

Minutes



Vegetation Management Advisory Group (VMAG)

Meeting Details

Organiser	Patrice Pearson
Date	18 March 2026
Time	9:30am to 12pm
Location	Food on the Table, Hindmarsh

Attendees

Kym Syrus	Chair, Nursery and Gardening Industry SA
Kaarina Sarac	Green Adelaide
Henry Haavisto	City of Campbelltown
Ian Furness	Office of the Technical Regulator
Dean Whitford	Active Tree Services
Peter Wotton	Trees for Life
Monika Rhodes	Alexandrina Council
Sarah Wozniak	LGA
Leonie Scriven	Botanic Gardens of SA
Marcus Lodge	Arborman
Megan Lock	Light Regional Council
Monika Rhodes	Alexandrina Council
SA Power Networks	
Maddison Cross	Vegetation Services Manager
Desinta Jeffries	Head of Program Delivery
Patrice Pearson	Stakeholder Engagement Business Partner
Paula Caldicott	Vegetation Project Manager
Apologies	
Grant Hemmerling	Town of Gawler
Ian Seccafien	City of Marion

Minutes

Item		Who
1.	Welcome - Kim welcomed the group and noted apologies. He acknowledged the multiple Traditional Owners of the lands that host the South Australian electricity grid and where the meeting was being held. - Kim provided CAF update on recent operational challenges following significant insulator pollution and associated flashover events causing outages, especially on the Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula and southern regions. - Kim advised that the CAF Chair, Andrew Nance announced he would be stepping down as he is taking up a role with Department of Energy and Mining, and we will look to keep connected with his expertise in his new role. - Kim provided an update on Aggressive Customer campaign that is rolling out to ensure the safety of staff and our communities – more information is available on our website Please be considerate - SA Power Networks - Kim also provided information on the solar and energy future to ensure and how tariffs will be modelled to reflect customer usage.	Kim Syrus
2.	Stakeholder Engagement Outcomes - Patrice provided SA Power Networks refreshed engagement approach for vegetation management. - Patrice provided an update on Q1 engagement efforts summarising including Green Adelaide submission, regional councils engagement and site-specific visits. - Patrice acknowledged Paula Caldicott's engagement with metro councils and noted this was now complete. - Patrice and Paula attended the Resilient East workshop and are keen to contribute to existing forums related to green canopy. - OTR engagement has been valued and will be ongoing. - LGA meeting that is scheduled to determine ways of working and ongoing regular engagements. - DHUD engagement about how we can reinforce the OTR approved species lists where applicable in code amendment consultations and any technical specifications as they are developed. - HMA Membership affords the VMAG the opportunity to raise items of interest to the Horticultural Industry and SA Power Networks are now a member. - Interest in presenting at the LGA Roads and Works conference in September in Tanunda. - Alignment of engagement with ATS program where possible.	Patrice Pearson
4.	Consultative Group review Patrice provided an overview of SAPN overall consultative group model that has been reviewed and how this supports our regulatory submission for 2035.	Patrice Pearson



	• Refreshed VMAG and EOI process to commence April. • Patrice shared the reviewed model that has been determined by engagement with stakeholders via evaluation and interviews. • Intention to align program and streamline engagement efforts and maximise our engagement effort and return for customers to influence the future of the energy. • Patrice discussed the regulatory framework funding the vegetation operating expenditure. • Patrice shared the renewed consultative model and the function of the vegetation group to be a working group to ensure there is some operational outcomes. • A question was asked about the difference between the working group and advisory group roles differ. • Patrice provided context that people are invited to express and interest in advisory groups and to promote all opportunities to members and networks. • Patrice emphasised the value from current members and hopes to receive applications from existing group. • Desinta also provided advice that this new structure supports more action on the ground. • The role of vulnerable customers was discussed as this will be a key theme to sit across all the groups into the regulatory engagement process. • Leonie discussed the intended membership and provided feedback that the importance of the new group to be skills based when assessing applications. • Sarah discussed the importance of the new group to be clear on what their role and expectation when contributing to new forums. • Once recruitment program is launched, we would appreciate the members looking at the full suite of opportunities and promote through their networks to ensure skills-based membership Action: Patrice to provide further detail to the new working group about how inputs can be fed into the Network Performance Advisory Group and how the Advisory group can connect back into the working group model. <i>Note: An additional slide has been provided in deck provided with minutes that explains governance and reporting in more detail provided in slide 13 attached.</i>	
5.	Non-compliant plantings program • Desinta provided an update on engagement process with metro councils. • Discussion on draft decision-making process and feedback from group was invited – provided in slide 18 attached. • Data update was provided by Paula to clarify a list of plantings identified as possible non complaints by our contractors and that we have sent this to all metro councils to seek more accuracy from Councils to confirm their planting data.	Desinta Jefferies Paula Caldicott



