

Resolution of Council

21 August 2023

Item 12.3

Electrification of Homes

Moved by Councillor Davis, seconded by Councillor Ellsmore -

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the City's Net Zero Performance controls that will come into effect from 1 October 2023 are a major step towards carbon reduction in relation to new offices, shopping centres, hotels:
 - (a) the planning controls, developed over four years, require new office, hotels and retail developments to reduce energy use through efficiency and renewable energy or be capable of achieving net zero energy prior to commencing use;
 - (b) this work paved the way for a similar state-wide policy. The new standards are ambitious but achievable and provide a clear pathway for developers to improve energy performance and transition to net-zero buildings. They will help the City achieve our target for net zero emissions by 2035 and will contribute to the NSW Government's goal of net zero emissions by 2050; and
 - (c) however, the new standards do not apply to residential development. The current BASIX SEPP, and the upcoming Sustainable Buildings SEPP includes a non-compete clause that prevents councils from introducing planning controls that set higher environmental requirements than the state planning policy such as requiring that only renewable energy be used in new residential developments;
- (ii) that we know industry can do better and there is an urgent need to make sure that future residential developments are not locked into using gas; and

- (iii) the Victorian Government has recently announced that all new homes will be required to be fully electric from 1 January 2024;
- (B) Council further note:
- (i) we are in the middle of a housing and cost-of-living crisis and people are struggling to pay their increasing energy bills. From July this year, NSW residential energy customers face gas price increases of as much as 23.7 per cent;
 - (ii) all electric homes, that don't use gas, are cheaper to run. Recent modelling from the Climate Council in 2022 shows that homes in Sydney could save \$924 a year on their bills if they switched gas appliances to electric ones;
 - (iii) a report released this month by Energy Consumers Australia states that as more households switch to all electric appliances and heating and renewable energy, those that can least afford to get off gas will end up paying more;
 - (iv) gas is also highly toxic to human health. A 2018 study in the Medical Journal of Australia found that gas cooktops are associated with around 12 per cent of childhood asthma in Australia. Stanford University researchers have linked gas stoves and ovens to carcinogenic chemicals like benzene. Long-term exposure to benzene is linked to acute lymphocytic leukaemia, chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, multiple myeloma, childhood leukaemia, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma;
 - (v) 350 Australia's Electrify Your Council campaign is calling on Councils across the state to change their planning rules to require all-electric, gas-free new homes with some councils already implementing change through their planning controls, such as:
 - (a) Waverley Council is banning indoor gas appliances on health grounds by requiring only electric ovens, cooktops and space heaters are installed in new residential development; and
 - (b) Parramatta Council is requiring all new residential and non-residential developments in its city centre to be all electric, and is currently considering further changes to require all new non-residential buildings to be all-electric; and
 - (vi) the Lord Mayor recently wrote to and met with Penny Sharpe, Minister for Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Heritage asking the NSW Government to urgently develop a plan supported by incentives or rebates to transition homes and businesses from gas to renewable energy;
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate the opportunities and challenges with amending the City of Sydney's planning controls to require all new residential developments, and development not captured by the City's new Net Zero planning controls, to be all electric and report back to Council via the CEO Update, including next steps, as soon as possible; and
- (D) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to Chris Minns, Premier of NSW urging him to develop a plan supported by incentives or rebates to transition homes and businesses from gas to renewable energy.

The motion was carried on the following show of hands:

Ayes (8) The Chair (the Lord Mayor), Councillors Chan, Davis, Ellsmore, Kok, Scott, Weldon and Worling

Noes (2) Councillors Gannon and Jarrett.

Motion carried.

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