

Vegetation Management Working Group

Thursday 13 August 2026
Meeting #1



Welcome and Chair address

Kim Syrus, Incoming Chair

Vegetation Management Working Group





Acknowledgement of Country

SA Power Networks acknowledges the multiple Traditional Owners of the lands that host the South Australian electricity network and their connections to land, sea, and community. We would also like to pay our respects to all First Nations peoples past and present, acknowledging their deep connection to Country, Culture and Community.

Connection With Country, 2025 by Kelly Taylor & T'Keyah Ware

Agenda and Introductions

Patrice Pearson, Stakeholder Engagement Business Partner



Empowering South Australia

Agenda

Topic	Presenter	Engagement
Welcome and Chair Address	• Kim Syrus, Chair	Inform
Agenda and Introductions	• Patrice Pearson, Stakeholder Engagement	Collaborate
Vegetation Management overview	• Desinta Jeffries, Head of Program Delivery	Inform
Our work with stakeholders	• Patrice Pearson, Stakeholder Engagement	Inform
<i>Morning Tea</i>		
Vegetation operational update	• Brett Chalmers, Vegetation Manager	Inform
Planning our priorities together – workshop	• Sara Fielden, Executive Facilitator	Involve
Future meetings	• Patrice Pearson, Stakeholder Engagement	Consult
Thank you	• Desinta Jeffries, Head of Program Delivery	Inform

Our Vegetation Management Working Group members 2026

Name	Title	Organisation / Industry representation
Kim Syrus	Chair	Nursery and Garden Industry South Australia
Randall Bates	Group Manager	Trees For Life
Megan Lock/Sam Bykow	Environmental Officer / Team Leader Horticulture	Light Regional Council
Sarah Wozniak	Senior Policy Officer	Local Government Association
Dr Stefan Caddy-Retallic	Regional Coordinator and Senior Lecturer	Adelaide Uni and Resilient South Partnership
Kaarina Sarac	Senior Policy Officer, Green Adelaide	Department Environment and Water
Monika Rhodes	Team Leader, Environmental Strategy	Alexandrina Council
Geoff Booth	Program Manager – Environment	SA Water
Ian Furness	Principal Engineer – Electricity	Office of the Technical Regulator
Gavin Malone	Cultural Geographer, Land Steward and community biodiversity volunteer	Biodiversity McLaren Vale
Henry Haavisto	Manager Urban Trees	City of Campbelltown
Tony Hall	City Arborist	City of Tea Tree Gully
Marcus Lodge	Consulting Arborist	Arborman (SME as required)
Dean Whitford	Contracter	Active Tree Services (SME as required)

SA Power Networks representatives in the room

Name	Title
Desinta Jeffries	Head of Program Delivery
Brett Chalmers	Vegetation Manager
Maddison Cross	Vegetation Operations Supervisor
Patrice Pearson	Stakeholder Engagement Business Partner
Guests	
Sara Fielden	Facilitator
Dan Bowditch	Vegetation Contact Officer

Introductory activity - 5 mins

Introduce yourself to another member and discuss if your role was a movie or soundtrack, what would it be?



Vegetation Management overview

Desinta Jeffries, Head of Program Delivery



Empowering South Australia

2026 Strategic Plan

Our **Vision and Strategy** sets the direction for SA Power Networks. To deliver this vision we need to ensure we are focused on evolving our core services and operations while looking ahead to how we can enable the future. We have three unifying pillars: *customer, network and people*.

Our **Values** are created to be meaningful to our people and apply equally to all of us.



Our vision

Connecting South Australians to a better energy future, today.

Our focus

Evolve the core and enable the future

Our value and impact

Customer
Deliver great service to our customers and the community, continuously adapting to their evolving needs

Network
Provide a safe, reliable and resilient network that efficiently supports the decarbonised energy needs of our state

People
Enable an aligned, capable and connected workforce, focused on safely delivering the right outcomes for our customers

Our values

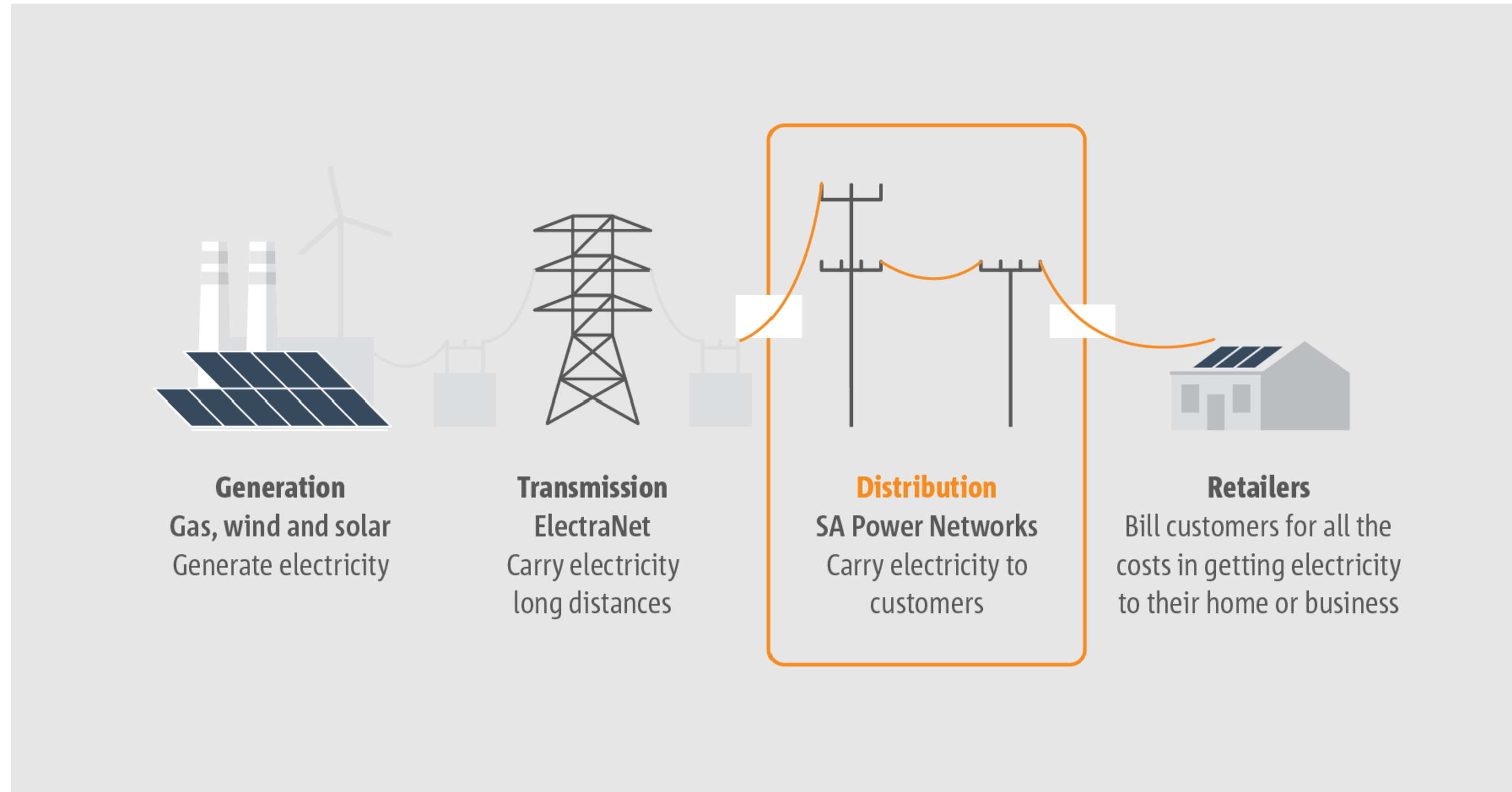
we **keep** everyone **safe**
Our first priority, always.

we collaborate with purpose
Working together to achieve great outcomes.

we take the initiative
Seeking and acting on opportunities or challenges.

we rise to the challenge
Stepping up to meet the needs of our community and teams.

