



Tree Safety Management Plan

(Prepared as a Tree Management Plan in accordance with Part 5 of the Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014, under the Electricity Supply Act 1995)

December 2015



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Who is Ausgrid?

Ausgrid is a statutory State-Owned Corporation, incorporated under the Energy Services Corporations Act 1995 (NSW).

One of our main functions is to distribute electricity. We are supplied with bulk *high voltage* electricity that we break down to lower voltages and distribute to customers.

Ausgrid's distribution *Network* supplies over 1.66 million customers and extends to over 41 local *Council* areas. Ausgrid's *Network* includes *powerlines* running along streets and *easements* and into homes and other properties, as well as streetlights, power poles, *access tracks* and steel towers. Ausgrid's *Network* does not include private poles and wires forming part of customers' electrical installations.

Ausgrid was formed in 1995, when Sydney Electricity merged with Orion Energy following the State Government's rationalisation of NSW electricity distributors.

Ausgrid supplies a significant proportion of the Australian electricity market, covering a distribution area of some 22,275 square kilometres from the Royal National Park south of Sydney to Port Stephens in the north, west to the municipality of Auburn and north west to the upper Hunter Valley.

Ausgrid services a community of almost 3.57 million people with a wide span of customers, ranging from rural to urban, residential to commercial, as well as serving industries such as mining, manufacturing and agriculture.

Ausgrid also has:

- 43% of the NSW market based on electricity consumption;
- Approximately \$16.2 billion total assets (gross);
- 45 Transmission Substations;
- Over 4300 km of Sub-transmission Circuits (overhead and underground) and 189 Zone Substations;
- Approximately 18,000 km of 22kV, 11kV & 5 kV circuits (overhead and underground) and 31,100 Distribution Centres;
- Approximately 18,000 km of low voltage circuits (overhead and underground) and 10,000 km of street lighting circuits; and
- Approximately 510,000 poles in service.



1.2 What is this Tree Safety Management Plan about?

This Tree Safety Management Plan outlines Ausgrid's approach to *vegetation* management near Ausgrid's *Network*. It covers areas such as:

- Why we have a Plan, to whom and where it applies, and when it will be implemented
- How you can have your say
- Raising community awareness
- Use of Contractors
- Emergencies
- Environmental issues
- Alternatives to trimming or removal
- Safety
- Responsibilities
- Notification of upcoming works
- Auditing
- Planting guidelines
- Our approach to trimming and removal
- Costs

1.3 Why have a Plan?

This Plan will help Ausgrid to enhance *vegetation* management practices, inform the community about what Ausgrid does, why Ausgrid does it and to provide the basis for community input. The Plan will operate as a Tree Management Plan under the [Electricity Supply \(Safety and Network Management\) Regulation 2014](#). By implementing this Plan, Ausgrid will better:

- minimise the possibility of accidental electrocution;
- minimise environmental harm, including minimising damage or destruction of *vegetation*;
- reduce the risk of fires caused by electricity; and
- prevent destruction, damage or interference with Ausgrid's *Network* and as a result, reduce the risk of power interruptions to the community.

Our aim is to minimise the impacts of our *vegetation* management activities on all areas of the environment by implementing appropriate management practices. Ausgrid's primary driver for *vegetation* management is to ensure public safety and enable the safe maintenance and operation of Ausgrid's *Network*.

The Plan seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of Ausgrid's *vegetation* management policies and practices. It is not intended to fully detail Ausgrid's *vegetation* management procedures and contractual arrangements.

1.4 Application of this Plan

This Plan applies across Ausgrid's entire distribution *Network* and area, including *urban*; *rural*, public and private lands.

Across Ausgrid's *Network*, there are various organisations and individuals with *vegetation* management responsibilities, in addition to Ausgrid's own responsibilities. These include *Councils*, landowners (both public and private) and other land occupiers. This Plan sets out the responsibilities of the various groups and describes how Ausgrid plans to interact with them. While the Plan applies directly to Ausgrid, it offers guidance to the other groups.

1.5 The meaning of words and expressions used in this Plan

Words and expressions which appear in italics are explained in Attachment 1 - Definitions at the end of this Plan.

1.6 What are 'Related Documents'?

The documents in the attachments (including a list of legislation and other reference documents) are referred to as "Related Documents". They are relevant to this Plan but do not form part of the Plan. These Related Documents may be amended at any time. If this occurs this Plan will be deemed to refer to the latest version of the Related Document. Generally an amendment to a Related Document will not require an amendment to this Plan (unless the change materially affects any provisions of this Plan).

1.7 Reviewing and amending this Plan

This Plan will be reviewed periodically, particularly where there are significant changes to factors such as legislation, policy, industry practice, standards and responsibilities.

This Ausgrid Tree Safety Management Plan may be amended or replaced by a subsequent Plan.

1.8 Feedback on this Plan

Written submissions on this Plan can be made at any time. Submissions will be considered when the Plan is next reviewed.

Written submissions and any other comments should be addressed to:

The Chief Engineer
Ausgrid
GPO Box 4009
Sydney NSW 2001

General enquiries may be made by calling 13 13 65. See Attachment 4 for further details.

2 SAFETY

Maintaining safety around Ausgrid's *Network* is one of Ausgrid's key priorities. Keeping *vegetation*, particularly *tree* branches, clear of *powerlines* and associated infrastructure, for example, water crossing signs, helps prevent injury to people and damage to property. This section outlines the dangers associated with *vegetation* near Ausgrid's *Network* and defines the safety responsibilities of Ausgrid and others planting and managing *vegetation*.

2.1 What are the dangers?

Some of the dangers of *vegetation* near *powerlines* include:

- Branches pushing live *overhead* wires together, causing the wires to short out, burn through and fall to the ground. This is a particular issue during times of high wind or storms;
- Falling branches bringing live wires to the ground;
- Possible ignition of bushfires;
- Accidental electrocution because of *unauthorised* access to live wires (for example, children climbing trees that are too close to wires, or climbing from trees onto attachments to poles and into live wires);
- Electrical injury from touching *vegetation* in contact with *powerlines*, particularly *high voltage powerlines*; and
- Electrical injury if a boat mast or floating crane comes too close, or touches, *overhead powerlines* crossing a navigable waterway where *vegetation* growth has obscured the crossing/warning signage.

2.2 What are Ausgrid's safety responsibilities?

Due to the safety risks outlined above, Ausgrid is required to ensure *vegetation* is managed where it is growing into *safety clearance zones* near Ausgrid's *Network*. It is essential that *vegetation* is kept clear of Ausgrid's *Network*, so that we can deliver a safe and reliable power supply.

Ausgrid complies with the various industry codes of practice relating to *Network* safety and *vegetation* management. In particular, as a licensed electricity distributor, our Network Management Plan¹ requires the safety clearances specified in Networks NSW Vegetation Management Common Requirement (VMCR) are to be applied where practicable. The VMCR provides for additional *vegetation safety clearances* in bushfire prone areas. Ausgrid otherwise manages *vegetation* in accordance with ISSC 3.

We have initiated a project to improve the management of long spans by developing a better understanding and balancing of risk, reliability, environmental and cost factors.

It should be noted that ISSC 3 specifies that *vegetation* management work must only be performed by qualified and *authorised* persons working in accordance with Ausgrid's Electrical Safety Rules when *vegetation* is being trimmed near energised *powerlines*.

In addition, Ausgrid considers bushfire risk management to be of critical importance, as is having a current Bushfire Management Plan² available at all times.

¹ Due to the commencement of the Electricity Supply (Safety & Network Management) Regulation on 1 September 2014, Ausgrid's Network Management Plan will be replaced with an Electricity Network Safety Management System in accordance with Australian Standard AS 5577-2013 – Electricity Network Safety Management System.

² Ausgrid's Bushfire Risk Management Plan was previously incorporated as Chapter 4 of Ausgrid's combined Network Management Plan. It is now a separate document in its own right. It is an interim document pending the implementation Ausgrid's Electricity Network Safety Management System in accordance with AS 5577-2013 which provides a national framework for the harmonisation of energy safety systems, including the maintenance of network asset integrity, *vegetation* management and bush fire risk mitigation.

