

St James Network Renewal Undergrounding Program Pilot (NRUPP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What are the benefits of underground power?

The practical, aesthetic and safety benefits of converting to underground power include:

- Improved property values by the enhancement of streetscapes and increased tree canopy in line with both the City of Canning and Town of Victoria Park Urban Forest Strategies.
- Greater reliability of power with the eradication of power supply interruptions caused by storms, trees, birds, vandalism, equipment failure and motor vehicle crashes with poles.
- Reduction in power supply surges due to overhead line faults and consequently a reduction in surge damage to electrical appliances and equipment.
- Better street lighting, all newly installed light poles will have Light Emitting Diode (LED) luminaires (globes) which can help to deter crime and improve road safety.
- Reduction in tree pruning to keep branches clear of overhead wires.
- Safer environment with a reduction in hazards caused by damaged wires and people pruning trees near power lines.

Will the underground power go all the way to my meter box?

Yes. The contractor carrying out the project work will install a new underground cable within each property and connect it to the meter box when the street main cable has been energised. The property owner becomes the owner of the private underground cable from the point that it leaves the pillar and is responsible for any future repair or relocation if required. The below diagram shows a typical installation.

Note: The street cable (shown as "NETWORK") will generally be only on one side of the street.

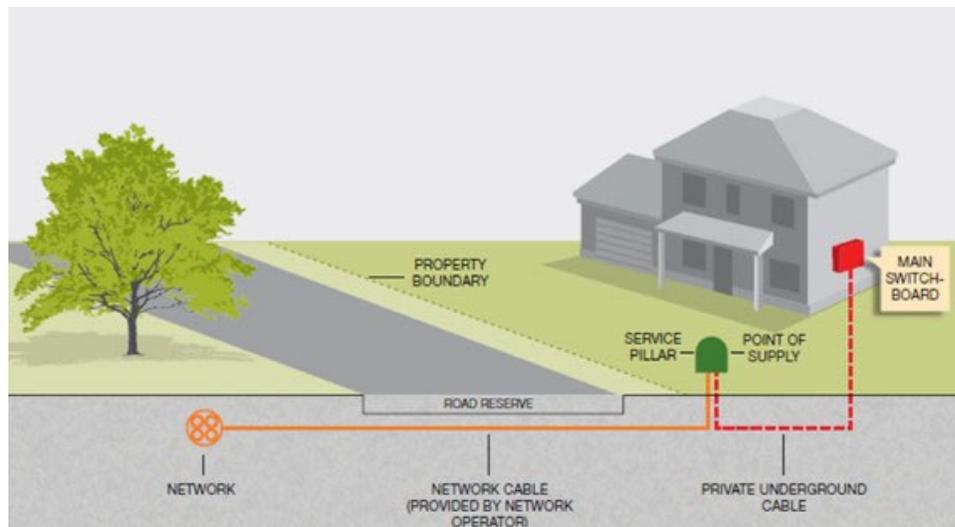


Figure courtesy of commerce.wa.gov.au

Where will the green dome go?

Location of the green domes has been determined during the design process. Green domes are located in a front corner of the property, just inside the front boundary adjacent to a side boundary. Usually every second property has a green dome installed, with two adjoining properties being served by the one dome. There are two sizes of dome, the smaller size being known as a "mini-pillar" and the larger size known as a "uni-pillar." Uni-pillars are located in approximately 10% of properties. It is necessary as part of the operational function of the network to have the larger uni-pillars at approximately 10% of pillar locations.

Will the new street lights go in the same positions as the old ones?

Street lighting has been designed in accordance with the current Australian Standard. In order to meet that standard, new light poles will be positioned and spaced appropriately. Positioning of new street light poles will be determined during the design stage, taking into account the location of existing infrastructure and street trees within the road reserve. The road reserve being the road and the verge including the footpath up the property boundary.

When will the old poles and wires be removed?

This will be the very last part of the project. The old poles and wires will be taken away after all properties have been connected to the underground supply and all testing and commissioning has been carried out satisfactorily. There may be a short period of time where the old street lights are not working and the new street lights are also not operational. Alternatively, there may also be a short period of overlap where both the old street lights and the new street lights are operational.

Will my power supply be interrupted during the project?

There will be a short period when the power is cut off (outage) when a property is converted from overhead supply to underground supply. Generally about four to five hours is allowed for the changeover, however, the actual outage is quite often much shorter than that. Each property owner will be notified in advance when the changeover outage is planned.

What if I need power on constantly because of a medical condition?

Any property where a person resides who is registered as having a medical condition which necessitates constant power supply will be given special consideration when the changeover is programmed. The affected resident or his/her carer will be contacted so that arrangements can be made to carry out the changeover without risk to the affected person's health or welfare.

Will I need to call in an electrician?

No. All work connected with the project, both within the road reserve and within each private property, will be carried out by the contractor engaged to carry out the project.

