



# Reduced pruning around low voltage powerlines

Fact Sheet on changes to the regulations governing vegetation clearance near powerlines

## Background

SA Power Networks is required to clear vegetation around powerlines to ensure community safety and the delivery of a safe and reliable electricity supply to customers.

The principles of vegetation clearance are set out in the *Electricity (Principles of Vegetation Clearance) Regulations 2021*.

The Regulations define areas as bushfire and non-bushfire risk and determine the specific clearances that must be maintained around powerlines in these areas.

In 2010, the regulations for metropolitan Adelaide were amended to reflect the lower level of risk associated with vegetation around low voltage (LV) powerlines. This allows vegetation to grow through LV powerlines in certain circumstances, which improves the streetscape and visual amenity. This approach has been strongly supported by local councils.

As substantial areas in large regional and rural towns have similar non-bushfire risk to metropolitan Adelaide, SA Power Networks sought a change to the regulations to allow this approach to be adopted in a number of regional towns.

## What does this mean?

This approach will only be undertaken around low voltage powerlines where the level of risk allows reduced pruning.

Key factors include:

- Designated non-bushfire risk area in the Regulations
- 24-hour availability of emergency services
- Population density
- Built up or urban area
- Only LV powerlines (ie. no co-located HV powerlines).

This approach will not alter the frequency of clearance – once every three years in non-bushfire risk areas – but may result in vegetation ‘growing through’ or touching the low voltage powerlines. This is considered to be low risk.

This approach to pruning balances community expectations and reflects the reduced risks in urban areas around LV powerlines.

Where there are high voltage (HV) powerlines (either on their own or above LV lines), additional tree trimming is required to ensure vegetation does not enter the HV clearance zone throughout the cycle.

## Where will the new legislation apply?

The risk-based approach to pruning will be adopted in the following non-bushfire risk areas as pruning is undertaken as part of our 3-year cyclic program:

- City of Mount Gambier
- City of Port Pirie
- City of Port Lincoln
- City of Port Augusta
- City of Whyalla
- City of Victor Harbor
- Town of Mt Barker
- City of Murray Bridge
- Town of Gawler – Evanston Gardens, Kudla, Hillier and Gawler South
- Town of Goolwa.

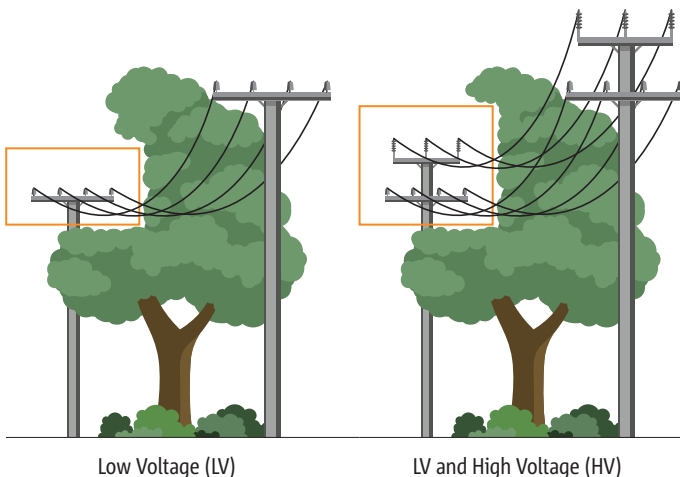
## What are the benefits?

- ✓ Improved streetscape and visual amenity of street trees
- ✓ Reduces amount of pruning required around low voltage powerlines
- ✓ Maintains appropriate level of public safety
- ✓ Meets community expectations for improved visual outcomes
- ✓ Reduces customer complaints regarding unnecessary or excessive pruning
- ✓ Recognises value of trees in urban/ township areas.

**Below:** Changes to the Regulations that will be implemented in the largest rural/regional centres in relation to vegetation clearance.

## Existing legislation (Non-bushfire risk areas)

- Clearance zone  
Vegetation must be clear from inside of legislated Clearance Zones



## New ‘risk-based’ legislation (Non-bushfire risk areas)

- Trees allowed to ‘grow through’ Low Voltage powerlines based on a risk assessment