2.3 What safety responsibilities do landowners and occupiers have?

Customers are responsible for keeping private *overhead powerlines* free of *vegetation* and must ensure only appropriate trees are planted in areas that are close to *powerlines*. Customers are also responsible for inspecting, testing and maintaining their *powerlines* and poles at regular intervals – just as we are. Details of Ausgrid's new policy regarding private and shared *overhead powerlines*, is covered in Section 3.2 of this document.

Landowners and *occupiers* should monitor the *clearance space* between *vegetation* and Ausgrid's *Network* to ensure the *clearance space* is kept free of *vegetation*.

Ausgrid should be contacted for advice if the *clearance space* is compromised. Where the landowner or *occupier* is responsible for *vegetation* management, then they should either enter into an arrangement with Ausgrid or engage an *accredited* or *authorised* Contractor to carry out the work. If landowners and *occupiers* with responsibility for *vegetation* management do not maintain the *safety clearances* or permit Ausgrid to, Ausgrid may arrange for the work to be done and could charge the landowner or *occupier* for the costs, in accordance with the Electricity Supply Act 1995.



Trimming or removal of trees near *powerlines* can be extremely dangerous. If you are arranging any tree trimming within 3m of *powerlines* you should ensure that the work is carried out by suitably qualified vegetation management workers and in accordance with the WorkCover 'Code of Practice – Amenity Tree Industry'.

Any tree trimming performed within 3m of Ausgrid *powerlines* must only be done by workers *accredited* under the WorkCover 'Code of Practice – Work Near Overhead Power Lines' and the work must be carried out according to the Code of Practice. Tree trimming within the No Go Zone (as defined in the Code of Practice) must only be done at the direction of Ausgrid, and vegetation management workers must not enter the No Go Zone at any time unless they are specifically *authorised* by Ausgrid.

Should you require work within the *No Go Zone*, or if you have any queries about vegetation management near *powerlines*, please contact Ausgrid via our website www.ausgrid.com.au or call us on 13 13 65.

2.4 What safety responsibilities do Vegetation Management Workers have?

Vegetation management workers must be appropriately *accredited* or *authorised* to carry out *vegetation* management work where the *vegetation*, the workers, or the equipment are within 3m of Ausgrid's *Network*. While carrying out *vegetation* management, workers must not endanger themselves or members of the public and must comply with all relevant legislation, codes of practice and safety procedures. In particular, workers must follow the requirements of Ausgrid's Electrical Safety Rules (for work carried out by or on behalf of Ausgrid), or the WorkCover Code of Practice – Work Near Overhead Power Lines (for work carried out by external parties).

2.5 What safety responsibilities do people planting vegetation near Ausgrid's Network or private Poles and overhead powerlines have?

In general, *trees* and other tall-growing *vegetation* should not be planted near Ausgrid's *Network* or *private poles and overhead powerlines*. Planting low-growing shrubs that will not result in the destruction of, damage to, or interference with the poles or powerlines is advised as it will minimise future hazards.

Refer to Attachment 2 of this document for guidance on what to plant near Ausgrid's *Network*.

3 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section describes Ausgrid's approach to improving the community's understanding of *vegetation* management issues, Ausgrid's expectations of landowners and *occupiers* in regard to this Plan, the steps Ausgrid takes regarding *vegetation* trimming and removal, Ausgrid's use of qualified Contractors and how Ausgrid will audit their work to ensure standards are maintained and the process is enhanced.

3.1 How can Ausgrid improve Community Understanding of Vegetation Management issues?

Ausgrid will continue to promote safety and environmental issues relating to the planting and management of *vegetation* near Ausgrid's *Network* to increase customer and community understanding.

Ausgrid will:

- liaise with landowners and *occupiers*, state and local government bodies (regulators, *Councils*, fire control bodies) and other community-based environmental organisations such as Landcare and Bushcare groups, as appropriate;
- distribute information covering safety issues, clearances, trimming techniques and planting guidelines;
- provide information on Ausgrid's website www.ausgrid.com.au;
- respond to community enquiries.

3.2 Ausgrid's Overhead Private and Shared Mains Policy

As referenced in Ausgrid's Network Management Plan, Ausgrid inspects, tests and maintains the assets we own.

Customers are responsible for keeping the *powerlines* which they own free of vegetation, and must ensure only appropriate trees are planted in areas that are close to *powerlines*. Customers are also responsible for inspecting, testing and maintaining their *powerlines* and poles at regular intervals – just as we are.

Ausgrid has developed a policy in regard to the management of privately owned overhead *powerlines* whereby Ausgrid proactively inspects private overhead *powerlines* in bushfire prone areas and subsequently deals with those *powerlines* that are found to represent an unacceptably high risk, especially bushfire risk. Ausgrid inspects private *overhead powerlines* in bush fire prone areas in accordance with their Network Standard NS 262 Private Mains Bushfire Risk Inspection, and any bushfire risk issues identified, including vegetation clearance issues, are dealt with in accordance with Division 2A of the Electricity Supply Act 1995 (NSW).

In cases where customers have not rectified safety defects that have been identified, it may be necessary for Ausgrid to disconnect these *powerlines*. This may include removing any overhead service line to the customer's installation. Even when a service has been disconnected, the landowner/occupier remains responsible for maintaining the customer installation in a safe condition.

3.3 What are Ausgrid's expectations of Landowners and Occupiers?

Landowners and *occupiers* should review the requirements of this Plan (particularly regarding the location and planting of appropriate species and the monitoring of *safety clearances*) and make arrangements for timely *vegetation* management works where they are responsible.

3.4 What steps will Ausgrid take regarding trimming and removal?

Ausgrid will seek to resolve *vegetation* management issues, particularly regarding trimming or removal of *vegetation*, directly and on a cooperative basis with the responsible landowner or *occupier*.

However, Ausgrid may carry out trimming or removal work if:

- it is considered necessary to ensure safety, prevent damage to Ausgrid's network and to maintain power supply; and
- the responsible landowners or *occupiers* do not arrange for the work to be performed and/or grant permission for the work to be carried out.

If this occurs the landowner or *occupier* may be responsible for the associated costs.³

3.5 Will notification be given before Vegetation Management is carried out?

Ausgrid will provide notices in accordance with its legal obligations. Ausgrid or its Contractors will keep relevant local government authorities fully informed at all times of their activities, work locations and nature of the work being carried out.

Ausgrid will provide notice to the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) for inspection, maintenance and emergency works on land reserved and acquired under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW lands) in accordance with any agreed procedures.

As Ausgrid's Contracts require the continual *maintenance of vegetation safety clearances* and do not involve planned work carried out to a defined schedule, written notification to residents on and adjacent to any site where *vegetation* is to be cleared is not required. However, where any work is to be carried out that will substantially damage a *tree*, defined by the Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014, Part 5 - Tree Preservation, a notification process shall be followed under the Electricity Supply Act 1995. This Clause does not impact on the requirements for notification of electrical work on private property.

Under the Electricity Supply Act 1995, a tree situated on any premises that could destroy, damage or interfere with its electricity works, or could make its electricity works become a potential cause of bush fire or a potential risk to public safety, may be trimmed or removed.

On land where Ausgrid does not have an *easement*⁴ or ownership, a written notice to the owner or occupier of the premises requiring the owner to trim or remove the tree may be made. If the work is not carried out as required by the notice, the network operator may carry out the work itself. In an emergency, Ausgrid, at its own expense, may trim or remove the tree itself.

3.6 What will Ausgrid do in an Emergency?

Trees and other *vegetation* may need to be trimmed or removed under *emergency* conditions where the *trees* or *vegetation* could destroy, damage or interfere with Ausgrid's *Network* or could make Ausgrid's *Network* become a potential cause of bush fire or risk to public safety. In such an *emergency*, *trees* and other *vegetation* may be trimmed or removed without notice.

