

Terms of Reference - Vegetation Management Working Group

May 2026

Purpose of our Consultative Group Model

Background

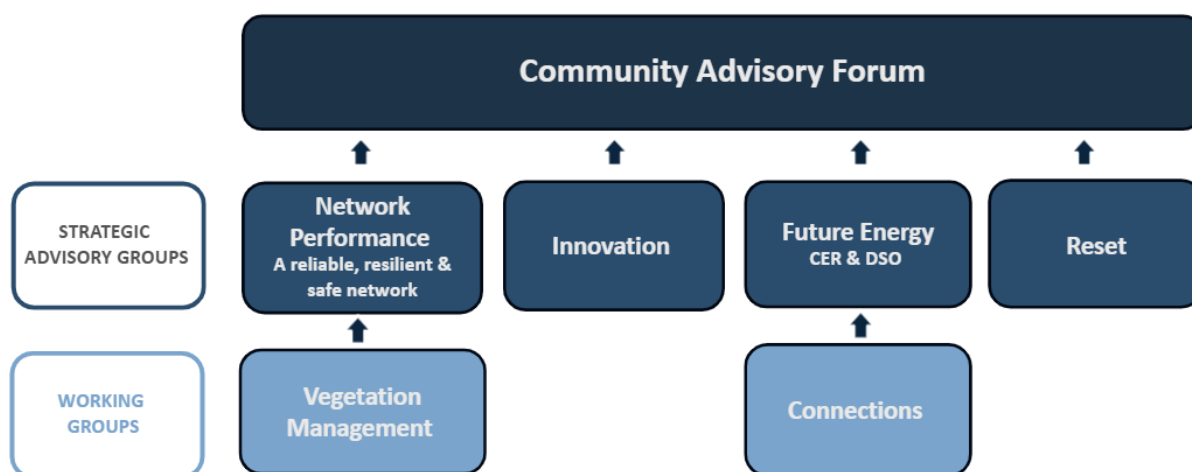
SA Power Networks provides an essential service to South Australians as the primary electricity distributor in the state.

We are committed to ensuring that the needs and views of electricity users are heard and considered on key issues in the delivery of our vision of *‘Connecting South Australians to a better energy future, today’*.

SA Power Networks’ consultative group model (illustrated below) seeks to regularly engage with a broad and representative cross-section of electricity users and representative stakeholders. It facilitates regular scheduled engagement opportunities to ensure customer and stakeholder perspectives are considered in our ongoing business decision-making.

A high-level strategic Community Advisory Forum (CAF) considers customer outcomes aligned with SA Power Networks’ Strategic Plan and is supported by more focussed strategic advisory and working groups that consider the delivery of more specific services for customers.

Our consultative group model is supplemented by other engagement activity as required to ensure engagement is fit-for-purpose for different stakeholders and issues.



Vegetation Management Working Group

The Vegetation Management Working Group (VMAG) provides advice to SA Power Networks ('business') on issues related to vegetation management aligned with our role in providing a safe, reliable and resilient network to South Australian electricity customers.

The key objectives of the Vegetation Working Group (VMWG) are to:

- To provide arboriculture and horticultural input into initiatives to improve vegetation management near powerlines.
- To create a shared understanding of vegetation challenges and opportunities and agree on areas of opportunity for the development of a long-term vegetation management strategy.
- To educate and raise awareness of appropriate species selection across local government, utilities, government, the supply chain and the broader community.
- To determine the scope, clarify roles and confirm shared responsibilities to support coordinated action.
- To generate practical options and share evidence-based recommendations and/or actions through advocacy, partnerships or programs and initiatives.
- To produce shared recommendations and updates from each meeting for strategic items to inform the Network Performance Strategic Advisory group where relevant.
- To work with Government agencies to explore opportunities for regulatory and/or policy review.

The working group is advisory only and does not have decision-making authority.

Engagement principles

SA Power Networks has five key engagement principles that underpin our engagement approach and consultative group model that will guide the way the group works together:

- Customer impact – with a focus on outcomes for end users and where customers have an ability to influence outcomes.
- Equity and inclusion – recognising diverse needs and circumstances.
- Accessibility – ensuring information is understandable and usable.
- Meaningful engagement – to actively provide input into decision making, not just reviewing.
- Transparency – clear sight of how input is gathered/used.
- Alignment with the AERs consumer engagement expectations as outlined in their Better Resets Handbook¹.

