

Minutes



Arborist Reference Group for Vegetation Management near Powerlines

Meeting Details

Organiser	Alex Lewis
Date	5 March 2018
Time	2.00-3.30pm
Location	SAPN, Anzac Highway Keswick

Attendance

Attendees

Kelvin Trimper, SA Tree Advisory Board
Brett Bobrige, City of Campbelltown
Chris Taras, City of Charles Sturt
Kim Syrus, HMA
Andrew Carrick, Botanic Gardens of SA
Marlene Weise, community representative
Glenn Williams, Treenet
Luke Hounslow, Active Tree Services
Peter Watton, Trees for Life
Ben Freeman, Freshford Nurseries
Kev Connell, Manager Vegetation
Doug Schmidt, General Manager Network Management (Chair)
Alex Lewis, Stakeholder Engagement Lead

Apologies	Henry Haavisto, Arborist Association of Australia
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Confirmation of Previous minutes	Noted – meeting 23 November 2017
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Business arising from previous minutes	Refer to agenda items 2.1
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1. Welcome

No apologies were noted.

2. Business arising from last meeting

2.1 John Elferink, SA Dairy Farmers Association

Following John's presentation to the group on biosecurity issues, a meeting with SAPN Environment Manager was held to discuss SA Power Networks' current protocols for biosecurity.

An infographic for 'Access to your property' has been developed and was tabled for discussion. AL to email to group.

3. Regulatory Reset Proposal 2020-25

AL provided an update on the progress on the 2020-25 Reset Customer Engagement Program.

Members would have been invited to the Operating Expenditure Deep Dive engagement session where our vegetation management costs will be discussed to be held on 12 April 2018.

To date, customer engagement has identified three key priorities:

- Reliability of the network
- Prices – affordable/ reasonable
- Network upgrades cater for future needs

4. Visual amenity assessment

Whilst visual amenity is important in all locations, the focus for improved outcomes should be areas of high visual amenity or tourism areas, townships and non-bushfire risk areas.

The following approach is proposed to look at visual amenity outcomes and opportunities:

1. Establish a Taskforce of 5-6 members (mix of Arborist Reference Group and LGA Working Group members) to undertake project.
2. Select 6 representative treescapes that are considered represented of treescapes in the state. It is envisaged that this would include 3 urban and 3 rural treescapes.
3. Identify what the different issues are for the 6 representative treescapes in terms of powerline clearance, such as:
 - legislative requirements
 - visual amenity – significance or visual value of tree in landscape, contribution of tree to future landscape, general health
 - community and Council expectations
4. Trial different cutting techniques in partnership with our vegetation clearance contractor and local council to determine the impact on the tree in terms of visual amenity and health/ structure.
5. Monitor the outcomes of the trial to assess the impact on the treescapes. This would include:
 - cost of clearance – cost vs benefit
 - vegetation growth rates
 - visual amenity outcome
 - tree health and structure
 - community and Council reaction and response

The group endorsed the proposed scope of work – Andrew Carrick, Chris Taras and Marlene Wiese nominated to represent the ARG on the Taskforce. Representative areas should include a hills locations eg. Strathalbyn, Woodside; a regional town eg. Mt Gambier and metro locations.

A key question was, who will and how will we determine if the vegetation looks better?



5. Species selection

A workshop was held in October and it was resolved to develop a list of 20-25 suitable trees to plant under powerlines (building on existing the lists) by zones – metropolitan, coastal, arid, warm and cool temperate.

Seed Consulting have subsequently been engaged to develop the lists and the Inception Meeting was held on 6 February.

The joint stakeholder meeting (ARG and LGA Working Group) workshops is scheduled for Thursday 19 April. Council workshops to seek input in to the development of the list will be held as follows.

WORKSHOP	DATE	VENUE
<i>Stakeholder workshop 1 –</i> Cool temperate and coastal zone	Wednesday 2 May 10.00am-1.00pm	Mt Barker Civic Centre, 6 Dutton Road, Mt Barker
<i>Stakeholder workshop 2 –</i> Metropolitan zone	Friday 4 May 10.00am-1.00pm	Glenunga Hub, Fullarton
<i>Stakeholder workshop 3 –</i> Warm temperate zone	Wednesday 9 May 10.00am-1.00pm	Clare Town Hall, Clare
<i>Stakeholder workshop 4 –</i> Arid zone	Thursday 10 May 10.00am-1.00pm	Port Augusta Cultural Centre, Port Augusta
<i>Stakeholder workshop 5 –</i> Cool temperate zone	Tuesday 15 May 10.00am-1.00pm	Naracoorte Town Hall, Naracoorte

The need for a Government agency workshop or involving agencies in the discussion was also raised.

6. Customer engagement

Rita McPhail, Manager Customer Programs, provided an overview of her role and the initiatives her team will be undertaking to improve our engagement with customers.

6.1 Customer notifications

Opportunities to improve the current notification process were discussed. Discussion included:

- Notification does provide direct notice to landowner but difficulties and limitations noted.
- Trial using a flashing road sign in sensitive areas.

6.2 Visibility tool – user experience

SAPN are currently working with Customer Programs and IT on the development of a visibility tool (proof of concept) for vegetation management to enhance customer and council engagement. Engagement on the proof of concept will be undertaken.

7. Update on strategic initiatives

7.1 Regulatory amendments

The Regulations are coming up for their 10-year review (2021 ascended) so consultation will need to be undertaken with key stakeholders. A list of possible amendments has been developed following discussion with key internal stakeholders.

SAPN met with the OTR to discuss the amendments and our proposed approach for engagement. The following approach is proposed:

1. Initial discussions with OTR on proposed amendments, approach and timeframes – 27 February 2018 (complete)
2. Develop draft Discussion Paper for stakeholder feedback and input – March/ April 2018
3. Run stakeholder workshop on proposed amendments – August/ September 2018
 - a. Councils/ LGA
 - b. Government agencies – DPTI, DEWNR, NVC, CFS, MFS
 - c. Regulator - OTR
 - d. ARG / LGA members - SAPN's consultative groups on vegetation management
4. Final Discussion Paper and endorsement on amendments to be sought – October 2018
5. Stakeholder meeting to present final Discussion Paper – December 2018/ January 2019
6. Commence Parliamentary Process (OTR)

The *Principles of Vegetation Clearance Regulations* expire on 1 September 2021.

7.2 Sapling trial

Sapling removal is now allowed under the *Native Vegetation Act* for saplings under 5 years of age (without an offset being required). SAPN are proposing to undertake a trial in the Gumeracha district and on Kangaroo Island using different contractors.

7.3 Growth regulator trial

Year 2 data collection will be undertaken in the second week of March, with the results available in a few weeks. Results from Victorian have shown continued control.

7.4 Training program for contractors

In 2018, contractor training will focus on hazard tree and sapling identification and native vegetation.

7.5 Post Vegetation Clearance surveys

The areas selected for surveying in 2018 are Unley, Salisbury, Port Lincoln, Maitland and Burra.

8. Other business

- Kelvin Trimper, AM – the group recognised Kelvin's receipt of an AM for his service to horticulture and thanked him for his contribution to the group.
- Attendance at the Arborist Conference was discussed – ATS/ SAPN to confirm if happy to fund participation of 2 members at the conference in Hobart.

9. Next meeting: **Monday 4 June, 2.00-3.30pm, Network Innovation Centre**

Agenda items:

- Reset Proposal
- Visual amenity
- Protocol review
- Appropriate species selection

