

29 November 2021

Plan drives safety improvements

Essential Energy has released the latest report on the performance of its Electricity Network Safety Management System (ENSMS). The annual report into the organisation-wide system of processes and activities that supports network safety outcomes across Essential Energy's footprint, shows continued safety improvements including a significant reduction in major incidents and network-caused events.

The report highlights areas for further improvement with 2021 seeing an increase in contacts with the electricity network, including from agricultural equipment or vegetation. Ideal vegetation growing conditions, bumper crops and less-experienced agricultural staff in the wake of COVID-19 travel restrictions are some of the causes.

Significant activities delivered by Essential Energy during the reporting period and contributing to the improved safety outcomes include the launch of the Look Up and Live app to help people identify where the overhead network is located; development of a new Vegetation Management Strategy that will help reduce bushfire risk; the launch of a new tool to continue to drive a safety mindset amongst the operational workforce and a smart meter trial which has improved the ability to indicate neutral integrity issues – a key factor in shocks and tingles; and a public safety campaign targeting safe driving behaviour.

The report also covers bushfire preparedness activities, aerial inspections throughout bushfire prone land; inspection of private power lines and working with owners of Private High Voltage Networks to ensure their compliance with bushfire safety requirements. The report also details the organisation's performance against bushfire inspection targets and completion of vegetation management tasks.

Background

Essential Energy's *Electricity Network Safety Management System Performance* covers the period 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2021 and the *Bushfire Preparedness Report* covers the period 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2021.

The ENSMS is a framework of policies and plans that drive the management of safety on Essential Energy's network, which covers 737,000 square kilometres across regional NSW. Details of incidents, vegetation management activities and the number of inspections during the period covered by the reports will help benchmark network performance over the period.

The report also underlines the communications with customers and the local communities served by the network to support public safety programs and campaigns to promote community safety around the network.

With a footprint that covers 95 per cent of NSW, Essential Energy's network overlaps with some of the highest risk bushfire zones in the State. Managing the risk of bushfires is an important part of keeping the network safe and reliable for the more than 875,000 customers and communities served by Essential Energy.

The reports are available [here](#).

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Media Release



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FACT FILE:

- Essential Energy builds, operates and maintains one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks, servicing more than 870,000 customers across regional, rural and remote NSW and parts of Southern Queensland
- Our footprint covers 95 percent of NSW and parts of Southern Queensland and traverses 737,000 square kilometres of landmass with 183,612 km of powerline, 163,417 of those in designated bushfire zones.
- The network has approximately 5.1 customers to each kilometre of powerline, which is almost one-tenth the customer density compared with our counterparts in NSW.
- Essential Energy's footprint includes 1.38 million power poles, equating to nearly 1.6 power poles per customer.

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