To support this, SA Power Networks will:

- Provide timely, relevant, and accessible information.
- Engage on topics that matter most to the VMWG ensuring their time is used meaningfully and focused on issues important to customers.
- Clearly articulate the level of engagement that the group has an opportunity to influence
- Demonstrate how stakeholder input has influenced decisions (you said, we did).
- Provide administrative and secretariat support.

Engagement should be meaningful, focused and outcome oriented on the issues that matter most to customers and where stakeholder input can genuinely influence outcomes.

¹ [Better resets handbook | Australian Energy Regulator \(AER\)](#)

Governance and operations

Reporting to SA Power Networks Leadership

The Community Advisory Forum is our high-level strategic consultative group providing oversight on customer outcomes aligned with SA Power Networks' Strategic Plan. The Forum is the key interface between SA Power Networks and the advisory and working groups.

The VMWG is our operational working group providing advice on the coordination of efforts to align members activities on customer outcomes aligned with our Strategic Plan and the key interface between SA Power Networks and the broader community.

The VMWG will report into the Network Performance Strategic Advisory Group on issues relating to reliable, safe and affordable network. The Chair of the VMWG will feed into the Network Performance Advisory Group, either via attendance at meetings or via Briefing Notes as required.

The Chair of the Network Performance Advisory Group will attend at least one VMWG meeting per year and the Chair of the VMWG will present to the CAF at least once a year.

Issues or specific recommendations from the working group can be tabled to the Senior Leadership Team, or CAF on strategic issues as required.

The VMWG can escalate matters to the CAF where there are issues of significant importance.-They will also report annually to the CAF on key matters of importance, ensuring visibility while maintaining the CAF's focus on strategic priorities and customer outcomes.

Scope of forum

The Vegetation Management Working Group will consider and provide input on:

- Collaborative action that contributes to a cool, greener city and state while maintaining a focus on safety, reliability, and sustainability
- Initiatives to improve the management of vegetation around powerlines
- Improve our processes and investigate ways to reduce the future escalation of costs through our vegetation management program for energy consumers in South Australia.
- Educate and raise awareness of appropriate species selection for planting near electrical infrastructure
- Explore opportunities for partnerships in programs or initiatives including those concerned with greening or urban canopy improvement
- Topics determined by the VMWG and agreed by SA Power Networks.

Out of scope

- Items that divert from or do not consider from our legislated responsibility to ensure a compliant, safe, and reliable network
- Operational or internal management decisions.
- Individual customer complaints or disputes.

Membership

The Vegetation Management Working Group will comprise a maximum of 12-14 members covering a diverse range of customer and stakeholder perspectives. They will be selected based on interests, skills, organisational affiliation and expertise and include diverse representation. For example:

- Independent Chair/ Facilitator
- Local Government membership representing the interests of metropolitan and regional councils
- One representative of Horticultural Media Society of South Australia
- One representative from Green Adelaide
- One representative from the Office of the Technical Regulator
- One representative from state government agency (such as DIT, DHUD or SA Water)
- Representatives from the following sectors, including but not limited to:
 - University of Adelaide or University of South Australia
 - Botanic Gardens of South Australia
 - Researchers or practitioners representing urban forestry that considers human, community and environmental health and wellbeing (such as Treenet/Trees for Life/Dept of Health)
 - Community representative or member of association representing customer views

SA Power Networks participating members:

- Head of Program Delivery
- Stakeholder Engagement Business Partner
- Vegetation Manager
- Two additional skills-based members as deemed appropriate/required

Guest presenters and subject matter experts will attend panel meetings as required but will not be formal working group members.

Decision Making

A quorum of greater than 50% or more members is required to make formal recommendations or actions for CAF to consider. If individual members or organisations wish to have their dissent recorded, this will be noted and minuted. The Chair of the CAF will have the deciding vote if required.

Key recommendations and/or insights arising from the Advisory/ Working Groups will be provided to CAF annually or as required.

Responsibilities

Role of the Chair

The key role of the Chair is to:

- facilitate inclusive, balanced, respectful and productive discussion.
- assist in agenda setting and the review of appropriate information/presenters.
- build constructive positions amongst different points of view.
- support members to engage effectively (including fewer technical participants).
- identify emerging trends, insights and recommendations for SA Power Networks.
- act as a key liaison with SA Power Networks staff and Senior Leadership Team.