Our role in the electricity supply chain



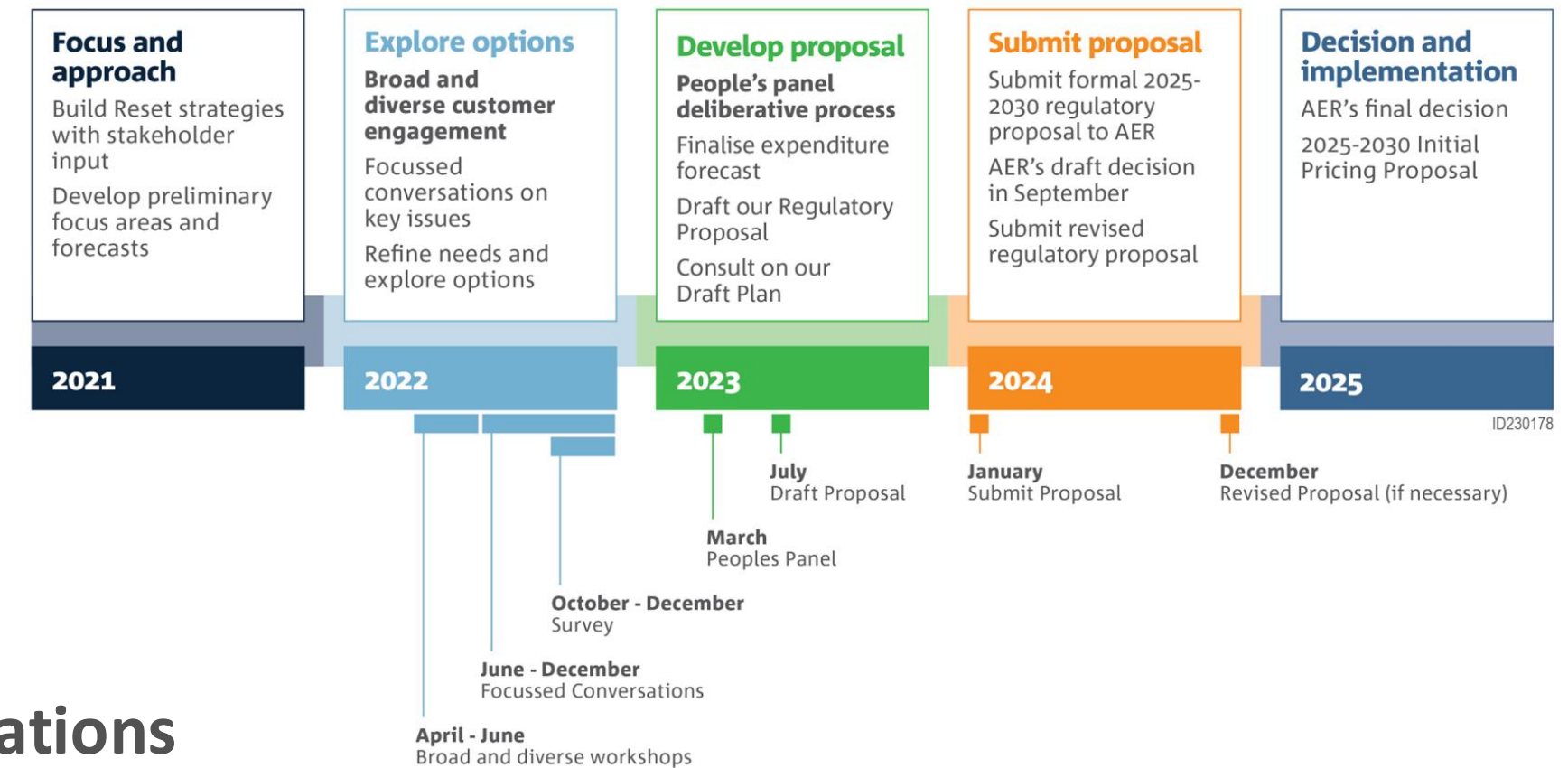
The AER determines our revenue every 5 years

We prepare a Regulatory Proposal every 5 years

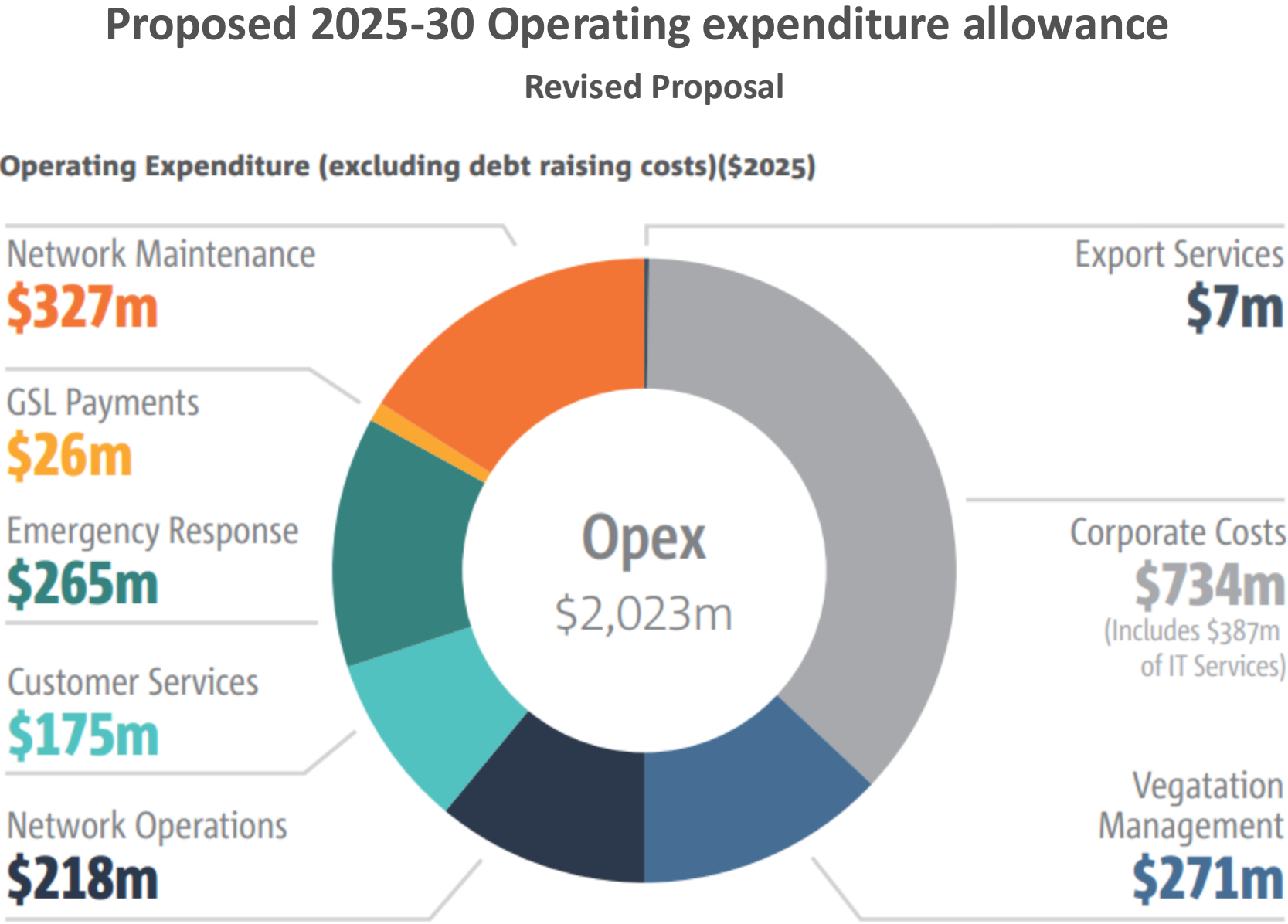
- with proposed work plans and expenditures
- shaped by extensive consultation with customers and stakeholders
- AER determines capital expenditure, operating expenditure and **revenue** allowances for the upcoming 5-year regulatory period

