

Minutes



Joint Arborist Reference Group/ LGA Working Group Meeting for Vegetation Management near Powerlines

Meeting Details

Organiser	Alex Lewis
Date	10 September 2019
Time	9.00am-12.00pm
Location	City of Campbelltown, 172 Montacute Rd, Rostrevor – meet on site at 21 Yeronga Rd, Kensington at 9am

Attendance

Arborist Reference Group

- Kelvin Trimper, SA Tree Advisory Board (Acting Chair)
- Henry Haavisto, Arborist Association of Australia
- Brett Winkler, Active Tree Services
- Chris Taras, City of Charles Sturt
- Andrew Carrick, Botanic Gardens of SA
- Peter Watton, Trees for Life
- Dr Marlene Weise, community representative

LGA Working Group

Attendees

- Francene O’Conner, Port Augusta Council
 - Ian Seccafien, City of Onkaparinga
 - Damian Brennan, Adelaide Hills Council
 - Marcus Hannath, City Tea Tree Gully
 - Lisa Kirwan, Alexandrina Council
 - Katherine Russell, LGA
 - SAPN
 - Kev Connell, Manager Vegetation
 - Alex Lewis, Stakeholder Engagement Lead
- Marcus Lodge, Arborman (Guest)

Apologies

Doug Schmidt, General Manager Regulation
Ben Freeman, Freshford Nurseries
Kim Syrus, HMA
Glenn Williams, Treenet
Janet Willoughby, City of Charles Sturt
Ben Seamark, City of Burnside

Confirmation of Previous minutes

Noted

Business arising from previous minutes

Refer to agenda items

1. Welcome

Kelvin welcomed the group to the joint meeting, in particular the new LGA Working Group members, Marcus Hannath and Lisa Kirwan, and Marcus Lodge as a guest attendee.

2. Business arising from last meeting

2.1 Culturally significant trees and avenues of honour

Following on from the discussion regarding Stanley Flat and a meeting with Heritage SA there is a need to understand the extent of the issue in relation to trees under powerlines using Avenues of Honour dataset, National Trust list and any Council heritage tree lists. GW to provide the datasets to SAPN.

3. Reliability site visit and follow up – overview of issue and process

Two site visits were undertaken

- Site 1 – 21 Yeronga Rd, Kensington – the landowner had declined to have the tree removed
- Site 2 – 18 Kitchener Avenue, Dulwich – SAPN/ Arborman had determined to not remove the tree following site inspection and further analysis of a palm tree in private property was being undertaken

Discussion included:

- Cost for sheath
- Process or tree removal
- AER incentives and ESCoSA targets
- Arborman process

Actions:

- KC to provide an indicative cost for a sheath

4. Appropriate species selection

Legislation relating to the planting of appropriate species of vegetation has been in place since 1988. Much of our vegetation clearance work in urban areas is a result of a legacy of planting species under powerlines that grow to an inappropriate height at maturity, resulting in conflicts with powerlines.

An approach to reduce or avoid the impacts of tree trimming by ensuring appropriate tree species are planted under powerlines was tabled and discussed.

Discussion included:

- Costs of vegetation management – approx. \$34 per customer pa
- Existing avenues – replace like for like
- Street tree planting and consultation – SAPN feedback pre-planting?
- Trees that will survive into the future
- Trees more suitable for planting under LV lines
- HV/LV data – exploring opportunities to provide data by Councils to assist in street tree planting.
- Process for adding/ removing trees.
- Is this the start of SAPNs enforcement period?



Next steps will include the establishment of a sub-group of the ARG and LGA working group to develop a long-term approach to appropriate species selection around powerlines in consultation with our stakeholders. The sub-group will report back to the ARG and LGA working group.

The group will work on a number of things over the next 12-18 months including:

- Process for SAPN feedback pre-planting
- Trees suitable for the future and new species/ trials
- Trees suitable for planting under LV lines
- Process for adding/ removing trees from the appropriate species list
- Process for tree removal and timeframes
- Ongoing communication with Councils/ stakeholders

Actions:

- AL to establish a sub-group and schedule the first meeting.

