

Minutes



Arborist Reference Group for Vegetation Management near Powerlines

Meeting Details

Organiser	Alex Lewis
Date	6 June 2019
Time	9.30-11.30am
Location	City of Campbelltown Civic Centre, 172 Montacute Rd, Rostrevor

Attendance

Attendees	Kelvin Trimper, SA Tree Advisory Board (Chair)
	Henry Haavisto, Arborist Association of Australia
	Brett Winkler, Active Tree Services
	Chris Taras, City of Charles Sturt
	Andrew Carrick, Botanic Gardens of SA
	Kim Syrus, HMA
	Dr Marlene Weise, community representative
	Kev Connell, Manager Vegetation
	Steve Wachtel, Manager Network Assets
	Alex Lewis, Stakeholder Engagement Lead

Apologies	Doug Schmidt, General Manager Regulation
	Peter Watton, Trees for Life
	Ben Freeman, Freshford Nurseries
	Glenn Williams, Treenet

Confirmation of Previous minutes	Noted – meeting 7 March 2019
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Business arising from previous minutes	Refer to agenda items
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1. Welcome

Kelvin welcomed the group to the meeting, in particular Steve Wachtel who is attending as Doug's proxy and was an inaugural member of the group during its inception.

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 presentation – overview of issue and process

AL provided a presentation on our reliability program in relation to the current process and key mitigation measures.

Discussion included:

- BZ and subjective area
- Outages – BFRA vs NBFRA
- Cost of vegetation maintenance and cost alternatives
- Tree removals – process, level of engagement
- Fire start data and extent of issue
- Customer engagement and ensuring removal letter is customer focused and process independent

Actions:

- AL circulate reliability letter
- ARG undertake audit of several trees identified for removal as part of next meeting

4. Government liaison

At the last meeting 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. One issue is traffic management and the usage of barrows.

SAPN should run a government agency workshop in Q4 2019 (October) with key stakeholders to discuss traffic management, environmental and vegetation management, and planning. Invites to be sent to DPTI, DEW, NRM, NVC, PIRSA, Greening Adelaide, SARDI and CFS.

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. The OTR called for submissions on the 10-year review in late May 2019. The closing date for submissions is 23 August 2019.

Whilst the majority of stakeholders have supported our proposed amendments there are two amendments that require further work and engagement – tree removals and visual amenity.

Tree removals

- Should SAPN have the right to remove trees? Should an offset be required?
- Notification process for tree removals – Council/ government
- Steps to remove trees and process – scoping data, Council happy for tree to be removed
- Before/ after shots of tree removals
- Larger trees eg. Main St, Inglewood – poorly pruned but provide habitat and food source for parrots
- One option to run a bus trip with key stakeholders to view the current clearance requirements associated with the vegetation maintenance program and show the end result of ongoing pruning in bushfire risk areas
- Trials eg. habitat creation under powerlines



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- Botanic Gardens leave habitat trees and prune trees to die. Signage could be left on trees stating, “this tree had to be removed but SAPN has retained as a habitat tree”.

Visual amenity

- No clear proposal despite significant consultation
- Difficult to legislate and highly subjective
- Burnley method of assessment an objective way of assessing visual amenity and whether trees warrant removal

Actions:

- Further engagement with stakeholders as part of process to be considered.

5.2 Protocol

The revised protocol was endorsed by the LGA Board at its Board meeting on Thursday 23 May. Copies to be sent to local government CEO’s and key vegetation contacts.

5.3 Powerline friendly list of species

The powerline friendly list of species has now been finalised. We still need to get the message out and educate the broader community.

AL to organise a meeting with Bunnings to further discuss and investigate the use of tags in plants.

5.4 Clearance surveys

SAPN undertook a trial in TTG Council area using P@MP.

Message stated - *‘We need to talk...we recently trimmed trees from powerlines in and around the City of Tea Tree Gully to ensure community safety and maintain power reliability. We would like to hear your feedback to help us improve our approach’.* Alex, SA Power Networks

A total of 72 online responses and approximately 50 text messages (responding to text) were received. Customers generally satisfied (over 50%) but number concerns or dissatisfied customers

- Pruning around LV lines – either not cut enough, contractors haven’t cut what they said they would, work not undertaken, waste of time
- Visual amenity
- Frequency of pruning – needs to be done more
- Skill level of contractors
- Inconvenience to resident eg. obstructing driveway, site clean-up not adequate, noise
- Council/ SAPN to and froing – who responsible?
- Non-vegetation related issues eg. power off but no cutting

5.5 Growth regulator trial

The trial in the City of Campbelltown using the growth regulator has been completed with the final data collected in March 2019.

Trees treated with Cambistat had lower mean annual shoot growth relative to the untreated trees. The greatest regulation was seen in Chinese Elm (86%) and Chinese Pistachio (79%), with the other species



showing growth regulation between 33-71%. Treated Jacaranda trees did not show a significant reduction in comparison to the other species. Overall, across all species and treatment rates, 1 57% growth reduction was recorded.

This could be an option for avenues of honour or targeted trees.

Actions:

- AL to email the final report from the 3 Year trial to the group.

5.6 Visual amenity assessment

SAPN to investigate undertaking trials of habitat creation under powerlines to improve the visual outcome and retain habitat value where required.

5.7 Training program for contractors

The hazard tree and sapling identification has been rolled out to the ATS scopers. The feedback from the session was positive.

Council feedback on performance and engagement should determine future training priorities. The key issue raised in the clearance surveys is site clean-up.

6. Other business

6.1 CCP update and review of CCP/ Reference Groups

A review of the CCP and Reference Group has been undertaken. There is no change to the ARG and its role/ purpose. The group shows the benefits of having a shared vision and partnership. The question of whether a government representative should be invited to sit on the ARG was raised.

6.2 Arboriculture Australia Conference briefing

Key topics discussed at the conference included:

- LiDAR
- Risk-based approach to pruning around LV lines
- Inappropriate species selection
- Customer engagement – our approach to working with our stakeholders is considered a benchmark by other utilities

7. Site visit

A site visit of the Chinese Pistachio's on Reid St was visited by the group.

8. Next meeting – 10 September 2019, City of Campbelltown

Agenda items:

- Regulatory amendments – 10-year review
- Audit of several reliability trees