We are funded to maintain service standards/meet obligations

- customer service and network reliability standards are set by ESCoSA (in the Electricity Distribution Code)
- safety and technical obligations are governed by OTR
- robust business cases needed for new/improved services



Our operating and maintenance costs



The AER recognises we are an efficient distributor:

“over time, SA Power Networks has been one of the most productive and efficient distributors in the NEM”



Our legislative obligations

- We are required by legislation to inspect and clear vegetation from around powerlines at regular intervals of no more than three years in both bushfire and non-bushfire risk areas.
- Legislation is governed by the Office of the Technical Regulator through the Electricity Act 1996 and *Electricity (Principles of Vegetation Clearance) Regulations 2021*.
- Our vegetation management framework and supporting programs reduce risk of bushfire, support network reliability, and keep the community safe.



How we structure our vegetation management program

Program Governance

- Oversee the statewide vegetation program to ensure it aligns with legislative requirements and regulatory obligations under the Electricity Act and Regulations

Contractor Oversight

- We engage and manage delivery partners like Active Tree Services, ensuring all works are delivered safely, efficiently, and to the required technical and compliance standards.

Quality, Safety & Assurance

- Our internal team conducts audits, monitors work quality, and ensures vegetation is cut to the correct clearance distances supporting ongoing compliance and public safety.

Council and Stakeholder Engagement

- We respond to public and council enquiries, work with local stakeholders to help explain what we do, why we do it, and how it fits into broader safety and reliability outcomes.

How the team is structured

LEADERSHIP TEAM



Desinta Jeffries
Head of Program Delivery



Brett Chalmers
Vegetation Manager



Maddison Cross
Vegetation Operations Supervisor

OPERATIONS TEAM



Mel Worrall
Vegetation Operations Officer



Lana Iancar
Vegetation Management Analyst



Paula Calicott
Project Manager

FIELD TEAM



Kev Mosbey
Vegetation Contact Officer



Andrew Peat
Vegetation Contact Officer



Dan Bowditch
Vegetation Contact Officer



Benjamin Williams
Vegetation Management Officer



Campbell McQueen
Vegetation Management Officer



Scott Rowe
Vegetation Management Officer



Donna Faulks
Vegetation Management Officer

BUSINESS PARTNER



Patrice Pearson
Stakeholder Engagement Business Partner

Challenges we face and want to work together on

Community Expectations

- Pressure to preserve amenity and tree canopy cover, even where clearance is required.
- Increasing focus on urban greening targets, often without recognising regulatory constraints.
- Community expectation to reduce cost while delivering higher levels of service or tailored outcomes.

Understanding and awareness

- Limited public awareness of why, where, and how we manage vegetation.
- Mismatch between community expectations and legislated requirements
- Concerns about “over-trimming” without understanding growth cycles, required buffer and clearance zones and fire risk.

Operational Realities

- Property access issues, scheduling delays, and regional variability.
- Balancing safety, compliance, reliability and local sentiment.