3.7 Are suitable Contractors used?

Ausgrid contracts out a large portion of its *vegetation* management activities. All of the contracting companies working for us must be able to meet a range of requirements, including appropriate certifications, expertise and experience, as well as health, safety and environmental management methods. Contract personnel receive arboricultural training in correct trimming techniques, additional job-specific electrical safety training and awareness training in our environmental management practices. In addition, Contract personnel are required to successfully complete a *vegetation* management course approved by Ausgrid prior to being *authorised* to undertake trimming near Ausgrid's *Network*.

³ Under Section 48 of the Electricity Supply Act 1995 Ausgrid can serve a notice on owners and *occupiers* (including local *Councils*) requiring landowners to trim or remove *trees* on their property where those *trees* could destroy, damage or interfere with the Ausgrid's *Network* or make Ausgrid's *Network* become a potential cause of bush fire or a potential risk to public safety. Ausgrid can also perform *vegetation* management where responsible landowners or *occupiers* do not carry out the work. Ausgrid is generally required to pay for works carried out on *trees* planted prior to the installation of Ausgrid's *Network* and *trees* which have propagated naturally.

⁴ Including easements under existing use rights

Contractors are required to employ at least one arborist and one horticulturist to be available within the Contract area to oversee trimming activities and to ensure appropriate standards are maintained.

Ausgrid's *vegetation* management Contractors are also required to have in place an Environmental Management System and a Contract-specific Environmental Management Plan (EMP). The Contractors EMP must comply with the requirements of Ausgrid's own standard EMP, which is prepared and updated by Ausgrid's Environmental Services.

The overall aim of Ausgrid's *vegetation* management program is to achieve and maintain the necessary *vegetation safety clearances* whilst taking into consideration, as far as is practicable, the natural habit of the *vegetation* in the interests of its long term health.

3.8 What checks are undertaken on our Contractors?

Ausgrid audits its Contractors on an ongoing basis to ensure appropriate work practices are being maintained and that all contractual and environmental requirements are being met. Contractors are provided with feedback from Ausgrid audits and this information will also be used to enhance this Plan and Ausgrid's *vegetation* management system.

3.9 Does Ausgrid have in-house expertise?

Horticulturists and arborists are employed by Ausgrid to audit the work of Ausgrid's Contractors and provide advice to *Councils* and the community. This enables Ausgrid to give feedback and to provide timely, specialist advice.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

This section looks at the range of potential environmental factors associated with Ausgrid's *vegetation* management activities. It also describes how Ausgrid intends to manage these factors.

The issues covered include:

- environmental assessment, approvals licences and permits
- *threatened species* populations or communities
- noise and vibration
- waste management
- heritage
- erosion and sediment control
- pollution control
- noxious weeds and pathogens
- visual impact
- visual impact

4.1 Background

Ausgrid maintains an Environmental Management System (EMS), certified to [AS/NZS ISO 14001](#), which establishes a framework for managing Ausgrid's environmental issues and supports Ausgrid's environmental policy.

The EMS requires Ausgrid to identify the environmental issues relating to the activities Ausgrid carries out and to use a risk assessment process to determine the significance of Ausgrid's impact. This Plan covers the environmental issues associated with Ausgrid's *vegetation* management activities.

Ausgrid aims to implement environmental best-practice while still taking into account other factors such as legislative requirements, community expectations and the use of the most appropriate, cost-effective measures. In addition to the requirements outlined in this Plan, Ausgrid will manage the environmental issues in accordance with their NUS 174C Environmental Handbook for Construction and Maintenance.

Ausgrid or its Contractors will carry out all appropriate environmental assessments and obtain all necessary approvals, licences and permits associated with Ausgrid's *vegetation* management activities. The following sections provide a general overview of some of the most common environmental issues or factors that may arise.

4.2 Environmental Assessment , Approvals, Licences and Permits

Ausgrid or its Contractors will conduct an environmental assessment, where required, and obtain all necessary approvals, licences and permits. Where trees could destroy, damage or interfere with Ausgrid's electrical network Section 48 of the [Electricity Supply Act 1995](#) provides certain exemptions from obtaining local government permit approvals required by Tree Preservation Orders under a local environmental plan (LEP) and certain other environmental planning instruments. Those exemptions, however, do not apply to consents or approvals required under State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP), certain heritage orders and specific requirements of environmental protection legislation such as the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974](#), [Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995](#) and the [Fisheries Management Act 1994](#).

Ausgrid has been granted a permit, under Part 7 of the [Fisheries Management Act 1994](#), which provides an exemption to Section 205 of that Act subject to Ausgrid meeting a number of specific conditions. The permit allows Ausgrid employees or contractors to undertake mangrove clearing works for maintaining the visibility of warning signs, maintenance of access tracks and clearing power lines to maintain statutory clearances.

Ausgrid follows agreed procedures with OEH for the inspection, maintenance and emergency works on land reserved and acquired under the (NPW lands). A list of some of the relevant legislation and environmental planning instruments is set out in Attachment 3, "Reference Documents".

4.3 Heritage

Ausgrid will always act to preserve natural and cultural heritage features including Aboriginal heritage objects and places, historic structures and relics, memorial gardens, parks, *tree* plantings and landscapes, including aquatic landscapes, in accordance with relevant statutory requirements such as those contained in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the Heritage Act 1977 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

Works would stop immediately where heritage objects are suspected or identified.

Significant, memorial and heritage *trees*, or *vegetation* in *protected areas* and marine environments, may require particular management to minimise potential dangers or damage. Alternatives to trimming, as described in Section 6, will be considered, but trimming may be necessary where other options are not feasible because of technical, economic or aesthetic considerations.

4.4 Vegetation

Ausgrid's goal is to protect and preserve native *vegetation* and in particular *threatened species*, populations and/or communities. Ausgrid will act in accordance with all relevant legislation including the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974, Native Vegetation Act 2003, Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (NSW) and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth).

Ausgrid recognises that in some instances Ausgrid's *powerline* corridors, substations and depot sites can prove to be valuable ecological areas containing *threatened species*, populations or communities of flora and fauna.

4.5 Wildlife Habitat

Ausgrid will prevent or minimise disturbing wildlife habitat such as hollow bearing trees or bush rock. Where wildlife is detected and is likely to be impacted by the works, Ausgrid's Environmental Services will be contacted to undertake an assessment.

Local wildlife rescue organisations will be contacted for the rescue or care of native wildlife.

4.6 Erosion and Sediment Control

Ausgrid will prevent or minimise erosion and sedimentation by limiting disturbance to low-growing species, vegetative ground covers and topsoil. Ausgrid will act in accordance with Managing Urban Stormwater – Soils and Construction (NSW Landcom, 2004), the 'Blue Book'.

Where it is considered erosion may occur, the stumps and the root structures of trimmed *vegetation* will be retained where practical.

Appropriate sedimentation and erosion control practices will be implemented on sites where soil has been exposed and there is the potential for erosion to occur.

4.7 Noise and Vibration

Ausgrid will consider the impacts of noise and vibration on the community. Every effort will be made to minimise any disturbance, while achieving the objectives of the works.

It is generally impractical to provide acoustic screening. For example, some of the work is done some distance off the ground and close to live *powerlines*, but work will be completed as quickly as possible and at appropriate times. *Emergency* work, however, can occur at any time.

4.8 Pollution Control

Disposal of any material by Ausgrid's *vegetation* management workers must be in accordance with all relevant legislation including the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.

These include ensuring watercourses and water bodies are not polluted by materials such as rubbish, felled or cut *vegetation*, toilet waste, silt, fuel spillage, herbicide and herbicide containers. Refuelling operations or decanting of herbicides shall be conducted at least 30m away from watercourses with all appropriate protection methods in place.

Spillage of oil, fuels or chemicals is to be avoided, but where a spillage or leakage has occurred, the relevant Emergency Response Plan or other applicable Ausgrid procedure shall be followed to ensure adequate control measures are implemented and the appropriate notifications are carried out.

