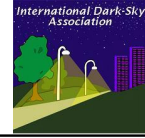




Newsletter 7 – July '07

RASNZ Dark Skies Group



Welcome

Welcome to the seventh newsletter of the Dark Skies Group of the RASNZ.

Sorry about the lack of a newsletter with the email in May. That is the risk of last minute deadlines. I left for an overseas break the day after posting that email. A week later I checked my email at a café and was impressed with the response to Newsletter 6. Oops! Unfortunately I couldn't reach the newsletter file to resend it.

Good News Newsletter

In many ways this issue can be called a good news newsletter.

TVNZ

In Newsletter 6 I raised the issue of TVNZ's "We Are ONE" promotional advertisement where many people gather to shine lights, including torches, car headlights and sports field lights into the night sky.

I was calling for help to write to TVNZ and complain about the message given by the ad. There has been some progress made but I am disappointed to see the promotion is still being shown.

Of the organisations that I wrote to other than TVNZ, only the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment replied to me. Her reply is very encouraging.

In her reply to me she stated: *"I agree that a Crown Owned Company such as TVNZ has a role in ensuring that the content of its promotions are consistent with environmental sustainability."*

"In response to your letter, we contacted TVNZ and learned the Minister for Broadcasting had received other enquiries about this promotion. I have sent the enclosed letter to the Chairman

of the TVNZ board." (She also sent a copy to the Minister)

In her letter to TVNZ the Commissioner says, *"I encourage TVNZ to consider how it promotes itself, to ensure that the messages conveyed in its advertisements are consistent with environmental sustainability and our sense of clean, green New Zealand."*

"It is becoming more common practice for an organisation's policies to aim to minimise the environmental impact of its activities. An organisation such as TVNZ can shape its policies both to minimise its environmental footprint and to ensure that it positively influences New Zealanders' attitudes to the environment."

I feel this is a good response. It shows that the time is right for raising the issue of light pollution, and there is some hope that we can effect change.

Thank you to anyone else who engaged in this issue.

New Lighting Technology

"Prime Minister opens sustainable streetlighting landmark."

"In early June 2007 a streetlighting technology first was officially marked with an opening ceremony addressed by the Prime Minister the Rt Hon Helen Clark."

"The Coromandel township of Whangamata has seen the commissioning of the very first CosmoPolis white light streetlighting system in the Southern Hemisphere."

"Auckland based lighting specialist Modus Lighting Ltd is partnering with Philips Lighting NZ Ltd to market advanced streetlighting solutions in New Zealand to make inroads into the very

major potential for streetlighting energy savings and emissions reductions.”

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU0706/S00273.htm>

“Helen Clark noted that public lighting is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from Local Councils, accounting for between 30-50% of all Council greenhouse gas emissions. “

“She stated that poorly designed and implemented streetlighting was wasteful and contributed not only to excessive energy consumption but also to emissions, glare and light pollution.”

“The Prime Minister stated that the Government had recently introduced new and tighter regulation for home energy efficiency and also and more stringent limits for lighting efficiency for commercial buildings.”

“She indicated that continued Government leadership in sustainability would be forthcoming and that updated streetlighting efficiency measures lay ahead, for introduction by 2009.”

It is likely that these measures will include Minimum Energy Performance limits or MEPs. It is important for us that shielding and directional control of outdoor lighting is included in the new efficiency measures.

The Prime Ministers statements are an important breakthrough in the path to better lighting. I'll be quoting them whenever I can.

Industry Contact

Bryan King, director of Modus Lighting Ltd above, made contact with me at the recent RASNZ Conference. Over breakfast we covered a range of topics.

He reassured us that our message is being heard at high places among the Electricity Commission (EC) and the Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority (EECA).

Bryan wears several other hats including Deputy Chairman and Environment Spokesman for the Lighting Council of New Zealand, and is a member of the Lighting Efficiency Stakeholder Group established by the EC, EECA and Lighting Council.

Bryan is very supportive of our work and has been in touch several times with helpful advice.

A new angle on security lighting

Have a look at the following link. This introduces the idea of using infra red light and cameras for security monitoring instead of white floodlighting which contributes to light pollution.

<http://www.info4security.com/story.asp?sectioncode=11&storycode=4113527&c=1>

I am interested in any comments about this idea. What would the effect of more IR have on astronomy e.g. astrophotography or photometry?

Nelson Action

Two enquiries from Nelson City area shows there is a growing concern about lighting in that area. These contacts with councils can be hard work but do raise awareness of the issues amongst both staff and councillors. Once that happens they then pick up on the topic in other arenas. I wish the Nelson folk all the best.

PowerPoint Presentation

At the RASNZ Conference in Auckland I presented a PowerPoint show that is intended for use by anyone, including

Astronomical Societies wanting to raise awareness of the issue of light pollution in NZ.

Last week I presented the show to the Invercargill Environment Centre. Hopefully we can get it to other groups like councils and community groups.

It is a work in progress as new information keeps coming to hand.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the presentation let me know and I will forward a copy on CD for a small fee to cover p&p. It is too big to email.

Note there is an earlier copy on the conference CD.

That's all for now.

Best regards,

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