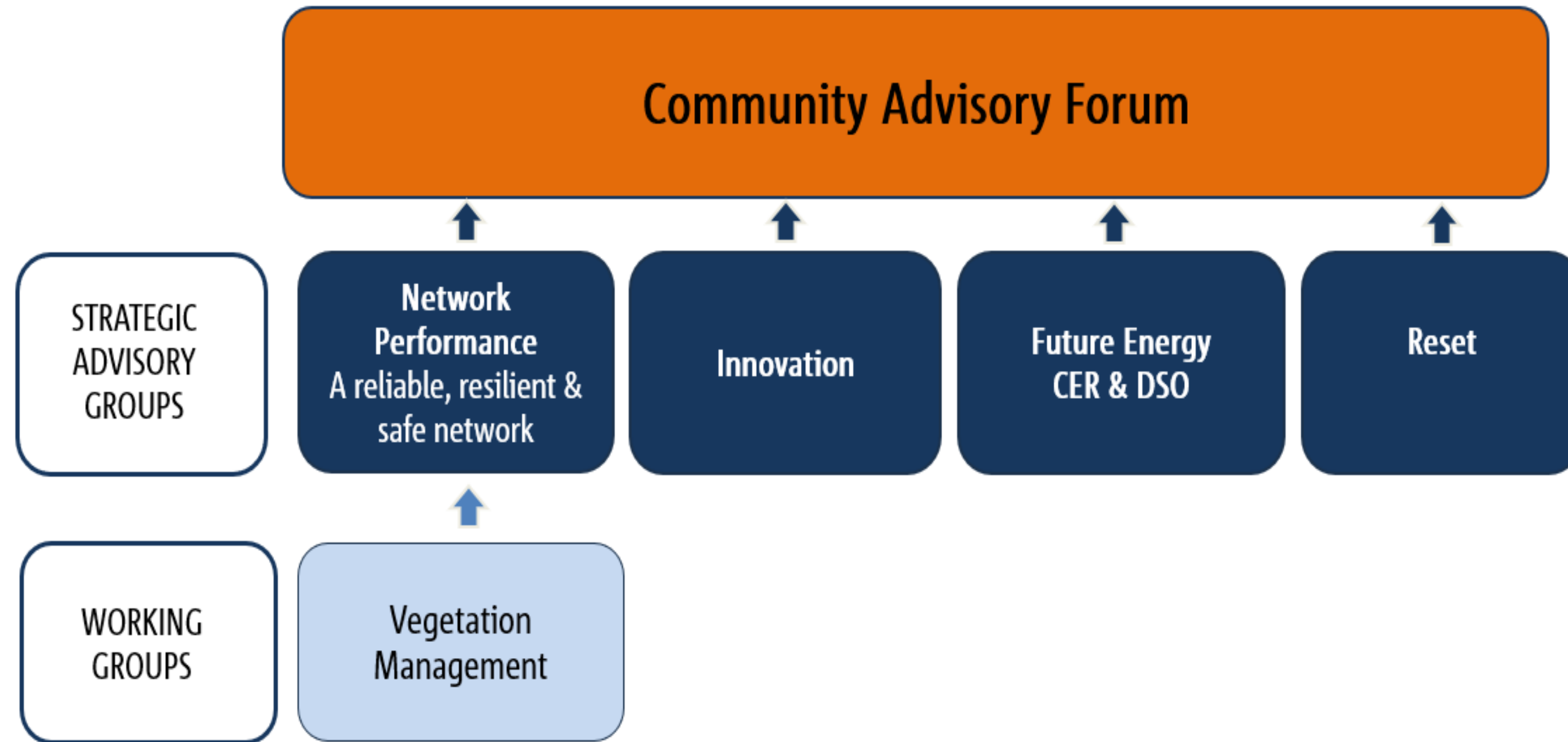
Our work with stakeholders

Patrice Pearson, Stakeholder Engagement Business Partner



Empowering South Australia

Overview of consultative group structure



During June 2026 SA Power Networks undertook an Expression of Interest seeking those with an understanding or interest in the electricity industry and a willingness to commit time to work collaboratively together.

These groups will be engaged regularly to share and understand various customer perspectives and will represent a broad cross section of electricity users and stakeholders.

Congratulations on your appointment.

Our Engagement Principles

Purpose

Our aim is to collaborate on how we balance contributing to a cooler, greener city and state while maintaining a focus on safety, reliability and affordability.

Green canopy existing in harmony with infrastructure is complex and ever-changing. Considering climate, housing growth and diverse social and environmental needs – solutions sit more broadly than with electricity infrastructure alone.

That's why we aim to develop productive and enduring relationships with our stakeholders to benefit the customers and community we serve.



Important and Prioritised



Open and Transparent



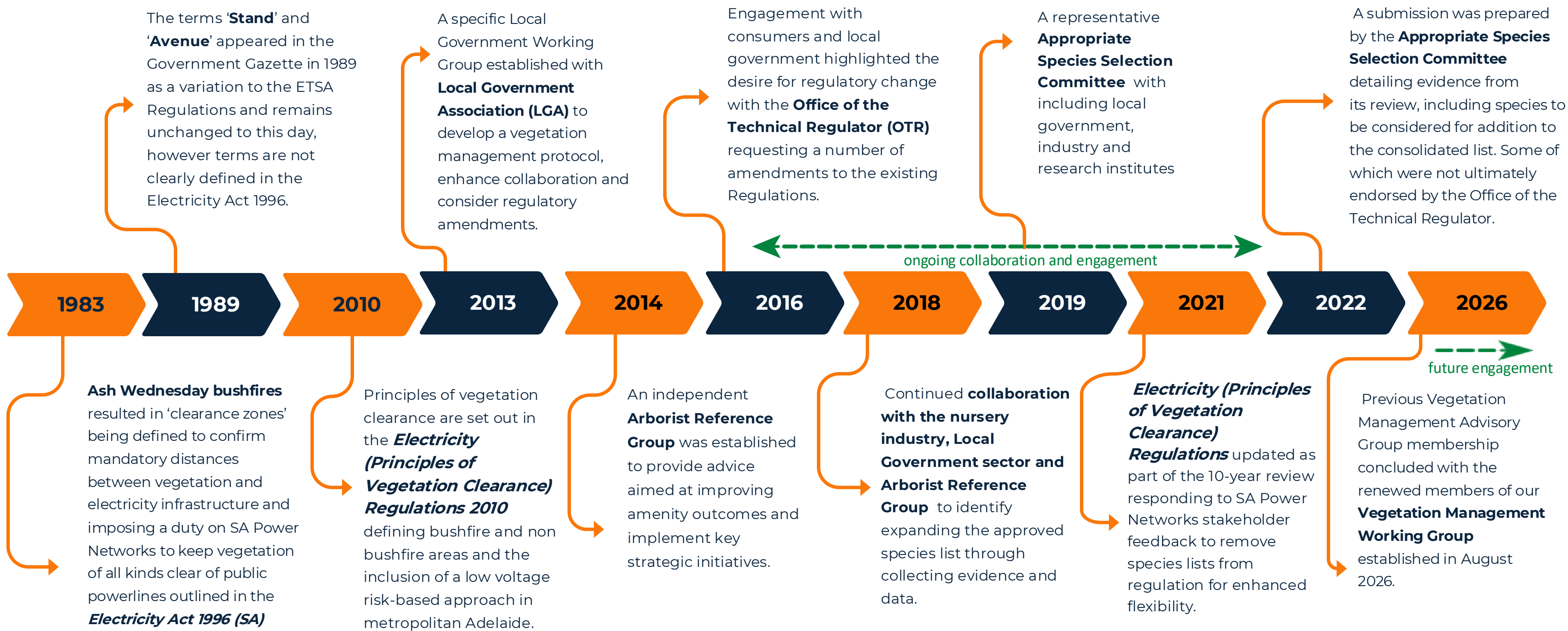
Engaging and Collaborative



Valued Feedback



Inclusive and Diverse



Our work with stakeholders over the years

- a timeline of the evolution of trees under powerlines and our stakeholder journey -

Recent engagement highlights 2026

- Metropolitan Non-Compliant Planting engagement
- LG Climate Partnerships workshops
- Green Adelaide Research workshop
- Office of Technical Regulator meeting(s)
- Local Government Association Executive meeting
- Department of Housing and Urban Development meeting
- Department of Education meeting
- Department for Infrastructure and Transport meeting(s)
- Private landowner and site-specific engagement
- Regional depot visits and field days
- Horticultural Media Association AGM
- Trees for Life Tree Scheme site meeting
- Attending LGA Road and Works Conference
- Attending TREENET Conference



Morning tea break

Vegetation Operations Introduction

Brett Chalmers - Vegetation Manager



Cyclic Maintenance Programs

Program is based on **bushfire-risk classification**:

- **Bushfire Risk Areas:** annual inspection and cutting
- **Non-Bushfire and Prescribed Areas:** three-year rotational pruning cycle

Dual objective:

- Maintain **public safety, network compliance and reliability**
- Balance vegetation works with **urban greening and canopy objectives**

2026 program scale:

- **408,000+ spans** inspected across Bushfire Risk Areas
- Approximately **68,500 spans** requiring cutting
- **40,000+ prunes** across non-bushfire and prescribed areas

Cyclic Maintenance Programs

Annual span-level inspection and cutting is completed before relevant **gazetted CFS bushfire season dates**.

Seasonal completion dates range from:

- **15 October:** Eastern Eyre Peninsula and West Coast
- **1 December:** Adelaide Metro and Mount Lofty Ranges

Priority focus on **High Bushfire Risk Areas**, including:

- Mount Lofty Ranges
- Lower South East
- Lower Eyre Peninsula

These areas have higher rainfall, denser vegetation and greater fuel loads, requiring annual maintenance to maintain clearances and reduce bushfire, public safety and network risks.