4.9 Waste Management

Where possible all waste generated from Ausgrid's *vegetation* management works, unless it is from noxious weeds, will be mulched and reused.

Debris must be disposed of offsite unless site specific requirements allow otherwise. Debris may only be left to decompose naturally onsite where the landowner or *occupier's* written permission has been obtained and it will not present a safety risk.

Where debris from noxious and environmental *weed* species is likely to self-seed, it should be removed to an EPA approved licensed landfill site or treated to prevent propagation. Waste requiring disposal must be appropriately classified prior to lawful disposal.

All waste management related to *vegetation* management will comply with Ausgrid's Waste Reduction and Purchasing Plan (WRAPPs) reporting obligations.

Ausgrid will generally not remove *trees* or branches that are blown down or where a *tree* falls over from natural causes.

4.10 Noxious Weeds and Pathogens

Ausgrid's aim is to prevent or minimise the spread of noxious and environmental *weeds* and pathogens when carrying out *vegetation* management works. Areas which are particularly vulnerable to noxious weeds and pathogens include areas where threatened species are likely to be present, orchards, vineyards, undisturbed bushland, State forests and within or adjacent to protected areas such as National Parks and conservation areas.

Ausgrid will minimise the transport of *weed* materials and seeds by cleaning vehicles and equipment and removing *weed* material following activities in *weed* infested areas. Other methods may also be used to control the spread of *weeds*. These include digging and removal, selective use of herbicides, replanting and re-vegetating with low-growing locally indigenous plants, as well as creating ground cover with leaves and mulch.

Ausgrid will minimise the spread of pathogens in vulnerable areas by cleaning and disinfecting boots, personal items and all components of vehicles and equipment of soil and vegetation.

4.11 Visual Impact

Ausgrid recognises the importance of maintaining local aesthetics and minimising the visual impact of *tree* trimming.

The primary objective of Ausgrid's trimming program is to strike the appropriate balance between maintaining the necessary *safety clearances* and working with the natural habit of each *tree* in the interests of its long-term health where possible. *Safety clearances* and trimming are outlined further in Section 6.

Ausgrid will endeavour to minimise the visual impact on the local area while upholding this primary objective.

Unfortunately it is not always possible to achieve an aesthetically pleasing result, because of:

- the species of *tree*;
- the position of the *tree* i.e. the *tree* has either been planted in close proximity to Ausgrid's *Network*, or even planted directly underneath; and/or
- the lack of *tree maintenance* – where *trees* have not been maintained suitably from a young age and they have grown unchecked near Ausgrid's *Network* it may be necessary to remove large amounts of *vegetation*.

5 PLANTING GUIDELINES

Ausgrid recognises the value of *trees* to local communities and encourages the planting of *trees* to enhance local streetscapes. Where planting is planned near Ausgrid's *Network*, Ausgrid recommends using suitable low-growing *vegetation*. Tall-growing species should be planted away from Ausgrid's *Network* to avoid safety problems and to enable the *tree* to grow to its mature height without the need for trimming.

This section covers issues on planting near Ausgrid's *Network* in both *rural areas* and *urban areas* and offers planting tips. It also provides information on suitable and unsuitable species.

Ausgrid appreciates that all street plantings need to be considered holistically. Ausgrid's recommended list identifies species of *trees* that will minimise the trimming of *vegetation* necessary to avoid encroachment of *safety clearances* near Ausgrid's *Network*. The local *Council* has the overall responsibility to develop appropriate strategies for *tree* plantings in areas under its control or management.

5.1 What should be planted in Rural areas?

Low-growing species can be planted near Ausgrid's *Network* where they will not present a risk to public safety, interfere with Ausgrid's *Network*, pose a bush fire hazard, or restrict access for *maintenance* or repairs. A list of potentially suitable species is listed in Attachment 2. Local Council nurseries and some private nurseries often sell species native to the local area and can provide specific recommendations on low-growing species suited to local conditions.

Ausgrid recommends *Councils* and other landowners and *occupiers* plant tall species away from Ausgrid's *Network* to maintain both safety and access to Ausgrid's *Network* for routine *maintenance* and repairs.

If tall-growing *vegetation* is planted close to Ausgrid's *Network* the *Council* or other landowner or *occupier* may be responsible for any trimming or removal work and the associated costs, in accordance with the Electricity Supply Act 1995.

Locations such as deep gullies are the preferred sites for groups such as LandCare, Bushcare and others, who undertake planting to connect habitats. This helps to ensure that planted *vegetation* will have minimal impact on Ausgrid's *Network*. If this is not practicable then connectivity of habitat should exclude tall-growing species near Ausgrid's *Network*.

5.2 What should be planted in Urban areas?

We recommend only low-growing species are planted near or under Ausgrid's *Network*. Many *trees* are unsuitable for planting under or near *powerlines* because they are likely to present a safety risk and there is insufficient room for the *tree* to grow. Taller *trees* can be planted nearby, provided that they will remain clear of Ausgrid's *Network* when fully grown.

Please note that *Council* approval must be obtained before planting on streets and footpaths.

On private property, only suitable low-growing species should be planted under or near Ausgrid's *Network*. A list of potentially suitable species is outlined in Attachment 2. Local Council nurseries and some private nurseries often sell species native to the local area and can provide specific recommendations on low-growing species suited to local conditions.

Ausgrid will consider including in the list additional low-growing species that may be suggested by *Councils* and other interested parties.

The planting of species which are not listed in Attachment 2 may be negotiated with individual *Councils* where the *Council* wishes to plant replacement street trees not on the list in situations such as where mature avenues of significance exist.

5.3 What should you consider before planting?

Ausgrid offers some simple advice to consider before planting:

- look up before planting to identify existing electricity works;
- consider how big the *tree* or other *vegetation* will grow and what could be affected;
- plant taller species furthest away from Ausgrid's *Network* – the rule of thumb is to plant a *tree* no closer than its potential mature height to the nearest point on Ausgrid's *Network* e.g. if the potential mature height of the *tree* is 10m, then do not plant the *tree* any closer than 10m to the nearest point on Ausgrid's *Network*;
- obtain *Council* approval before planting on streets and footpaths;
- remember that access to Ausgrid's *Network* will be required for *maintenance* and repairs in the future;
- give preference to planting species native to the local area which are often available from Local Council nurseries and some private nurseries;
- plant species that will not invade the surrounding environment;
- plant away from underground pits, pillar-boxes and kiosk transformers so roots don't become a problem;
- investigate whether underground services are present, including Ausgrid's underground power cables;
- contact Dial Before You Dig (www.1100.com.au or phone 1100) for information on the location of cables and other underground infrastructure before digging, particularly on footpaths and streets;
- remember that underground services may also exist on private property – further information is available from Ausgrid's website (www.ausgrid.com.au);
- consider the requirements of other utility and service providers, eg Roads and Maritime Services traffic sight clearances or interference with telecommunications cables; and
- look at the species lists shown in Attachment 2 for guidance on what to plant near Ausgrid's *Network* – local nurseries can offer specific recommendations on low-growing species suited to local conditions.

This guide also applies to planting *trees* near *aerial bundled cables* (ABC).

6 NETWORK OPTIONS AND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT METHODS

Ausgrid is pursuing a number of longer term solutions to minimise the extent of *tree* trimming in its distribution area in the future. For example:

- Ausgrid ensures that underground electricity is installed in all new urban residential developments;
- *aerial bundled cable* which has a smaller *safety clearance* than standard bare *overhead* wires is the standard construction for new and relocated *low voltage overhead* wiring;
- where deemed practical and efficient new *high voltage* wires are placed underground; and
- in some commercial areas, *overhead* wires are placed underground in conjunction with building developments.

This section describes these *Network* options, the indicative costs and also Ausgrid's approach to *vegetation* trimming, including the relevant *safety clearances*, *vegetation* removal and replacement.

6.1 What Network options are available as alternatives to trimming?

To minimise *tree* trimming, Ausgrid is happy to pursue longer-term *Network* options with *Councils* or other landowners and *occupiers*.

