

IDAVic President's Report 2018-2019

We met quarterly at the ASV Lodge, Burwood, and thank the Astronomical Society of Victoria for allowing us to use it free of charge. Members unable to attend often participate by video conference.

Our small team of dedicated volunteers have made steady, and significant, progress this year. Small steps – evolution, rather than revolution.

In a refreshing move, the City of Maroondah (Melbourne) invited public submissions to their lighting plan. IDAVic's submission and those of members, recommended that luminaires be CCT 3000K, at most. Maroondah were congratulated for acknowledging that excessive ALAN creates a false sense of security within the minds of citizens.

In their "Overview of environmental impacts" document prepared by Ironbark Consulting it was noted that "...the community, including members of the International Dark Sky Association have implored Council to place more emphasis on mitigating the impact of artificial light at night on the natural environment as well as human health. In response to this, Council has commissioned the development of this document, which seeks to examine possible alternatives or solutions, and identify any potential changes that could be made to the Draft Public Lighting Guidelines." The last sentence is a step forward in potentially challenging current practices. IDAVic needs to test some of the assumptions and the evidence put forward justifying street lighting having CCT of 4000K.

IDAVic has continued to raise awareness about the detrimental impacts of blue-rich ALAN. Sadly, authorities who have power to enable change are unwilling to entertain change.

Revisions of two key Australian/New Zealand Standards were anticipated this year; AS/NZ1158 – 'Lighting for roads and public spaces' and AS/NZ4282 – 'Control of the obtrusive effects of outdoor lighting'. The latter was published on the 13th February 2019. The guidelines of the 1997 version were elevated to requirements in the 2019 revision. A key aspect of IDAVic's submission, the importance of minimising obtrusive lighting from blue-rich sources (supporting documents referenced), was completely ignored. However, Appendix C of the document recognises that, for biota "(t)oo much light at inappropriate times via artificial lighting may have significant adverse effects on life processes". Nowhere in Appendix C is there any direct reference to the impacts of artificial lighting on *humans* – a very serious omission. A critique of the revised Standard prepared by IDAVic member, Dr Barry Clark, is gratefully acknowledged.

Problems of excessive ALAN – street lighting and lighting on site - continue at Melbourne Observatory, a registered observatory protected by the requirements specified in the revised Standard, AS/NZ 4282:2019. Melbourne City Council's cursory response to a complaint concerning the above has been passed to Melbourne City Councillor, Rohan Leppert, who maintains a special interest in Melbourne Observatory. He is working to improve MCC's awareness of the impacts of obtrusive lighting at MO, and elsewhere, as a

member of the Future Melbourne Committee. IDAVic will continue liaison with Cr Leppert in this important opportunity to influence government policy.

While AS/NZ 4282:2019 now specifies requirements, Cr Leppert has questioned that no statutes exists which empower the MCC to enforce it (a point that another Council has made in defending their lack of action in enforcing the Standard). However, it is maintained that ISO 31000:2018 contains the overarching principles to empower authorities to apply AS/NZS 4282:2019. ISO 31000:2018 contains principles applicable to a wide range of government activities, including strategies and decisions, operations, processes, *functions*, projects, products, *services* and *assets*. Of key import is that ISO 31000:2018 can be applied to *any type of risk*, whatever its *nature*, whether having positive or negative consequences. Cr Leppert's response is awaited.

Publication of the revised AS/NZS 1158 is awaited.

IDAVic has continued to support Friends of Lake Wendouree Natural Environment in their efforts to broaden community awareness and concern about the ecological impacts of extra lighting around Lake Wendouree. The evidence is sound, but the Council remain committed to the plan. The objection continues.

Institutional member, the Mornington Peninsula Astronomical Society (MPAS) have been invited so seek "Urban Night Sky Place" status with IDA to protect their observatory at The Briars in the long term. IDAVic have offered to assist in guiding them towards this objective.

IDAVic advised ASV President Perry Vlahos regarding his submission to the local Council about a poorly shielded streetlight shining into his habitable area. The Council listened and improved the shielding.

Despite the number of followers of our Facebook Page rising to 648, the number of financial members has fallen. This trend is indicative of Society moving away from formal memberships, but instead support IDAVic by following the group, asking questions, seeking advice and adding article links. From different sources the number of public supporting IDAVic is over 1,000. In the coming year work must continue to build our public profile into the wider community.

We have purchased a number of "Turn on the Night" light and environment STEM kits to educate students and the general public about light pollution issues and then assist to find simple solutions. IDAVic will explore avenues for making best use of these.

I thank the team for their support and efforts, especially the Secretary, Judith Bailey, and the Treasurer, Dr Nick Lomb.

IDAVic is looking forward to continued progress in support of our objectives.

Dr Russell Cockman

President IDAVic

November 2019