The Chair should have substantial industry knowledge and a collaborative mindset, dedicated to ensuring that consumers have a voice in the energy sector. The Chair will be instrumental in steering discussions in a collaborative manner, facilitating stakeholder engagement, and prioritising consumer insights in our strategic planning and service delivery.

Additional remuneration for the Chair will be paid to acknowledge the additional role requirements. This fee will be negotiated with SA Power Networks.

Role of individual members

Forum members should:

- fairly and accurately represent the needs and perspectives of customers and stakeholder they represent.
- bring insights from professional or lived experience and / or customer representation.
- consider the needs of diverse customer groups, including vulnerable customers.
- actively participate in meetings — if meetings are not regularly attended, (min. of 50% per annum) SA Power Networks and/or the Chair can terminate members terms for non-attendance.
- prepare for meetings, including reading meeting papers, other pre-reading and review of meeting minutes.
- openly share experience, information and contribute to problem solving and identify priority topics for discussion.
- have the ability to regularly connect with customer groups and stakeholders to understand and accurately represent current and changing sentiment.
- feedback information from meetings to representative groups, the community and other stakeholders.
- work collaboratively, respectfully and in alignment with the engagement principles outlined in the Terms of Reference.

While SA Power Networks welcomes a diversity of views in Forum discussions, members do not represent SA Power Networks, will not defame SA Power Networks, nor make public negative comments.

Role of SA Power Networks

SA Power Networks will:

- provide clear, accessible information (avoiding technical jargon).
- actively use VMWG input for consideration in decision-making, as appropriate.
- demonstrate how input is used and/or has been considered in decision-making and outcomes.
- provide secretariat support to the VMWG:
 - provision of agendas and meeting papers one week prior to each meeting
 - distribution of minutes for approval one week after each meeting
 - work with the Chair to set agendas, develop meeting content and review minutes
- appoint an external chair to conduct and oversee meetings.
- outline the level of influence and engagement being sought for each agenda item to ensure members understand what level of feedback is being sought.

SA Power Networks employees and subject matter experts will be invited to attend meetings to present topics and proposals, to discuss issues and obtain customer feedback as required.

SA Power Networks employees and other agency subject matter experts will be invited to attend meetings to present papers and proposals, to discuss issues or obtain customer feedback as required.

Term

Membership to the Vegetation Management Working Group is for a two-year term, with members being eligible to sit for an additional two-year term (2+2) to align with SA Power Networks regulatory cycle (final Regulatory Proposal 2030-35 to be lodged in December 2029).

The new term of the VMWG will commence in June/ July 2026 and be reviewed in June/ July 2028.

Membership may be reviewed periodically to ensure diversity and relevance is effective and representative.

Meetings

The VMWG will meet as follows:

- four (quarterly) 3.5- 4.0-hour meetings in metropolitan Adelaide – schedule to be developed and in person/ online preference to be discussed and agreed by Forum².
- additional meetings on special topics may be required (e.g. those requested by regulatory bodies or other external groups), as well as other correspondence between meetings.

An Induction Workshop and a range of onboarding activities will be offered for all members.

Remuneration/Honorarium

SA Power Networks acknowledges the time and expertise of members participating on the Vegetation Management Working Group.

A sitting fee of \$250 per meeting applies for meeting attendance for eligible members. The honorarium will be paid half yearly, based on attendance.

Members not eligible for receiving an honorarium include:

- State/ Local Government representatives who are attending to represent their organisation.
- Others assessed on an as needs basis (eg. representatives who are paid to attend meetings as part of their paid employment role).

Individual members may also elect to have their honorarium paid to a charity via the SA Power Networks/Enerven Employee Foundation.

Maintaining confidentiality and conflict of interest

Members may be provided with information that is of a confidential nature. This information is not for personal or general use or circulation in the broader community.

Members must maintain full confidentiality unless SA Power Networks approves the release of material for community information and/or comment, or other usage.

² Note that it is anticipated that only 2 meetings will be held in 2026 given the timing of appointment.

Members may be provided with information that could provide a commercial or intellectual benefit to the individual or stakeholder groups they represent.

Members must declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest. The Chair and the business will determine appropriate management of conflicts. This may include members removing themselves from meetings during relevant discussions.

Attachment: Consultative group model for structured engagement