6.1.1 Low Voltage Aerial Bundled Cable (ABC)

By using aerial bundled cables (ABC) significantly reduced *safety clearances* can be maintained between *trees* and the conductors, improving the amenity of the streetscape without compromising safety. Since 2000, Ausgrid has installed more than approximately 300km of *low voltage* ABC.

Councils are advised of programmed *tree* trimming works to enable assessment of where extensive trimming is needed to obtain *safety clearances*. This allows *Councils* to consider replacing bare *low voltage overhead* with ABC in those locations, or investigate whether the *trees* should be removed and replaced, in consultation with residents. Where it is agreed that ABC will be installed, the *tree* trimming *safety clearances* will be reduced to 0.5m (instead of 1.0m) from the nearest bare *low voltage overhead* wire, pending the installation of the ABC.

A visual indication of the typical clearances for standard bare conductor *overhead* versus ABC *overhead* is shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Typical clearances for ABC versus bare conductor overhead conductors.



6.1.2 Underground cables

Underground electricity is installed in all new urban residential developments. Where deemed practical and efficient new *high voltage* wires are also placed underground. In some commercial areas, *overhead* wires are placed underground in conjunction with building developments.

6.1.3 Comparative costs

A summary of the comparative costs is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Comparative costs for alternative Network options – Low Voltage Overhead

Comparative Costs for Low Voltage Overhead in an Urban Area (2014 dollars)		
Options	Indicative Cost	Comments
Trimming, if <i>overhead</i> is retained.	\$15-\$150 per <i>span</i> per year	The most economic community outcome provided environmental issues are suitably managed.
Replacing bare overhead wires with <i>Aerial Bundled Cables</i> (ABC).	\$4,000 to \$7,000 per <i>span</i> + ongoing trimming costs.	Trimming to reduced clearances will still be required.
Replacing <i>overhead</i> wiring with underground cables.	\$57,000 to \$106,000 per <i>span</i> . (Typically 8 customers per <i>span</i> at \$7,125 to \$13,250 per customer.)	Ausgrid considers all requests for undergrounding on a case by case basis in accordance with the "Network Undergrounding Policy Guidelines".
Relocating <i>powerlines</i> to avoid <i>vegetation</i> or <i>vegetation</i> removal.	Need to be costed on a case by case basis. Could be done on a "beneficiary pays" basis.	Each job is unique. Costs need to be assessed on a range of issues – technical, social and environmental.

Where Councils and other landowners and occupiers decide to pursue other Network options to minimise tree trimming, Ausgrid should be approached to provide advice and specifications relating to the proposed works.

6.2 What are the relevant safety clearances?

Safety clearances are based on industry standards recognised by NSW Department of Industry. The industry accepted clearances comply with Networks NSW Vegetation Management Common Requirement (VMCR). In residential areas, the *vegetation safety clearance* is typically 1.0m around bare *low voltage overhead wires*. In bushfire prone areas, an additional 0.5m clearance is required.

Ausgrid's *vegetation* management program is designed around arboricultural, environmental and safety standards. The trimming techniques used by Ausgrid generally follow AS 4373 - Pruning of amenity trees and are intended to remove the minimum amount of *vegetation* necessary to achieve *safety clearances* whilst preserving the health and safety of the *tree*.

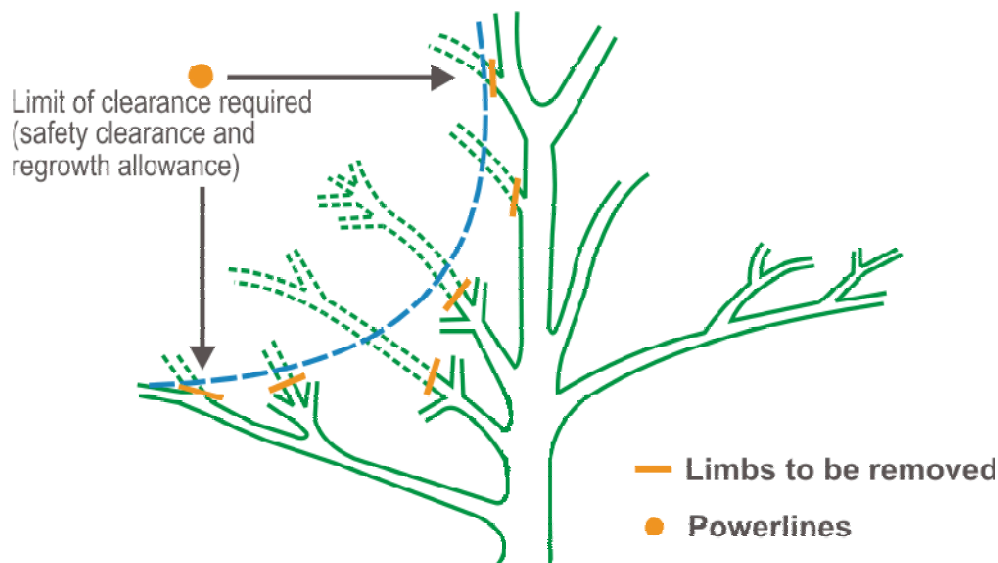
Once the minimum *safety clearance* plus an allowance for *regrowth* is determined for each branch, it is then trimmed at the nearest collar (or growth point) outside the limit of clearance. This is a requirement under AS 4373 as it protects *trees* from infection or disease and reduces the development of weakly attached growth that can result from trimming *trees* mid-branch. See figure 2 below.

Current arboricultural techniques discourage the use of "flat-topping". "Flat-topping" leads to large quantities of weakly attached growth (epicormic growth) threatening both *tree* health and public safety. However, in certain environmentally sensitive areas, Ausgrid may agree to undertake "flat-topping" at the request of the land manager or landowner.

"Unbalanced" trimming of *trees* leaving only one side with substantial limbs does not of itself necessarily lead to long term instability in the *tree*, unless the *tree* is already unstable due to factors unrelated to *powerline* trimming, such as root damage. *Trees* showing signs of stress because of pre-existing conditions are assessed for possible removal rather than trimming.

The figure below illustrates the impact of horticultural requirements where *trees* are trimmed.

Figure 2: Relationship between trimming requirements for tree health and clearance distances



Unfortunately it is not always possible to achieve an aesthetically pleasing result, because of:

- the species of *tree*;
- the position of the *tree* i.e. the *tree* has either been planted in close proximity to Ausgrid's *Network*, or even planted directly underneath; and/or
- the lack of *tree maintenance* - where *trees* have not been maintained suitably from a young age and they have grown unchecked near Ausgrid's *Network* it may be necessary to remove large amounts of *vegetation*.

In some cases trimming may prove to be undesirable, such as where *trees* require trimming more often than is practical, or where trimming may impact the health of the *tree*.

Typically a one to three year trimming cycle is considered to be reasonable industry practice, but this may vary depending upon various practical factors. These factors include the rate of *regrowth*, possible fire risk, climate and the type of *vegetation*.

6.3 What are the requirements for underground cables near vegetation?

When installing underground cables, Ausgrid will employ techniques to minimise impacts on tree roots. These techniques include:

1. Trenching outside the structural root zone (*SRZ*).
2. If trenching will occur inside the tree protection zone (*TPZ*), Ausgrid will underbore or directional drill, hand dig or use an air knife.

Where the above requirements cannot be met, an arborist or horticulturalist will carry out a health and stability assessment of the tree prior to works commencing.

In circumstances where tree roots are impacting on the integrity of Ausgrid's Network and Ausgrid considers that alternative management strategies are not appropriate, a tree may be required to be removed. All vegetation removals will be assessed and supervised by an arborist or horticulturalist and undertaken in accordance with Section 6.4.

6.4 What is Ausgrid's approach to vegetation removal?

Ausgrid will not trim a *tree* in a way that substantially damages the *tree*, except in accordance with this Plan and where it believes it is necessary to protect the safety of people or property, or the integrity of Ausgrid's *Network* and it considers that alternative management strategies are not appropriate in the particular circumstances. Alternatives may not be prudent or feasible where there is an immediate threat to safety.