Customer engagement and field audits focus on:

- Safety and compliance
- Clearance standards
- Contractor quality and performance
- Early engagement where substantial cutting is needed

Cyclic Maintenance Programs

Non-bushfire and prescribed areas are managed on a **three-year cycle**, covering approximately **one-third of councils each year**.

Works are undertaken at individual tree-prune-unit level across:

- **Metro Prescribed:** Adelaide metropolitan area
- **Rural Prescribed:** such as Victor Harbor, Murray Bridge and Port Augusta
- **Non-Bushfire Risk Areas:** such as Tailem Bend, Waikerie and Wudinna

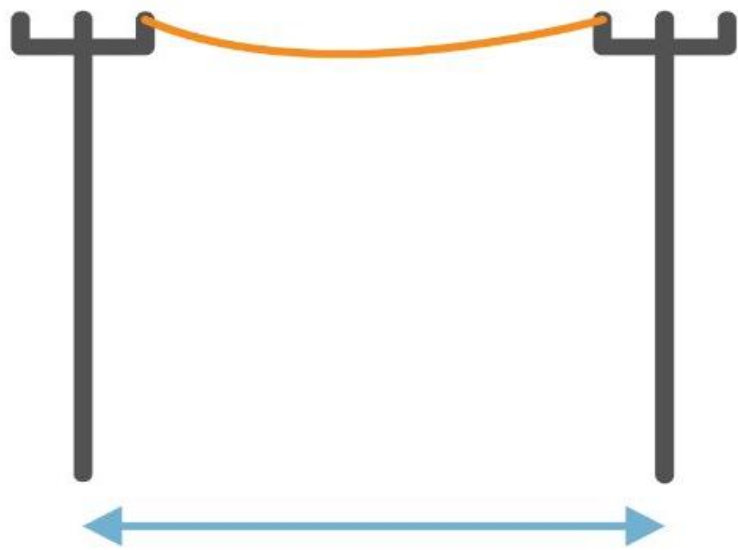
The program supports network reliability while responding to urban greening expectations.

Metropolitan planning should consider the **30% canopy-cover target by 2055**.

