

Minutes



Vegetation Management Working Group

Meeting 1

Meeting Details

Organiser	Patrice Pearson
Date	14 August 2026
Time	9.30am
Location	Marion Hotel

Attendance

Attendees

Kim Syrus, Chair
Megan Lock, Light Regional Council
Sam Bykow, Light Regional Council
Sarah Wozniak, LGA
Stefan Caddy-Retallic, Adelaide Uni
Kaarina Sarac, Green Adelaide
Monika Rhodes, Alexandrina Council
Geoff Booth, SA Water
Ian Furness, OTR
Gavin Malone, Biodiversity McLaren Vale
Henry Haavisto, City of Campbelltown
Marcus Lodge, Arborman
Dean Whitford, Active Tree Services,
Desinta Jeffries, SA Power Networks
Brett Chalmers, SA Power Networks
Maddison Cross, SA Power Networks
Patrice Pearson, SA Power Networks
Sara Fielden, SA Power Networks
Dan Bowditch, SA Power Networks

Apologies

Randall Bates, Trees for Life
Tony Hall, City of Tea Tree Gully

Items for discussion

Introductions

Vegetation Management Overview

Members spent time introducing themselves and providing insights into their roles and a favourite movie or soundtrack.

- Desinta gave some context on our Strategic Directions and our role as a distribution operator in the electricity supply chain.
- The regulatory proposal process was discussed and the revenue allowances over our 5-year period.
- Our operating and maintenance costs from our 2025 regulatory proposal were explained.
- Our legislative obligations and program governance was provided as an overview.
- Our challenges and opportunities were provided to share what we want to work on together with the group.
- Discussion about the progress of the metropolitan non-compliant species was discussed, to be tabled as an agenda item for next meeting.
- The approach in metro prescribed areas related to age of asset and age of vegetation to be explored further and discussed at future meeting.

Stakeholder Engagement overview

- How SA Power Networks engage contractors for the non-regulated business (Enerven) was discussed and information about tender processes for other contractors was explained.
- Auditing was discussed and that councils provide feedback on the program, through operating relationship between Active Tree Services and councils.
- Additional auditing processes were explained, including our Vegetation Management Officers, External Auditors and the Office of the Technical Regulator as additional oversights.
- Patrice provided an overview of SA Power Networks engagement principles and the history of engagement with a number of previous vegetation management consultative groups over the years.
- The consultative group model and the role of the working group was discussed to enhance action-based outcomes and provide strategic insights into the Network Performance Advisory Group meetings.
- Our refreshed engagement approach was discussed and as we prioritise actions, we will discuss members roles and contribution.

Vegetation Operations overview

- Brett provided an overview of how our vegetation programs are delivered based on cyclic maintenance and bushfire risk classifications.
- The scale of the program was presented, including how we conduct span level and tree unit level inspection and cutting.
- The non bushfire risk areas are managed on three-year cycle and acknowledgement of the 30% canopy cover target by 2055 was noted.
- Detail on the clearance and buffer zones were provided to give context that our clearance requirements are based on voltage, span length and risk area.
- Question on how we manage the removal of significant trees was discussed and that SA Power Networks do not broadly facilitate removals - with the exception of bushfire risk and tree falling towards powerline.
- The compliance approach in high fire areas was discussed. The risk-based approach in non-bushfire and prescribed risk areas is an item the group would like to discuss further at future meetings.
- Members expressed interest in understanding more about the balance of compliance, risk and customer safety and how this is applied, particularly for passive tree assessments outside clearance zones.
- More information on how our operating expenditure is baselined and overlay with other competing priorities such as urban greening.

Planning our priorities together

- An interactive workshop was independently facilitated to identify key ideas and opportunities within the group's terms of reference.
 - The session was developed to create a shared understanding and priority for action.
 - Groups moved around the room to share perspectives and captured thoughts and ideas.
- Further engagement during September will be distributed to members to further prioritise initiatives prior to the next meeting.
- Future sessions will look to identify roles to help generate practical actions.

Other business

- A **summary of feedback provided as an attachment** to the minutes for members to review and provide any feedback.
- Members shared additional thoughts from the workshop session.
- The management of fauna within the vegetation program was also noted as an item of interest to the group.
- It was advised that olive species have now been declared as a national weed species. The interest in visual amenity was also discussed.
- The ability to overlay infrastructure with the Lidar work being undertaken by Green Adelaide was noted as an opportunity.
- Adelaide Uni offered species identification support to progress the permitted and approved species list.