All *vegetation* removals are assessed by an Ausgrid arborist or horticulturalist. If Ausgrid plans to remove *vegetation* on private property, we will consult with the landowner or *occupier* and seek their approval prior to the work starting, except in an *emergency*. The landowner or occupier may be charged for the work. Whilst Ausgrid does not generally require permission from *Councils* for removal of *vegetation* on private property, Ausgrid will generally notify *Councils* of any proposed *tree* removals and allow them to comment on these removals. Consultation and statutory approval from appropriate bodies is necessary where *protected trees* or other *vegetation* need to be removed.

Ausgrid may issue a notice to the landowner or *occupier* to remove *vegetation* if it is, or may be, an ongoing threat to the safety of people or property, or the integrity of Ausgrid's *Network*. In these circumstances permission from *Council* may not be required but where practical, landowners or *occupiers* should verify this with *Council* prior to removing the *vegetation*.

Ausgrid will not remove any *tree*, or trim any *tree* in a way that substantially damages the *tree*, unless it considers:

- other *Network* options are not feasible because of technical, economic or aesthetic considerations;
- safety is compromised;
- the electricity works and supplies are threatened;
- the work is required for access to *powerlines* (including support structures) for construction, *maintenance* or operational needs, or to ensure reliability and staff safety during operation and *maintenance*;
- there is an unsuitable species planted near Ausgrid's *Network*
- the *vegetation* will not respond to directional trimming;
- the *vegetation* cannot be maintained for appropriate periods of time due to its growth characteristics;

- the health of the *vegetation* is such that to leave it would pose a threat to the safety of the community, property or Ausgrid's *Network*; and
- the aesthetics of the *vegetation* are such that continued trimming irreparably damages it, and removal is considered preferable to ongoing trimming.

Council and/or Ausgrid will consult with adjoining landowners or *occupiers* and the local community if street *trees* are to be removed.

Ausgrid will give notice where the landowner or *occupier* is required to remove a *tree*. Notice is not required in an *emergency* and we may remove the *tree* at our expense.

Ausgrid encourages owners or *occupiers* to seek *Council* permission before removing their *trees* near *Ausgrid's Network* to ensure that the requirements of Tree Preservation Orders under the LEP are fulfilled. Appropriately *authorised* Contractors must be used, as this work can be extremely dangerous. Refer to Section 2 for safety requirements when carrying out this type of work.

Saplings, whose mature height will infringe the *clearance space* or restrict access for *maintenance* or operational requirements, are best removed or relocated at an early stage of their growth to minimise the future safety risks, cost and disruption. Methods used for the reduction of saplings and regrowth that may be used where appropriate include slashing or mulching, hand cutting and biological (such as grazing).

Ausgrid will generally remove *trees* or branches of any species and diameter that are hazardous or unstable and that are located within the *inspection space* and are capable of damaging Ausgrid's *Network*. Such *trees* or branches include those originating from fallen decaying logs or stumps, and any *trees* or branches with obvious symptoms of advanced decline i.e. excessive dieback, sparse leaf cover or major decay fungi.

The following strategies may be used to mitigate the impact of the removal process:

- Replacement with a suitable species prior to the removal of the unsuitable species.
- For a group of *trees*, a staged removal, with staged replacement, is preferable as this reduces the visual impact.
- Removal of the *vegetation* and subsequent replacement.
- Replacement planting on the other side of the street prior to any removal.
- Consultation with the community.

6.5 What is Ausgrid's approach to the replacement of trees?

Ausgrid encourages the replacement of *trees* that are removed, provided the *trees* are planted away from Ausgrid's *Network*. Planting should be in line with Attachment 2 of this plan. We will consider supplying replacement *trees* but we will generally not replace *trees* that have been planted inappropriately after Ausgrid's *Network* was built.

Replacement *trees* will usually be a small size, as these plants generally establish better and more quickly and over several years will outgrow a plant that was larger initially.

Ausgrid encourages the replacement of *trees* with species that are native to the local area. This will assist in the preservation of the local ecology.

ATTACHMENT 1 – Definitions

The words and expressions noted below have the corresponding meaning in this Plan:

Access Track	A dry weather 4WD or pedestrian access track that has been previously established for the purposes of accessing the <i>Network</i> .
Accredited	Workers accredited under the WorkCover Code of Practice – Work Near Overhead Power Lines
Aerial Bundled Cable (ABC)	An insulated multi-core cable, often used in substitution for multiple bare single conductors
Authorised	Authorised by Ausgrid
Clearance Space	A space of specified dimensions surrounding Ausgrid's <i>Network</i> (the dimensions depend upon factors such as the <i>powerline</i> type and the voltage carried), which must generally be kept clear of <i>vegetation</i> at all times. Exceptions are permitted where there is an assessed minimal risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • damage to or interference with Ausgrid's <i>Network</i> • bushfire • loss of visibility of water crossing signs • reduced safety
Clearance Zone	The zone surrounding Ausgrid's <i>Network</i> comprising the <i>clearance space</i> and the <i>inspection space</i> (see also <i>Safety clearance</i>).
Council	The Council of a local government area.
Easement	An area that is a defined and limited right that allows one party to use a portion of land that is owned by another party. Common examples are rights of way, drainage easements and easements for services. Easements are created in accordance with the <u>Conveyancing Act 1919</u> and the <u>Real Property Act 1900</u> . They may be created for a definite period of time or in perpetuity.
Emergency	Where Ausgrid has reasonable cause to believe that particular <i>vegetation</i> could destroy, damage or interfere with its electricity works, or could make its electricity works become a potential cause of bush fire or a potential risk to public safety, and that urgent corrective action is required to manage the <i>vegetation</i> appropriately.
High Voltage HV	Any voltage which is nominally more than 1000 volts alternating current. <i>High voltage.</i>
Inspection Space	The area outside the <i>clearance space</i> that may also require clearing to maintain safety and electricity supplies.
Kilovolt kV	1000 volts. <i>Kilovolts.</i>
Low Voltage LV	Not more than 1000 volts alternating current. <i>Low voltage.</i>
Maintenance	Activities or works that keep Ausgrid's <i>Network</i> in good condition and allow its unimpaired operation. This includes <i>vegetation</i> management activities.
Naturally Propagated	<i>Vegetation</i> that has grown by natural seeding, including by birds or animals.
Network	For the purposes of this Plan, means all those elements of Ausgrid's electrical infrastructure associated with the distribution and supply of electricity. This includes, but is not limited to, <i>powerlines</i> , pilot cables, streetlights, poles, standards, stay wires, and substations and transformers.