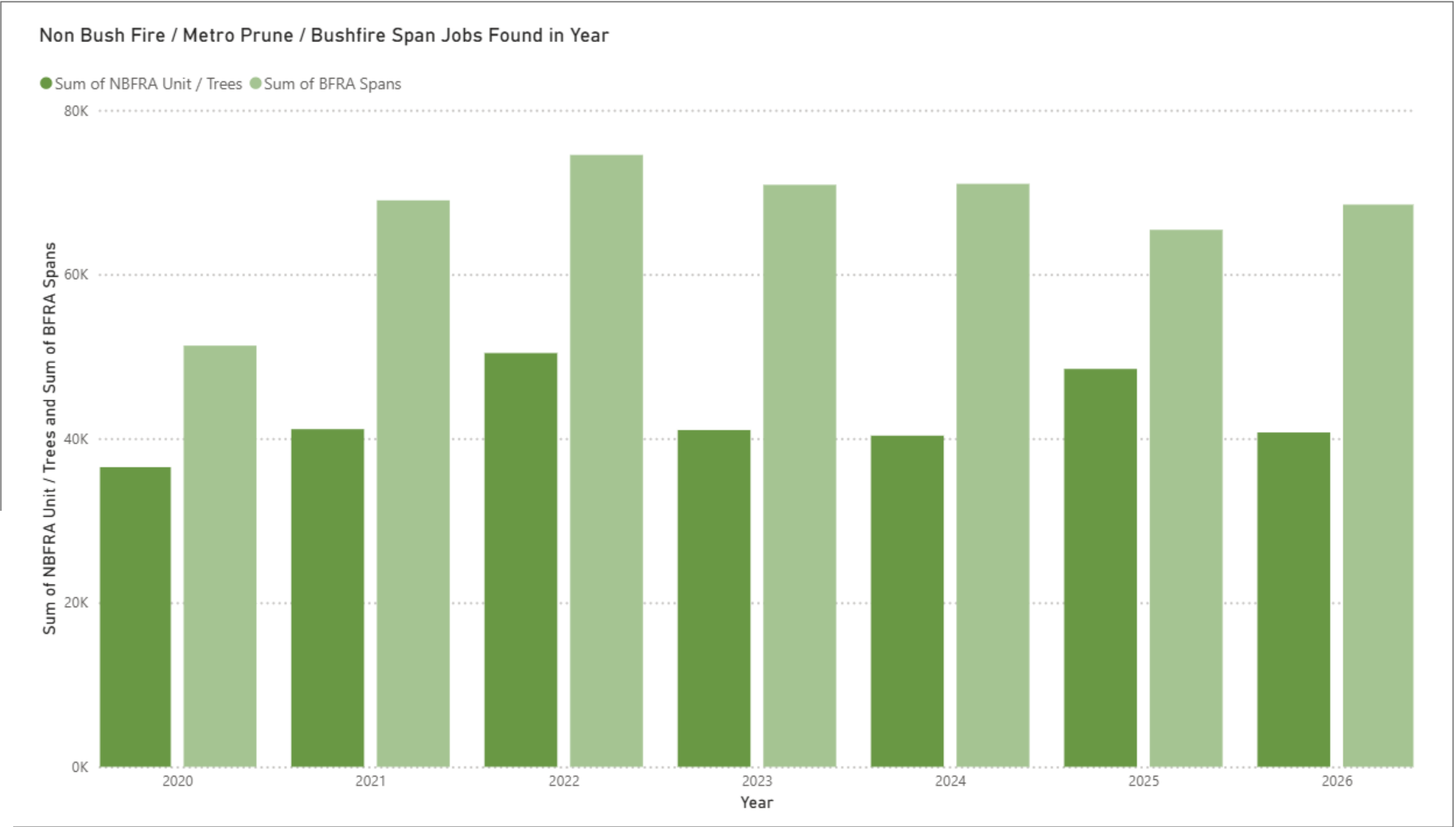
Vegetation Volume graph



NBFRA Unit / Tree



BFRA Span

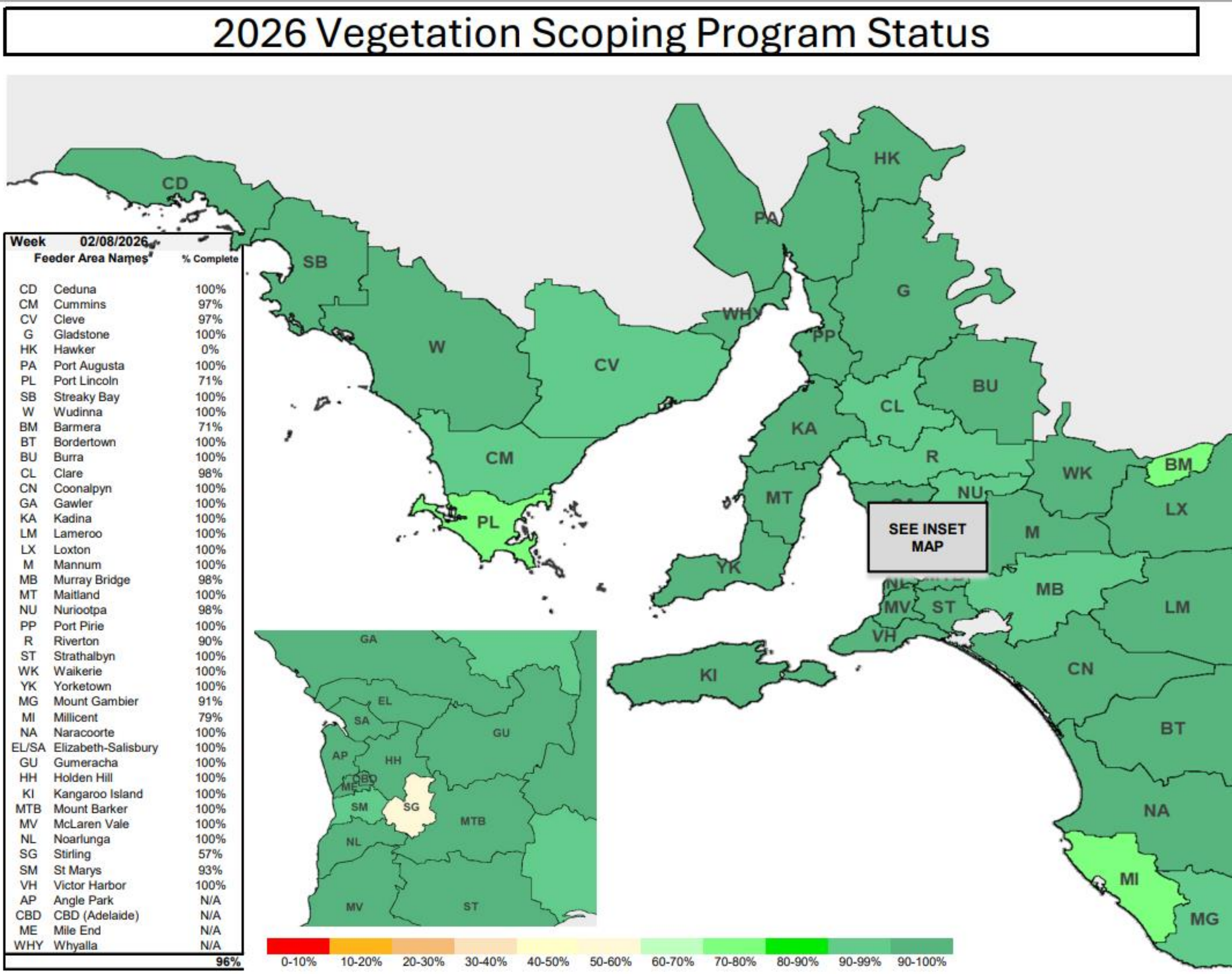


2026 Vegetation Scoping Program

Progress Update – Week Ending 2 August 2026

Regions to Achieve 100% completion prior to gazetted CFS bushfire season dates

- Stirling
- Port Lincoln
- Millicent
- Hawker



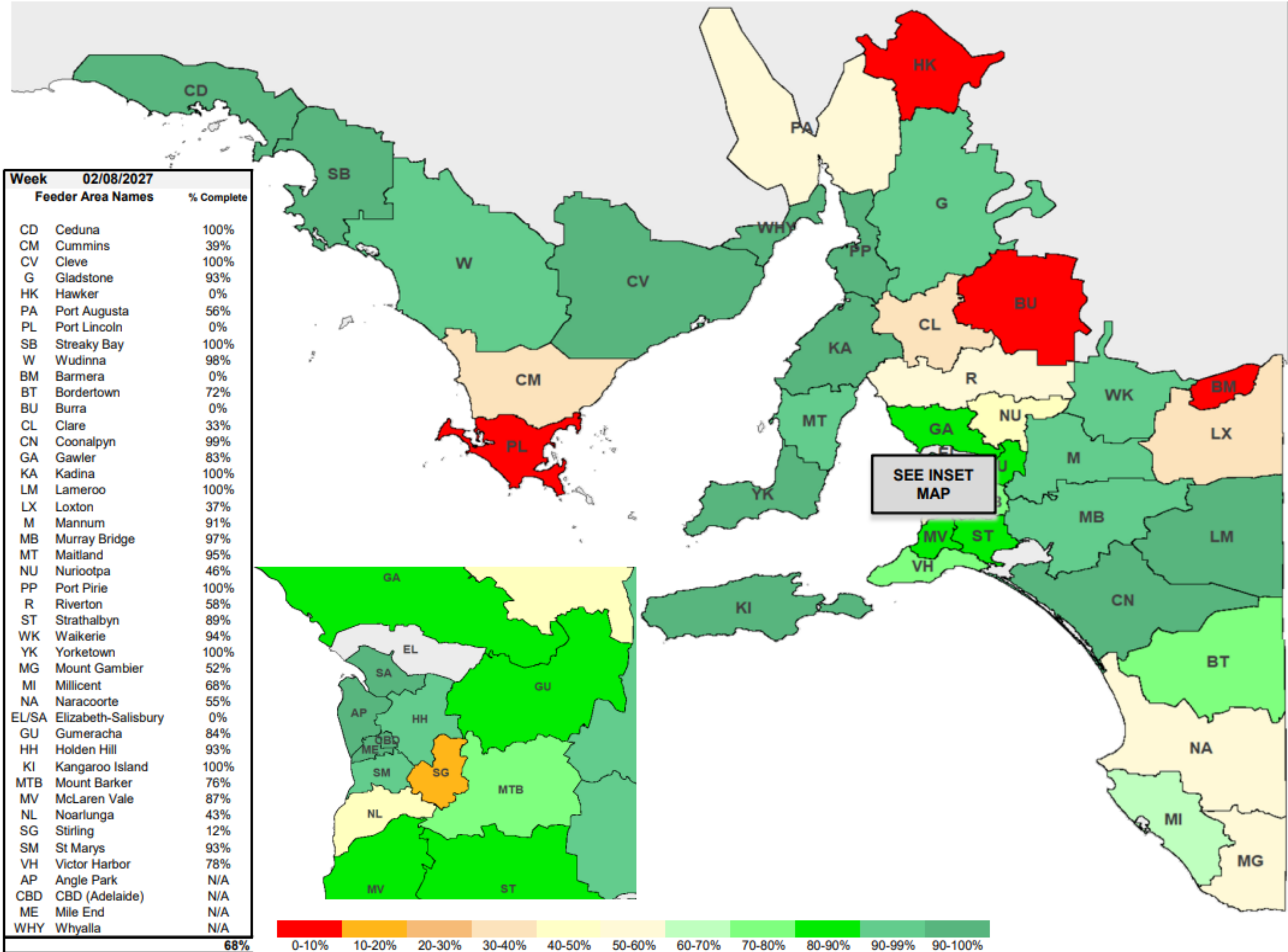
2026 Vegetation Cutting Program

Progress Update – Week Ending 2 August 2026

Regions to Achieve 100% completion prior to gazetted CFS bushfire season dates

- Stirling
- Hawker
- Port Lincoln
- Burra
- Barmera

2026 Vegetation Cutting Program Status



Clearance Zones and Regrowth Buffer Zones

Clearance Zone

- The space around a powerline that must be kept clear at all times
- Extent of clearance varies by voltage, type of construction, span length, and risk area
- Clear to sky (no overhang) on open wire lines in any bushfire risk area and at 33kV or higher in all risk areas