Will I get a new electricity meter?

No. power will be supplied to the existing meter via underground cable. Unless the meter is identified during the connection process as malfunctioning, it will not be replaced as part of the project.

Who will be responsible for any damage to my property?

The contractor engaged to carry out the project will be responsible for rectifying any damage caused in carrying out the works. All street verges are video-recorded before any work commences as a complete record of original conditions. Affected verges and footpaths will be reinstated to a condition as close as possible to that which existed prior to works commencing. Should you have any queries about your verge or footpath, please contact Western Power on 13 10 87 or the City.

Will the roof bracket near my gutter holding the overhead wires to my house be removed?

No. The overhead wires to each property will be removed after the property is connected to the underground supply. The old brackets on properties where the overhead wires feed into the property will not be removed, for two reasons. Firstly, many of the old brackets and their mountings are decades old and removing the brackets may cause damage to the property. It is therefore left to the property owner to remove the brackets, should they wish to do so, after the underground project is completed. Secondly, many of the brackets are located on or near material containing asbestos and it is beyond the scope of the project for the contractor to be dealing with or disturbing material which may contain asbestos on private property.



Typical roof connection bracket

What if I don't want underground power?

The City of Canning and Town of Victoria Park Councils have determined that it will proceed with the project, it is not viable for an individual property owner to 'opt out' of the project as all overhead distribution power lines will be removed.

Will I have a choice between paying a lump sum or by instalments over ten years?

All ratepayers with an existing overhead power supply to a building on the site, within the area that is to receive underground power, will make a contribution to the scheme. Council has resolved to provide two options to allow those who cannot afford a lump sum payment the opportunity to pay by instalments with your annual rates over a ten (10) year period. The amount payable is the lump sum payment plus interest incurred on the low interest loan that Council takes out on behalf of the ratepayers. The loan amounts may be subject to change from time to time during the loan period based on State Government determination.

How will I notify the Local Government of my chosen payment method?

Before issuing the levy for the effected ratepayers in the defined area will receive a payment method nomination form to complete and return to their local government. In the event that the local government has not been notified of a ratepayers chosen payment method, the default payment method will be instalments with interest over a ten (10) year period.

Can I change my payment method later on?

In order for the local government to raise a loan, ratepayers must decide whether they wish to participate in the Lump Sum Payment option or the ten (10) year instalment option. The chosen payment amount will be levied in March 2022 rate notices. Ratepayers will not be able to change their elected payment method once the local governments has entered into a loan repayment program with the State Government.

If I choose to pay by instalments when is my first instalment due?

Ratepayers who wish to participate in the ten (10) year Instalment option will have their first instalment for underground power incorporated on their rate notice to be issued in March 2022. The instalment amount for underground power will be due on the same date as the normal rates and charges.

Are the amounts different if I am an eligible Pensioner or Senior?

Eligible pensioners and seniors are entitled to rebates on underground electricity charges as determined by the State Government, as per the guidelines set out below:

- *Holders of a Pensioner Concession Card, State Concession Card or a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card WITH a WA Seniors Card, will be entitled to receive either up to 50% rebate or full deferral on underground electricity charges.*
- *Holders of a WA Seniors Card, who do not hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, will be entitled to receive a single \$100 rebate on underground electricity charges for the first year only of the scheme.*
- *Western Australian Seniors Card holders were not entitled to defer any underground power charges.*

If you are receiving a rebate on your current Rates Notice, your pensioner or senior concession will automatically be applied to your Underground Power Charge.

Can I defer my Underground Power Charge?

Ratepayers who choose the ten (10) Year Instalment option and are eligible pensioners are entitled to defer the payment of the Underground Power Charge in the same way they defer rates. Should the property be sold within the ten year period the deferred amount is required to be paid in full at settlement. Entitled seniors cannot defer any rates or charges.

What happens if I become a Pensioner/Senior during the 10 Year Instalment Option?

Ratepayers who become eligible Pensioners or Seniors during the term of the Underground Power Scheme are entitled to a proportional rebate in the first year of application and then the full concession, subject to capping, in subsequent years. Ratepayers who choose to make a Lump Sum payment at the commencement of the Scheme and subsequently become Pensioners or Seniors during the Scheme are not able to claim a concession. Seniors are only entitled to a concession in the first year of the Scheme.

What happens if I sell my property after the scheme has been approved by Western Power?

The owner of the property on the due date of the levy being charged is responsible for full payment for the property. Underground power charges are not apportioned between the buyer and seller and the seller is required to pay the balance of charges at settlement.

- *If you, as the seller, have already paid the lump sum amount there will be no adjustment as part of the property settlement.*
- *If you, as the seller, have decided to participate in the ten (10) year instalment option the local government will calculate the remainder of the scheme costs to the end of the term and provide this information to your settlement agent for payment at settlement. You will be responsible for the full costs and they will not be adjusted between you and the buyer.*