

Underground Power Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Individual Property FAQs

1. Will my power be turned off as part of the upgrade?

Your power will need to be switched off for a short period at the time of the changeover to the new underground power system. This usually takes no more than one hour. You will be notified by the contractor prior and will not need to be present for this to take place.

2. What if 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.

3. Will I be able to access my property at all times during these works?

Yes, access will be maintained at all times for residents.

4. Will the contractor need to access inside my property boundary as part of these works?

No, in most cases you will not need to be home and contractors will not need to get inside your property.

However, should the contractor need to access inside, or to the rear of your property, or your meter box is locked, they will contact you to prior to make arrangements for access.

5. Does the cost per property include the connection to my meter box?

Yes. The cost includes a new underground property service connection from the green dome near the front of your property to your meter. 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 contractor will attach an illustration showing the route of this cable inside the meter box.

6. What will happen if my property, verge or footpath at the front of my property is damaged as part of these 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.

7. Will I have to re-wire my house if I have an older house?

No. If, during the connection process, it is observed that any existing wiring is in a dangerous or unstable condition, the property owner will be notified and a report made to the appropriate electrical safety authority.

8. Do I have 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.

9. Will I get a new electricity meter?

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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.

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Overall Project Works FAQs

1. How will this work be carried out?

Western Power's contractor will deliver an installation advice notice a few days before their work commences. They will begin by locating existing underground services in preparation for trenching and horizontal drilling of verges to install the new cables.

The underground power cable installation requires a combination of horizontal directional drilling and traditional trenching. Excavation works may occur on the verge in front of your property. We will endeavour to minimise damage to footpaths, reticulation and crossovers wherever possible while keeping disruptions to a minimum.

All work excavations, extruding cables and conduits will have bunting or fencing around them to ensure the safety of local residents. Should you wish to discuss anything about the day to day activities on site then please contact the Western Power contractor in the first instance on 13 10 87.

This project will greatly improve the overall amenity of the area and bring significant benefits in terms of safety, security and continuity of supply. We assure you of our commitment to carry out the work with as little impact on property and occupiers as possible, and ask for your cooperation and tolerance.

Throughout the project you will receive notifications from the Western Power contractor to advise you of upcoming works in your street.

2. Why are these works being carried out?

The Town is very supportive and committed to this major project. The benefits underground power will deliver to property owners and residents include; reliable power supplies, streetscape enhancements and a safer and more secure environment. When the project is complete, all residential properties within the Town of Claremont will be enjoying these benefits.

3. When are these works due to be completed?

The works to underground the power supply will commence in April/May 2018 and will run for approximately 13 months (maximum 15 months) with a planned completion around June 2019, weather and contractor conditions permitting. Refer to the map.

4. Will the entire street be closed off during these works or just the area of immediate works?

No, traffic management will be in place where work is being carried out and occupiers will be advised of any restrictions or street closures associated with the work.

5. Will new streetlights be installed as part of these works?

Yes, new streetlights will be installed as part of these works.

6. Will the overhead network be removed as part of these works?

Yes, all overhead distribution poles and wires will be removed. Some transmission lines and poles will remain. Please view the map for the location of the transmission network.

7. Will the Transmission poles and wires be removed?

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Due to excessive costs, the Western Power transmission lines along parts of Alfred Road, Shenton Road, Claremont Crescent and Ashton Avenue will not be removed however, all distribution lines that service home and street lights will be removed. Please view the map for the location of the transmission network.

8. Will works be carried out at night?

Most of the works will be carried out during normal daylight works hours (7:30am-5:30pm) however in some cases, some night works may be needed. Notice will be delivered 3 days prior to commencing any night works inside or outside or in the nearby vicinity of the property boundary.

9. Will the high voltage power lines also be put underground?

No, high voltage lines along Barnfield Road, a portion of Alfred Road, Guger Street and Loch Street cannot be put underground.

10. Will the works be closed over holiday periods?

There will be a break from works over the Christmas period. Notice of project shutdown will be delivered to all properties within the project boundary as soon as Christmas shutdown dates are known.

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Payment FAQs

1. What is the cost to me?

The project will be funded two thirds by the Town, with the remaining third being contributed by property owners in the area. This equates to \$3500 per property which is a similar cost to property owners as it was when the Town undertook a similar project in the south ward approximately 15 years ago.

The households with an existing underground power connection from the pole to the household will receive a 10% discount bringing the cost to \$3150.

2. When will I receive an invoice?

Property owners will receive their UGP invoice in July 2018, separately and after the Rates Notice has been issued.

3. What payment options will be available?

There are two payments options to choose from:

- a. One off payment for the total amount due or
- b. Quarterly payments over five years (please note instalment option will incur an extra cost)

Eligible pensioners and seniors may be entitled to a rebate subject to the entitlement being registered with the Town.

4. How can I pay?

There are a number of payment options. Please refer to the bottom of your UGP statement for more information.

5. Why is there an extra cost for paying by instalments?

The Council incurs a cost for managing outstanding debt and this cost is then passed on to the ratepayer. Pensioners and seniors are exempt from this cost.

6. Why is this not included in my rates?

We are providing ratepayers the option to pay the Underground Power Charge by instalments over five years, which is not possible to do with annual rates and this is why it is invoiced separated.

Further to this, the Office of State Revenue have different concession rebates for annual rates and UGP meaning that rebates have to be managed separately.

7. What if I cannot afford to pay?

Everyone is offered to pay the UGP invoice via instalment over a five year period. Pensioners also have the option to defer payments. Please contact us for more information on payment plans or deferred payments.

8. As a pensioner am I entitled to a discount on the full amount or instalment option?

Pensioners and seniors who currently receive a rebate on their council rates may be entitled to a rebate against their charges for underground power, in accordance with the State Government Pensions and Seniors' Rebate Scheme. For more information about rebates, please contact us.

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9. If I reside in a strata complex will the charge get split evenly between the strata owners?

No, all property owners are required to contribute equally.

10. If I already have underground power will I have to contribute?

Yes but you will receive a discount. Most of the project cost is for underground network that replaces the old overhead system in the street, and owners will need to contribute towards that cost.

11. What if I refuse to pay?

As the same with annual rates, penalty interest is accrued at a rate of 11% on overdue balances. Overdue accounts are referred to an external debt recovery agent for collection and additional legal fees may apply.

12. What if I sell my property?

Similar to rates, if you sell your property prior to paying the full amount of your invoice, your UGP liability will be paid out at settlement as part of your settlement adjustment.

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Other FAQs

1. What if I don't want underground power?

Unfortunately it is not possible to opt out of the upgrade or the charges. To achieve the benefits of underground power, ALL properties must have it, otherwise the remaining above-ground service outages can affect the whole Town. All properties will receive the benefits of underground power through enhanced safety and improved service reliability therefore Council has decided to distribute the charges between all households.

2. What if my land is vacant?

Owners of vacant land will be charged for the cost of underground power, the same as for Council rates and deep sewerage.

Western Power will change each property over from the overhead to the new underground system. The old overhead system is then removed as soon as possible.

3. What happens if my property is on the border of the City of Nedlands? Does underground power still apply?

Yes, if you have received a letter from Town of Claremont then your property is part of the catchment that is in the proposed area for underground power.