No Go Zone	Means the area around overhead power lines into which no part of a person or material or cranes or vehicles or items of mobile plant may encroach without the approval of the network operator.
	Note:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • person includes hand tools, equipment or any other material held by a person. • plant includes the load, controlling ropes and any other accessories.
Occupier	A person who is in actual occupation of the land.
Overhead	In relation to a <i>powerline</i> , means a <i>powerline</i> that is above ground level.
Powerline	An electric line, structure and equipment used for or in connection with the supply of electricity. It excludes telecommunication cables.
Protected area	An area within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a national park or nature reserve within the meaning of the <u>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</u> or - land that is reserved or zoned for environmental protection purposes under the <u>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</u> or - a public reserve within the meaning of the <u>Local Government Act 1993</u>.
Protected Tree	A <i>tree</i> that is the subject of or within an area, as defined in Section 48 of the <u>Electricity Supply Act 1995</u> , that is the subject of an interim heritage order, or a listing on the State Heritage Register, under the <u>Heritage Act 1977</u> or an order in force under section 136 of the <u>Heritage Act 1977</u> ; or an interim protection order under the <u>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</u> ; or a protection conferred by any similar law. It also means a <i>tree</i> within a <i>protected area</i>
Regrowth	<i>Saplings</i> , suckers and other <i>vegetation</i> that has grown or regrown after previous control works
Rural area	Any area that is not an <i>urban area</i>
Safety Clearance (Zone)	The zone surrounding Ausgrid's <i>Network</i> comprising the <i>clearance space</i> and the <i>inspection space</i>
Sapling	An immature tree
Span	The <i>overhead</i> wires between two adjacent supporting poles or structures
SRZ	Structural Root Zone – the circular area around a tree at ground level with radius in metres, computed by $SRZ = 0.64 \times (50 \times \text{diameter(m)})^{0.42}$, where trunk diameter is measured at tree base.
Threatened species, populations or communities	A species or community specified under the <u>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)</u> , <u>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</u> or <u>Fisheries Management Act 1994</u>
Tree	A tree taller than 3 metres, or having a canopy more than 3 metres in maximum diameter or having a trunk with a circumference at a height of 1 metre from the ground of more than 0.3 metres. Trees can include shrubs and other plants for the purposes of the <u>Electricity Supply Act 1995 (NSW)</u>
TPZ	Tree Protection Zone – the circular area around a tree at ground level with radius equal to 12 x the diameter of the tree trunk measured at 1.4 m above the ground.
Unauthorised	Not <i>authorised</i> by Ausgrid
Urban Area	The built up areas within and surrounding cities and towns. It includes suburban areas

V	Volts
Vegetation	All plant life including, but not limited to, <i>trees</i> , palms, vines, shrubs, and grasses such as bamboo but excluding lawns
Weed	Those species of plant defined as noxious or environmental weeds under the <u>Noxious Weeds Act 1993</u>

ATTACHMENT 2 – Plants generally suitable for use near Ausgrid's Network

Botanic Name	Common Name	Height (metres)	Cultural notes
<i>Acacia boormanii</i>	Snowy River Wattle	3 - 4	Suit highlands planting
<i>Acacia cardiophylla</i>	Wyalong Wattle	2 - 5	Good for Western Slopes region of NSW
<i>Acacia floribunda</i>	White Sallow Wattle	3 - 6	Fast growing, suit coastal areas, frost tolerant
<i>Acacia rubida</i>	Red Stem Wattle	2 - 3	Suit highlands planting
<i>Acacia spectabilis</i>	Mudgee Wattle	3	Suit highlands planting
<i>Acacia vestita</i>	Hairy Wattle	3 - 4	Suit highlands planting
<i>Acer palmatum</i>	Japanese Maple	4 - 5	Deciduous tree with finely textured foliage
<i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Globosum'	Designer Maple	5 - 6	
<i>Acmena smithi</i> var 'Minor'	Dwarf Lilly Pilly	3 - 4	Shade tolerant, hardy, drought tender
<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	Silk Tree	5 - 6	Deciduous tree with ferny foliage and masses of pink flowers
<i>Amelanchier lavis</i>	Snow Cloud	6	Suit highlands planting
<i>Angophora hispida</i>	Dwarf Apple	2 - 4	Hardy, drought resistant, light frost resistant, coastal
<i>Banksia collina</i>	Hill Banksia	3	Drought tender, heavy frost resistant, coastal
<i>Banksia ericifolia</i>	Health-leaved Banksia	3	Very hardy, drought resistant, heavy frost resistant
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia	4 - 5	Dark green leaves with silver underneath, suits dry areas
<i>Banksia robur</i>	Swamp Banksia	1.5 - 2.5	Suit highlands planting
<i>Buddleia davidii</i>	Butterfly Bush	3	Purple clusters of flowers, not suitable for Blue Mountains area
<i>Callistemon</i> 'Endeavour'	Endeavour Bottlebrush	2	Suit highlands planting
<i>Callistemon</i> 'Harkness'	Bottlebrush	4	Suit highlands planting
<i>Callistemon citrinus</i>	Crimson Bottlebrush	1.5 - 5	Very hardy, drought resistant, heavy frost resistant
<i>Callistemon linearis</i>	Narrow-leaved Bottlebrush	2.5 - 4	Very hardy, drought resistant, heavy frost resistant
<i>Callistemon paludosus</i>	River Bottlebrush	2 - 3	Hardy, drought tender, heavy frost resistant+F58
<i>Callistemon pinifolius</i>	Green Bottlebrush	2 - 4	Very hardy, drought resistant, heavy frost resistant, coastal
<i>Callistemon salignus</i> 'Eureka'	Eureka Willow Bottlebrush	4 - 5	Bright pink flowers papery bark tolerant to most soils
<i>Callistemon speciosus</i>	Showy Bottlebrush	2 - 4	Large deep red flowers
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	Weeping Bottlebrush	4	Red flowers pendulous habit many cultivars
<i>Callistemon</i> 'Kings Park Special'	Bottlebrush	5	Red flowers, quick growing, fauna attracting

Botanic Name	Common Name	Height (metres)	Cultural notes
<i>Camellia japonica</i>	Japanese Camellia	4 - 6	Variety of flower colours
<i>Camellia sasanqua</i>	Sasanqua Camellia	4 - 6	Variety of flower colours
<i>Catalpa bignonioides 'Nana'</i>	Designer Catalpa	4	Heart shaped leaves
<i>Cercis canadensis 'Forest Pansy'</i>	Redbud	4 - 5	Drought tolerant, masses of pink flowers
<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judus Tree	6 - 7	Max 4 metres in Tablelands, suit highlands and bushfire-prone planting
<i>Cercis chinensis</i>	Chinese Redbud	4 - 6	Bright pink flowers
<i>Citrus spp</i>	Citrus	4 - 6	Fruit bearing
<i>Cornus bayleyi</i>	Dogwood	3	Suit highlands planting
<i>Dais continifolia</i>	Pompom Tree	4 - 5	Showy mauve-pink flowers in summer
<i>Escallonia cultivars</i>	Escallonia	3 - 5	Tree like shrubs, suit highlands planting
<i>Eucalyptus alpina</i>	Grampians Gum	3 - 6	Recommended for bushfire-prone areas
<i>Eucalyptus stricta</i>	Blue Mountains Mallee	3 - 5	Good for sandstone/sandy soils
<i>Feijoa sellowiana</i>	Guava	4 - 6	Edible fruiting tree
<i>Fraxinus excelsior 'Nana'</i>	Designer Ash	2 - 4	
<i>Fraxinus ornus 'Meczek'</i>	Designer Ash	5 - 6	
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis 'Elegantissima'</i>	Honey Locust	5	
<i>Gordonia axillaris</i>	Fried Egg plant	3 - 5	
<i>Grevillea banksii</i>	Banks Grevillea	3 - 4	Hardy, drought resistant, heavy frost resistant
<i>Grevillea 'Honey Gem'</i>		3	Hardy, light frost resistant, fertiliser sensitive
<i>Grevillea hookerana</i>	Hooker grevillea	3 - 4	Suit highlands planting
<i>Grevillea 'Moonlight'</i>		3 - 5	Hardy, drought resistant, light frost resistant
<i>Hakea dactyloides</i>	Hakea	3 - 4	Hardy, drought resistant, light frost resistant, coastal
<i>Hakea salicifolia</i>	Willow-leaved Hakea	3 - 5	White flowers spring-summer
<i>Hakea sericea</i>	Silky Needle-bush	5 - 6	Suit highlands planting
<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>	Syrian Rose	3 - 5	Suit highlands planting
<i>Jacksonia scoparia</i>	Jackson bush	3 - 4	Very hardy, drought resistant, heavy frost resistant
<i>Lagerstroemia 'Acoma'</i>	Indian Summer Crepe Myrtle	3	Deciduous tree, showy flowers
<i>Lagerstroemia 'Hopi'</i>	Indian Summer Crepe Myrtle	3	Deciduous tree, showy flowers
<i>Lagerstroemia 'Lipan'</i>	Indian Summer Crepe Myrtle	4	Deciduous tree, showy flowers
<i>Lagerstroemia 'Sioux'</i>	Indian Summer Crepe Myrtle	4	Deciduous tree, showy flowers
<i>Lagerstroemia 'Tonto'</i>	Indian Summer Crepe Myrtle	3	Deciduous tree, showy flowers
<i>Lagerstroemia 'Tuscarora'</i>	Indian Summer Crepe Myrtle	4	Deciduous tree, showy flowers
<i>Lagerstroemia 'Yuma'</i>	Indian Summer Crepe Myrtle	4	Deciduous tree, showy flowers
<i>Lagerstroemia 'Zuni'</i>	Indian Summer Crepe Myrtle	4	Deciduous tree, showy flowers

