

Bushfire Prevention Measures for Community Safety

Essential Energy is committed to providing a safe and reliable power supply for all our customers across regional, rural and remote NSW and parts of southern QLD.

We've been working with industry leaders and the University of Melbourne to update our bushfire risk modelling to make sure we continue to meet the demands on the network while ensuring community safety. This has highlighted changes to the bushfire risk in some areas and with community safety in mind, we will need to remove more vegetation near the network than we have previously in these targeted areas.

Why is it important to keep vegetation away from powerlines?

Trees growing, rubbing, or falling onto powerlines is a major cause of power outages and can cause bushfires or safety issues. It is important to keep any vegetation from affecting powerlines keeping the power on and our communities safe.

How are trees trimmed?

Most trees near the electricity network are trimmed to comply with safe clearance standards. This can include removal of tree limbs or complete trees.

How much vegetation is removed in areas determined as high bushfire risk?

Essential Energy is required to remove more vegetation in areas with heightened bushfire risk, than in other areas. Some trees may need to be completely removed to achieve this.

We will consult with landholders if removal needs to occur.



Why does Essential Energy require some trees to be removed?

Trees are removed when:

- ▶ It's necessary to protect powerlines to ensure safety of the community or surrounding property near the network
- ▶ Alternatives, such as undergrounding or moving the powerline, are too costly or not practical
- ▶ Acting in accordance with our Vegetation Management Plan
- ▶ Qualified arborists have determined a tree is unhealthy and poses a heightened risk of falling into powerlines
- ▶ Required trimming for safety will cause a tree to become unhealthy. In these cases, it is safer to remove the whole tree.

SAFETY FIRST

Never attempt to carry out vegetation work or any other activity on or near the electricity network yourself. Working near powerlines poses significant safety hazards, including the risk of serious injury or death, and must only be undertaken by qualified and authorised personnel.

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How is vegetation on council land managed?

Essential Energy works with councils to ensure effective vegetation management in the best interests of the community. We will consult with councils where specific street trees are identified for removal.

How often are trees near powerlines inspected?

Inspection cycle times vary from 12 months to 60 months depending on the vegetation growth rate, bushfire risk, climate, and type of vegetation.

High bushfire risk areas are inspected each year by low flying planes or helicopters to give us a bird's eye view of the network.



Examples of trees that may be removed or trimmed where the potential for damage to the network and bushfire risk is increased.

Does Essential Energy increase inspections over the bushfire season?

We have a rigorous Pre-Summer Bushfire Inspection program where the electricity network is aerially inspected using technology that identifies any area where maintenance or vegetation management is needed.

Will I be notified if work is required?

If you are the landholder with vegetation in close proximity to the power network, we will:

- ▶ Undertake an initial site inspection to scope required works
- ▶ Provide advice, either verbally or by letter, regarding the scope of work – including contact details
- ▶ Seek consent prior to tree removal or using herbicide.

Community feedback

Community members can provide feedback and view specific vegetation mitigation projects via our Essential Engagement website.



MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ Visit essentialenergy.com.au/vegetation.
- ▶ Call **13 23 91**.
- ▶ Scan the QR Code or visit our Essential Engagement website to provide feedback at engage.essentialenergy.com.au/bushfire-mitigation-projects.