

Resolution of Council

23 October 2023

Item 10.1

Transitioning to Heat Pumps in City Aquatic Centres

The original motion was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Ellsmore.

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the City's pools are currently heated by gas, and the City has started work to electrify our aquatic centres this financial year;
- (ii) the City's Environmental Strategy 2021-2025 includes plans to phase out natural gas from City operations, by developing a plan to electrify gas-using assets and in the interim involves purchasing "renewable gas" for all its needs by 2025;
- (iii) renewable gas can be generated from composted food or the nutrients in wastewater, through an anaerobic digestion facility. Gas is then injected back into the gas grid to supply home and business gas needs, as natural gas does, but with a much lower carbon footprint;
- (iv) renewable gas is no substitute for wide-scale electrification and renewables uptake, decarbonising industry and transport systems, or simply making our energy use more efficient. These are all things the City is doing as well;
- (v) when burned, both "renewable" and natural gas releases nitrous oxide, a pollutant that creates smog and lowers air quality;
- (vi) "renewable gas" - a highly processed gas that still contains at least 90 per cent methane – is a greenhouse gas that is capable of significantly damaging the climate more than carbon dioxide if left in the atmosphere; but when the methane is captured and burned as renewable gas instead of natural gas we reduce net fossil fuel gas emissions. Renewable gas is the least worst option while we work to electrify our aquatic centres;

- (vii) GreenPower's new Renewable Gas Certification Pilot was recently launched, enabling commercial and industrial gas users to match their gas consumption with renewable gas that is added to gas networks on their behalf. The City hopes to be a part of this pilot; and
 - (viii) the Commonwealth Government have established the \$100M Community Energy Upgrades Fund, which council pools are eligible for; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) investigate options to retrofit all City-owned pools and aquatic centres with heat pumps as soon as practicable and while minimising impacts on the operations of the City's aquatic centres;
 - (ii) report back to Council via the CEO Update with timeframes for the transition;
 - (iii) provide a report that compares the sustainability, cost and ease of transition between the use of renewable gas and heat pumps in aquatic centres; and
 - (iv) report back to Council via the CEO Update with the report and its outcomes.

The motion, as varied by consent, was carried unanimously.

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