation owners and contractors to sign up to our [Fluorocycle](#) program to assist the environment and enable the claiming of environmental credentials.

Further information and resources are available at the [Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment](#).

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