

## Item 12.2

### Notices of Motion

#### Co-Funding for Aerial Bundled Cables (ABCs) with Councils

By Councillor Scully

It is resolved that Council submit the following motion for consideration at the next Local Government NSW Annual Conference:

It is resolved that:

- (A) Local Government NSW note:
- (i) the NSW Government is aiming to plant five million trees across Greater Sydney by 2030 to help achieve its goal of increasing canopy cover to 40 per cent;
  - (ii) increasing the tree canopy in our local parks, streets and neighbourhoods will provide much needed shade and shelter from heat, improve our air and water quality, improve health and wellbeing and build our resilience to climate change;
  - (iii) street trees provide the most urban cooling benefit, as they shade hard surfaces like buildings and asphalt;
  - (iv) electricity distributors only consider small trees suitable for planting under powerlines. Pruning to ensure safe clearances by electricity distributors can often significantly reduce the urban canopy;
  - (v) when overhead low voltage bare wire cables are upgraded to insulated cable known as aerial bundled cable (ABC), trees can grow closer to the wires and can be directionally pruned around the wires, allowing for larger trees and greater canopy cover;
  - (vi) local residents regularly express concern regarding the heavy pruning of street trees by contractors as overhead bare wire cables cannot come within close proximity of tree canopy;
  - (vii) currently if a council wants to upgrade the network from bare wire to an aerial bundled cable, it would need to hire an Accredited Service Provider and would bear the full cost of the upgrade;
  - (viii) in preparing for its Draft Plan 2024-29, Ausgrid consulted with Councils through various working groups. At the vegetation management and resilience groups, several councils asked for more aerial bundled cabling;
  - (ix) Ausgrid is proposing working with Councils to co-fund upgrades to ABC, as part of a broader climate resilience program;

- (x) the proposal includes a priority funding program for councils with low urban canopy cover and low proportions of ABC in their overhead network. Priority councils would receive a 70 per cent funding contribution from Ausgrid. It also includes a non-priority program which provides 50 per cent co-funding contribution;
  - (xi) Ausgrid is seeking a letter of 'in-principle' support from councils for the program in their Draft Plan 2024-29, in support of a budget allocation for fund which would see Ausgrid allocating \$12.2 million to work with local governments to deliver more aerial bundled cable;
  - (xii) local governments and residents across NSW would benefit if both Essential Energy and Endeavour Energy, the network operators for Greater Sydney and parts of regional NSW, were to implement similar co-funding programs for councils; and
  - (xiii) many councils may still find the costs of these upgrades prohibitive, and the NSW Government could support councils with funding for their contributions, which would enable the NSW Government to achieve their canopy cover goal of 40 per cent; and
- (B) Local Government NSW:
- (i) ask NSW councils to support the co-funding proposal;
  - (ii) write to Essential Energy and Endeavour Energy to encourage implementation of similar programs across Greater Sydney; and
  - (iii) write to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for funding to support councils with their contribution towards the program.

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