- Councils are actively participating and we thank them for their efforts.
- Karina asked question about the data we are capturing around the non-compliant species supporting the expansion of the trees that currently exist on the Approved Species list.
- Paula discussed the appetite for enhancing the approved lists and Desinta advised naming the non-complaint trees as 'trials' is not necessarily formalised.
- SA Power Networks role can be support expanding the list; however, we are not the owners of this process.
- Patrice discussed the intent of the renewed working group aims to include SA Power Networks as equal stakeholders in trial discussions.
- Henry raised the issues with trials still need to be conducted in the right place, e.g. not under high voltage so it is not considered as a waste where this is unlikely to be viable in the future.
- Ian reminded the group on what criteria is currently considered by OTR.
- A draft decision-making process was provided for the group to clarify that we are consulting with stakeholders on the preferred pathways.
- We discussed our intention to tailor an approach that works for each council depending on the appetite and numbers of each council while standardising the framework.
- The LGA media campaign was raised and the intention to collaborate on the decision-making pathways was clarified. SA Power Networks intention is to ensure good green canopy outcomes and confirmed that removal was not a defined pathway.
- SA Power Networks is keen to engage with other agencies that may hold data to support the reconciliation of the source of truth, where there is appetite to do so and data validation is to come.
- Desinta talked about costs to customers are incurred for both councils and SA Power Networks to clarify the data so is an opportunity to look at working together on this.
- LGA discussed the letter sent to OTR and SA Power Networks and council representatives shared that their relationship with SA Power Networks has been collaborative to date.
- Kim discussed the upcoming LGA meeting aims to support the ongoing ways to manage non-compliance and clarified the questions from councils have been positive overall and willingness to participate through a staged program and through ongoing conversations.

Action:

- **Patrice to distribute the draft decision-making model through the via slides provided with minutes of the meeting.**
- **Decision making model also to be tabled with LGA for further comment once data is fully received from metro councils, aiming for end of March 2026.**
- **Criteria of trail trees to be an agenda item to determine parameters for the working group moving forward**



6.	MORNING TEA	All
7.	Spotlight on Verbal update from members - LGA nothing to add as discussion occurred through meeting items and noted upcoming meeting Friday 20 March with LGA President and CE to discuss ongoing engagement related to non-compliant plantings - ATS described some new equipment being used pictured below the Truck Mount Jabiru is a mechanical tree trimming unit which utilises 2 hydraulically driven saw blades attached to a 40ft EWP boom where the bucket would normally attach - Fully insulated boom allows it to work to around low voltage and high voltage powerlines, while maintain insulated plant SAD's - Controlled from cab on rear of truck deck, can also be moved along site without a driver in the truck cab. (crawl mode) - By using this we remove the need on that site for an operator to be working at heights - Eliminates manual labour of EWP tree trimming with EWP Operators using hydro saws which in turn increases productivity and crew member morale by reducing fatigue - Fully designed in house by Active Tree Services, placed on a Hino 500 GT 4x4 truck for great accessibility to rural properties  - OTR provided an update on letter received from City of Marion – update to follow. Action: OTR to provide a response to letter in coming weeks.	LGA ATS OTR
8.	Operations Update Maddison provided an update on Vegetation Program on program with annual bushfire program Scoping on target, slightly ahead of plan - 47% complete (204k spans scoped as of 15/03)	Maddison Cross

	• Metro prescribed update with City of Marion 100% scoped currently 18% cutting complete (608 prunes as at 15/03) • Adelaide City, Burnside, Holdfast Bay, West Torrens, NPSP and Prospect and Walkerville councils to come. • Regional non bushfire risk townships, Ceduna, Cleve, Kangaroo Island, Streaky Bay and Wudinna 100%Scoped. • Staged cutting commenced this week. (1k spans cut to date)	
8.	Innovation and Information share • Members provided an update on key projects, events or partnerships Green Adelaide Research workshop to be held 30 March and SA Power Networks to attend.	All
9.	Thank you • Closing out the VMAG in its current form acknowledging collaborative effort and commitment of current members	Desinta Jeffries
	MEETING CLOSE	