Regrowth Buffer Zone

- Site outside of the clearance zone
- Utilised to manage regrowth and allowing provision for swaying of lines in windy conditions to not breach clearances
- Contractor cutting buffer parameters are less than provision in regulations, see below

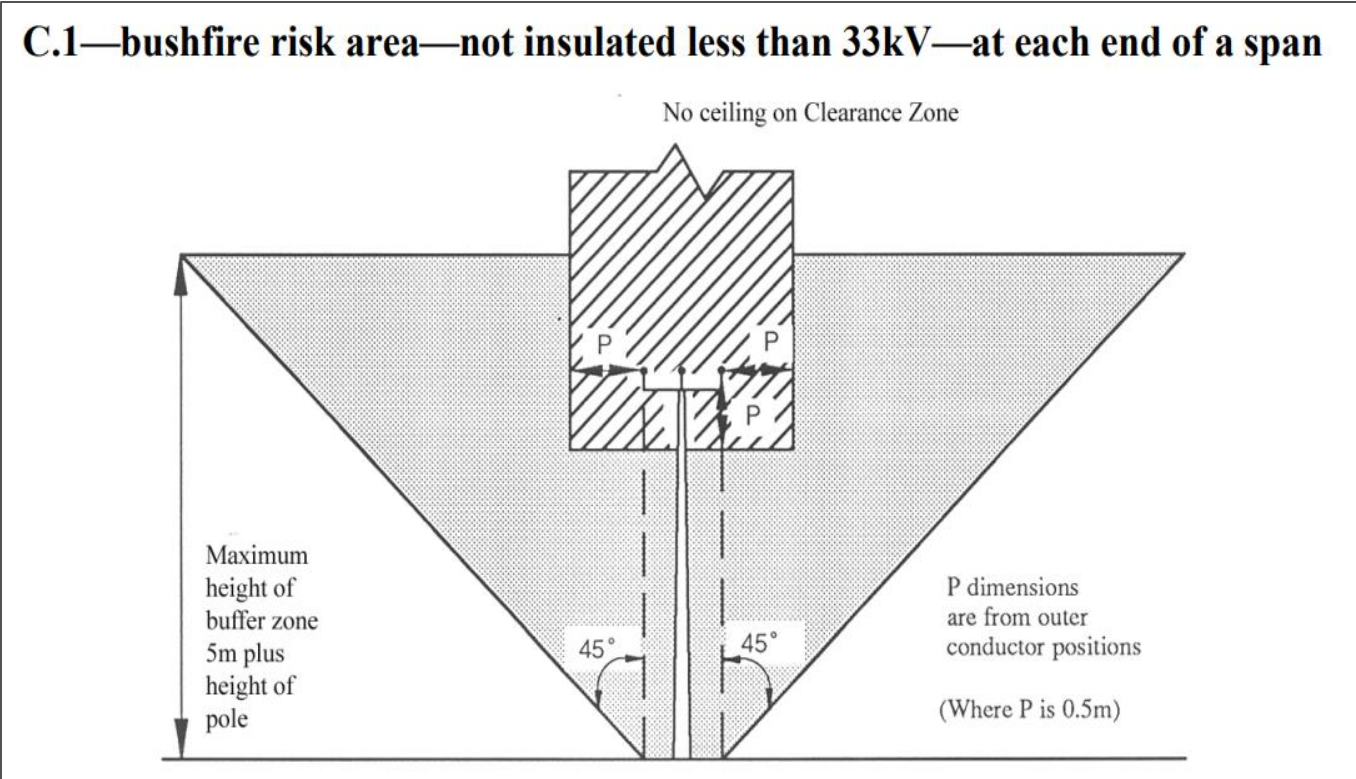


Table 1—Bare or covered conductor at operating voltages of 240V to 11kV

Voltage	All spans	Span (in metres)									
		0–50		Over 50–100		Over 100–150		Over 150–200		Over 200	
	P	V	H	V	H	V	H	V	H	V	H
Voltage not exceeding 480V in the bushfire risk area only	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.5	1.5	3.5	—	—	—	—
7.6kV and 11kV in bushfire and non-bushfire risk areas	0.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.5	2.5	3.5	2.5	4.5	2.5	6.0

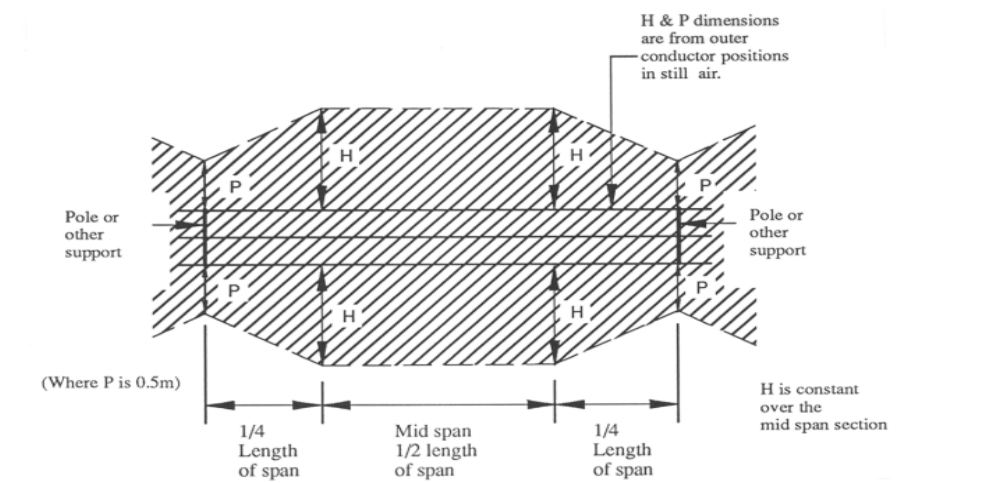
Table 2—Bare or covered conductor at an operating voltage of 19kV

Voltage	All spans	Span (in metres)									
		0–100		Over 100–200		Over 200–300		Over 300–400		Over 400	
	P	V	H	V	H	V	H	V	H	V	H
19kV single wire earth return (SWER)	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.5	1.5	5.0	2.0	7.0	2.0	9.0

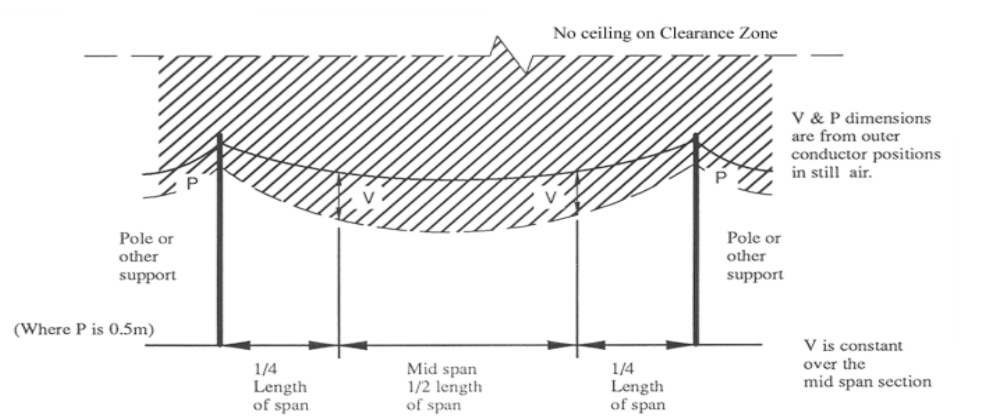
Table 3—Bare or covered conductor at operating voltages of 33kV and 66kV