Item	Action Item	Who	Timing	Status
1	Further prioritisation of themes will be sought via an online survey during September for members to provide their feedback and to bring back to future meeting.	Patrice	September	Complete
2	Metropolitan non-compliant planting update to be provided at next meeting,	Brett/Patrice	November	
3	Risk assessment and the application was of interest for group to understand more about risk application in LV NBFRA	Des/Brett	November	
4	A 'Spotlight On' standing agenda item will be provide to members and further design of future agenda items to be shared.	All	Ongoing	Ongoing
5	Waite Arboretum was kindly suggested by Stefan as an option for future meeting. Patrice to meet with Stefan to discuss this further and the opportunity to conduct a site tour.	Patrice	September	Complete

Minutes



Workshop discussion outcomes						
*Please note these are currently listed verbatim for the purpose of distributing with minutes and in coming weeks, we will consult with you online to help prioritise these initiatives and discuss at future meeting *						
Ideas and opportunities	Theme aligned to terms of reference					
	Roles and responsibilities	Education Awareness	Generating actions	Advice and expertise	Policy and regulatory	Shared understanding
Define species selection per suburb or region	✓	✓				
How can group collaborate with community, councils and emergency services		✓				
Creating a baseline of SAPN processes, current canopy cover and known data to inform the focus of the group		✓	✓			✓
More focus on rural councils as we are heavily focussed on metro		✓	✓			✓
Sharing of common issues and strategies to overcome		✓				
Enhance boots on ground perspective and coordinate program of works to help with better outcomes and education		✓				
Documenting the challenges/objectives of each stakeholder group including what is common and unique to understand collective challenges and opportunities	✓	✓				✓
Collective data sharing amongst groups		✓				
Finalise work on non-compliant tree communications including info to VMWG on final scope, numbers and where the 'line is'					✓	✓
Shared understanding of visual amenity of infrastructure and actions e.g. remove and replace selected trees instead of prune						✓
Consideration of adjacent land in vegetation management	✓					✓
Understanding vegetation management views in addition to contractors' understandings		✓				✓

Ideas and opportunities	Theme aligned to terms of reference					
	Roles and responsibilities	Education Awareness	Generating actions	Advice and expertise	Policy and regulatory	Shared understanding
Map streets with canopy cover vs height (2026 Lidar capture) to identify extent of impact on canopy and potential opportunity for growth in metro and NBFRA				✓		✓
What opportunities to advocate for and work with regulator to take a risk approach allowing increase of green canopy on low voltage streets	✓					✓
Define a process for assessing new and approved permitted species to amend current lists (e.g. what evidence is required?)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advocate to create OTR process for updates permitted and allowed species lists						
Identify innovations to allow for more species to be planted under powerlines	✓			✓		
Explore opportunity to review current risk profile if it is adequate or too onerous with a view to increase canopy in safe manner		✓		✓		✓
Sharing of Lidar data and ensuring the data is good quality			✓			✓
Harmonise electricity tree lists with SA Water tree lists to holistically achieve 30% by 2025			✓	✓	✓	
NBFRA and prescribed regulation – identify what regulations are working well and what could be better			✓		✓	✓
Improve consistency of risk tolerance approach for non-bushfire risk areas		✓		✓		✓
Work with PLEC to identify projects that reduce risk and improve conservation rather than just visual amenity	✓		✓		✓	
Risk based option in bushfire risk areas? (boundary review)		✓	✓		✓	
More awareness of SAPN challenges to balance regulation/risk/stakeholder requirements	✓	✓		✓		✓



Ideas and opportunities	Theme aligned to terms of reference					
	Roles and responsibilities	Education Awareness	Generating actions	Advice and expertise	Policy and regulatory	Shared understanding
SAPN to act as information provide and SME on clearance and buffer requirements and practical applications	✓				✓	
Improve vegetation considerations at design and planning stages and include ecological considerations					✓	
Work with Adelaide Uni to provide advice on species suitability (KISS)	✓	✓			✓	
Sharing of expert view on species selection, growth and pruning advice					✓	✓
Appropriate species to consider taller canopy as well as good pruning options				✓	✓	
Formal OTR response on previously raised 'risk based' approach to pruning in NBFRA (mainly metro)			✓			✓
SAPN to offer operational insight to support the group Determine why and what each contribution is	✓			✓		✓
Improve visibility of permitted and approved species list (i.e. update to current spreadsheet)			✓			✓
Advocate internally and externally to drive change	✓		✓			
Encourage a change towards planting a variety of species along roads rather than avenues of identical species			✓		✓	✓
Collaborative vegetation management to enhance removal and treatment of weed species	✓		✓	✓		
Control of weeds of national significance i.e. juvenile and mature species	✓	✓				