

“Trev and Stan on managing trees around powerlines” transcript

Hi there - I'm Trevor and I've been asked to talk about managing me and my mates around powerlines.

We love to add some shade and shelter to your neighbourhood, as well as releasing oxygen and providing habitats to our native animal friends.

SA Power Networks are currently required to cut trees under or near powerlines as a result of legislative requirements for community safety.

Whether in your backyard, or on road verges, or in the bush, you can't leave it to chance.

Did you know that trees like me cause nearly half of all power outages in South Australia? Strong winds can cause contact with powerlines causing an outage. And not just in winter, problems can occur in any season.

I get worried, because even trees outside of the clearance zone can damage powerlines and put you at risk from electrical shock, fire or supply interruptions.

It's not going out on a limb to say that trees are a vital part of our landscape, planting the right tree in the right spot can ensure you and me stay safe.

There are some limits on the type of trees and vegetation you can plant near powerlines. A lot depends on the height we reach at maturity.

If we only grow up to 3m tall then we can be planted on or near powerlines in bushfire risk areas, but if we are above 3m we pose a real threat to safety.

In non-bushfire risk areas its ok if we grow between three and six metres in height.

Like you, sometimes we need a bit of a trim. SA Power Networks will check if we need a trim once a year if we are growing under powerlines in a high bushfire risk area. Or once every three years in a non-bushfire risk area.

SA Power Networks really do like me, so they manage me if my foliage gets too close to public powerlines. A good trim ensures you and the community stays safe.

There are times when you as a property owner or land owner have to look after me. If I'm growing on your property and I'm too near to your private supply lines, then you'll need to keep my foliage away from the lines. It's best to get professional help.

As you know, us trees like to get to the real issue, which is making sure you plant the right plant in the right location, so we naturally keep away from powerlines.

Even if you are planting a tree away from lines, it's also worth thinking about what might happen in a storm. Many outages are caused by falling trees and tree limbs falling from outside the clearance zone. You wouldn't want a tree to fall on lines, or even worse, to damage your home.

For help on this, speak with your local nursery representative, do a little research, or jump online and check out the Botanic Gardens Online Plant Selector Tool to find suitable plants for planting under or near powerlines.

My friends at SA Power Networks are trying hard to keep me looking good and keep you safe and connected to power. That way, we'll all be happy.

If you want more information about ensuring happy trees in your area, you can call the friendly SAPN team on 13 12 61 or send them an email at customerrelations@sapowernetworks.com.au.