Voltage	All spans			Span (in metres)									
				0–100	Over 100–200	Over 200–300	Over 300–400	Over 400–500	Over 500–600	Over 600–700	Over 700–800	Over 800–900	Over 900
	V	P	B	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
33kV	2.5	0.5	2.0	2.5	4.5	6.5	9.5	14.0	19.0	25.0	32.0	39.5	48.0
66kV	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.5	4.5	6.5	9.5	14.0	19.0	25.0	32.0	39.5	48.0

C.3—bushfire risk area—not insulated less than 33kV—view of clearance zone from above



C.4—bushfire risk area—not insulated less than 33kV—view of clearance zone from side



Planning our priorities together

Facilitated workshop

Sara Fielden - *SA Power Networks Executive Facilitator*



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Planning session

This session is to help us create:

- ✓ a clear shared understanding of the objectives
- ✓ a clear view on priority objectives for action
- ✓ common ground for what we all want from the working group



Theme	Objective
Advice and Expertise	Provide arboriculture and horticultural input into initiatives to improve vegetation management near powerlines.
Shared understanding	Create a shared understanding of vegetation challenges and opportunities and agree areas of opportunity for a long-term vegetation management strategy.
Education and awareness	Raise awareness of appropriate species selection across local government, utilities, government, supply chain and the broader community.
Roles and responsibilities	Determine scope, clarify roles and confirm shared responsibilities to support coordinated action.
Generating Actions	Generate practical options and share evidence-based recommendations and actions through advocacy, partnerships, programs and initiatives.
Policy and regulatory opportunities	Work with government agencies to explore opportunities for regulatory and policy review.

Planning Activity

1: Identify & share opportunities – 15 minutes

1. Individually reflect on each objective and identify ideas and opportunities on how we can progress the themes (5 mins)
2. Share and discuss your ideas and opportunities in pairs/trios (10 mins)

2: Note & Post – 10 minutes

Note your ideas and opportunities on post-its and post them to the relevant themes (*limit to 3 ideas per theme*)

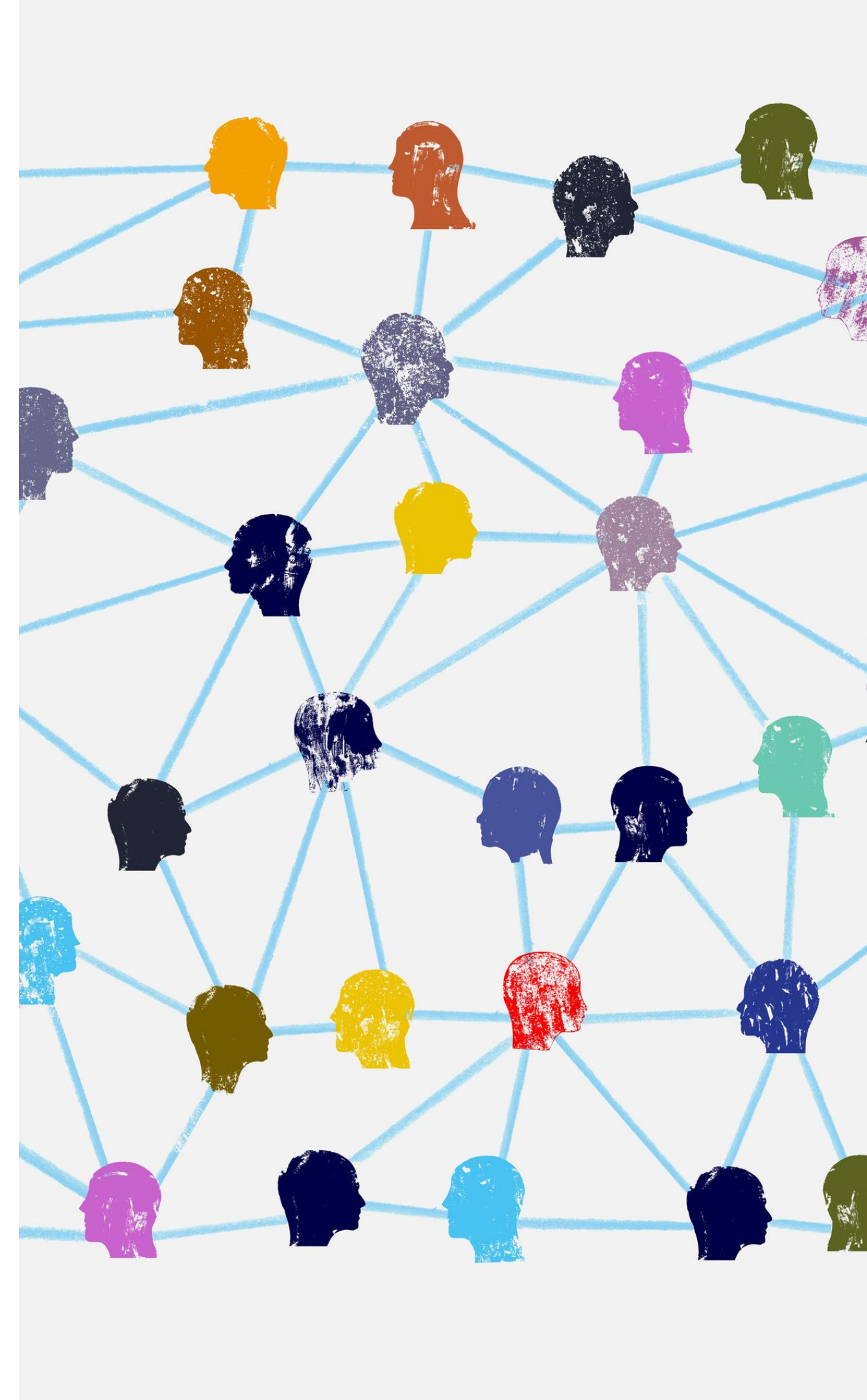
3: Small group theming – 5 minutes

In your pairs/small groups review and group similar ideas and opportunities

4: All-in review

Pairs/small groups report out on the similar ideas and opportunities

5: Let's prioritise



Summary and next steps

- We will take what we hear today and summarise our shared focus areas of opportunity together
- Our next stage will then be to work through roles to support coordinated action and how we might engage broader stakeholders



Future meetings – your preferences

- Format, timing, location
- Discuss ideas and opportunities to share and engage
- Using Talking Power
- Broader stakeholder engagement + insights
- Other ideas and site visits



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Updated SA Power Networks Website – Vegetation around powerlines

Safe clearances and distances between vegetation and powerlines – OTR

TREENET National Symposium – Trees connecting communities September 2026

Green Adelaide Urban Greening Research Priorities

Trees for Life Tree Scheme August 2026

HMA SA Laurels Dinner September 2026

LGA Roads and Works Conference September 2026

Biodiversity McLaren Vale – community restoring indigenous biodiversity