5. Update on strategic initiatives

5.1 Regulatory amendments – 10-year review of Regulations

The current Regulations expire on 1.9.2021 and SA Power Networks is proposing a number of amendments.

Whilst the majority of stakeholders have supported our proposed amendments there are two amendments that required further work and engagement prior to lodging the submission with the OTR – tree removals and visual amenity.

SA Power Networks undertook further specific engagement to determine if there was a compromise that could be agreed regarding tree removals and offsets. A bus trip was held on 26 July, a follow up stakeholder workshop on 7 August and a subsequent bus trip in late August.

Following the engagement tree removals were broken into three categories:

- The removal of saplings – supported
- The removal of non-indigenous vegetation – supported
- The removal of mature/ indigenous vegetation, with the disagreement about the payment of offsets (not actually tree removal per se) – not supported

While SA Power Networks does not support paying offsets as it is a direct cost to customers, for mature native vegetation removal SA Power Networks was willing to pay a \$25 per tree offset, with a fund of up to \$50,000 per annum, for the removal and replacement of native trees directly below the powerline clearance zone.

In addition, it proposed:

- To develop a training module for ATS scopers in consultation with NVC/ Conservation Council on native vegetation.
- Develop a booklet/ guide/ vegetation identification app to assist in identifying saplings/ trees.
- To work with the NVC to identify trees to be retained (not subject to removal) by region and status eg. Vulnerable, Endangered.
- Review process and tree removals on annual basis for initial 3 years (NVC, Conservation Council, Arborist Reference Group and LGA Working Group).



A copy of the submission lodged with the NVC was tabled at the meeting.

SA Power Networks should contact the Local Government Biodiversity Networks – contact Tonya Brown, Adelaide Hills Council.

5.2 Training program for contractors

SA Power Networks propose to develop a training module for ATS scopers in consultation with NVC/ Conservation Council on native vegetation.

5.3 Indoors Outdoors

Two stories were developed for Indoors Outdoors – reduced pruning around LV lines and energy advisory.

The reduced pruning story can be viewed at:

<https://vimeo.com/350628496>

5.4 Visual amenity assessment

The Ash trees in Lobethal are to be hand pruned to assess any difference in visual outcome.

5.5 Government agency workshop

One of the priority areas for focus during 2019 was Government liaison. It was felt there was disconnect with Government (DPTI, DEW, NVC) which provides an opportunity to align and work more closely.

SAPN were proposing to run a government agency workshop in Q4 2019 with key stakeholders to discuss traffic management, environmental and vegetation management, and planning however given the engagement on the 10-year review it is proposed to run a workshop in Q2 2020 (March/ April).

6. Other business

6.1 CCP update and review of CCP/ Reference Groups

Kelvin provided an update on the review of the CCP and Reference Groups. There is no change to the ARG or the LGA Working Group and their role/ purpose.

The ARG shows the benefits of having a shared vision and partnership. The Native Vegetation Council will be invited to nominate a representative to the ARG. The ARG endorsed Kelvin Trimper to continue as the ARG representative on SAPN's Customer Consultative Panel for a further two-year term.

6.2 2020 priorities

- **ARG** – appropriate species selection, avenues of honour and culturally significant areas, government liaison/ government workshop.
- **LGA Working Group** – appropriate species selection, native vegetation management and tree removal consultation.



6.3 Arboriculture Australia Conference briefing

Francene handed out a summary of some key learnings from the Arboriculture Australia Conference which may be of interest to members.

6.4 Around the table

- **Native vegetation**

There was a recent incident following the pruning of native vegetation in Scott Creek. ATS and SAPN met with representatives of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park and following a productive meeting, a number of measures were proposed. Kev thanked Peter Watton for his objective and balanced views in the discussion.

- **Habitat trees**

Marcus Lodge provided an overview of their experience with habitat trees. In summary:

- Varying success rates
- Location a key factor
- Target rural/ fringe areas eg. Hills interface
- Consider hollows/ habitat potential as part of scoping
- Habitat boxes – ongoing management cost?
- Biodiversity value

7. Next meeting

- ARG – 12 December 2019
- LGA WG – 19 December 2019