Botanic Name	Common Name	Height (metres)	Cultural notes
<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Crepe Myrtle	6	Deciduous tree, pink, mauve, crimson or white flowers and beautiful bark
<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>	Coast Tea Tree	3 - 4	Very hardy, drought resistant, coastal
<i>Leptospermum nitidum</i>	Grampians Tea-tree	3	Suit highlands planting
<i>Leptospermum petersonii</i>	Lemon-scented Tea Tree	4	Aromatic leaves and white flowers in summer
<i>Leptospermum polygalifolium</i>	Common Tea-Tree	4 - 6	Masses of creamy-white flowers late spring-summer
<i>Magnolia 'Little Gem'</i>	Dwarf Magnolia	3 - 4	Creamy white flowers, frost tolerant
<i>Michelia figo</i>	Port Wine Magnolia	4	Fragrant flowers
<i>Myoporum insulare</i>	Boobiala	4 - 6	Good for coastal areas
<i>Olea europea var 'Europea'</i>	Edible olive	6	Produces edible fruit
<i>Photinia x fraseri</i>	'Robusta' Photinia	4 - 5	White flowers in spring, prune to one or two leaders
<i>Photinia serratifolia</i>	Chinese Hawthorn	4 - 6	White flowers in spring, prune to one or two leaders
<i>Pittosporum revolutum</i>	Yellow pittosporum	3 - 5	Yellow flowers in spring
<i>Prunus fruticosa 'Globosa'</i>	Designer Cherry	<3	White flowers
<i>Prunus x blireana</i>	Purple Leaf Plum	3.5 - 5	Non-fruiting plum
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elderberry	4 - 5	Suit highlands planting
<i>Syzgium luehmannii</i>	Small-leaved Lillypilly	5	Masses of creamy white flowers in summer new growth is pale pink
<i>Tibouchina lepidota</i>	Lasiandra	4 - 5	Masses of velvety royal purple flowers in autumn
<i>Acacia buxifolia</i>	Box-leaf Wattle	3	
<i>Acacia echinula</i>	Hooked Wattle	2	
<i>Acacia elongata</i>	Swamp Wattle	3	
<i>Acacia falcata</i>		2 - 5	
<i>Acacia linifolia</i>	Flax-leafed Wattle	2	
<i>Acacia longissima</i>	Long-leaf Wattle	2 - 4	
<i>Acacia obtusifolia</i>		1.5 - 8	
<i>Acacia oxycedrus</i>	Spike Wattle	3	
<i>Acacia stricta</i>	Straight Wattle	3	
<i>Acacia suaveolens</i>	Sweet-scented Wattle	1.5	
<i>Acacia ulicifolia</i>	Prickly Moses	1.5	
<i>Banksia aemula</i>	Wallum Banksia	4	
<i>Banksia oblongifolia</i>	Fern-leaved Banksia	2	
<i>Banksia spinulosa</i>	Hair-pin Banksia	2	
<i>Breynia oblongifolia</i>	Coffee Bush	2-3	
<i>Callistemon rigidus</i>	Stiff Bottlebrush	2	
<i>Callistemon salignus</i>	Willow Bottlebrush	3-4	
<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>	River Bottlebrush	2-4	
<i>Dodonea triquetra</i>	Common Hop Bush	2	

Botanic Name	Common Name	Height (metres)	Cultural notes
<i>Exocarpus strictus</i>	Dwarf Currant	2	
<i>Grevillea linearifolia</i>	White Spider Flower	2	
<i>Grevillea longifolia</i>		2-4	
<i>Grevillea mucronulata</i>	Green Spider Flower	1-2	
<i>Grevillea oleoides</i>	Red Spider Flower	2	
<i>Grevillea sericea subspecies sericea</i>	Pink Spider Flower	1-2	
<i>Grevillea speciosa</i>	Red Spider Flower	1.5	
<i>Hakea bakeriana</i>		2	
<i>Hakea gibbosa</i>	Needlebush	2	
<i>Hakea propinqua</i>		2	
<i>Isopogon anethifolius</i>	Narrow-leaf Drumsticks	3	
<i>Kunzea ambigua</i>	Tick Bush	2-4	
<i>Leptospermum emarginatum</i>	Twin-flower Tea-tree	2.5	
<i>Leptospermum juniperinum</i>	Prickly Tea-tree	1.5	
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>	Woolly Tea-tree	3	
<i>Leptospermum morrisonii</i>		3-4	
<i>Leptospermum parvifolium</i>		2	
<i>Leptospermum polyanthum</i>	Slender Tea-tree	2-5	
<i>Leptospermum squarrosum</i>		2.5	
<i>Leptospermum trinervium</i>	Paperbark Tea-tree	3	
<i>Melaleuca diosmatifolia</i>	Pink Honeymyrtle	3	
<i>Melaleuca squamea</i>	Swamp Honeymyrtle	1-2	
<i>Ozothamnus dendroideus</i>	Tree Everlasting	2-4	
<i>Ozothamnus diosmifolium</i>	Paper Daisy	2	
<i>Persoonia isophylla</i>		2	
<i>Persoonia lanceolata</i>	Lance Leaf Geebung	2	
<i>Persoonia levis</i>	Smooth Geebung	4	
<i>Persoonia linearis</i>	Narrow-leaved Geebung	3	
<i>Persoonia pinifolia</i>	Pine-leaf Geebung	2-4	
<i>Pultenaea daphnoides</i>	Large-leaf Bush-pea	2-3	
<i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	Waratah	2-3	

Notes:

- This list is not exhaustive. Contact the local council for suitable species native to the local area.
- Not all of the species listed are native to the whole of the Ausgrid supply area.
- Some species in this list may require formal and/or correctional trimming to ensure suitability.
- Minimal clearing of these species may still be required where *powerlines* are relatively low in height, for example, near where they connect to a building.
- This list has been compiled in conjunction with other NSW electricity suppliers and, as such, not all species may be suitable in the Ausgrid supply area.

ATTACHMENT 3 – Reference Documents

The following legislation and documents are relevant to this Plan, but do not form part of this Plan.

- Amenity Tree Industry: Code of Practice – WorkCover (NSW) 1998
- Australian Heritage Council (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act 2003 (Commonwealth)
- AS/NZS ISO 14001:2004 Environmental management systems - Requirements with guidance for use
- AS 4373 2007 – Pruning of amenity trees
- AS 5577 2013 – Electricity network safety management system
- Ausgrid CSWI 30/03 Processing Bushfire Related Defects Following a Line Patrol Report
- Ausgrid Electrical Safety Rules
- Ausgrid Network Management Plan / Electricity Network Safety Management System
- Ausgrid's Waste Reduction and Purchasing Plan (WRAPPs)
- Code of Practice for Electricity Transmission and Distribution Asset Management, November 1997, published by the Electricity Association of NSW
- Conveyancing Act 1919
- Electricity Supply Act 1995 (NSW)
- Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014
- Energy Services Corporations Act 1995 (NSW).
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)
- Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth)
- Fisheries Management Act 1994 (NSW)
- Guideline for Land Management Transmission and Distribution Assets, September 2001, published by the Electricity Supply Association of Australia
- Heritage Act 1977 (2010) (NSW)
- Industry Safety Steering Committee (ISSC) 3 – December 2005 “Guideline For Managing Vegetation Near Power Lines”, published by the Department Of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability
- Industry Safety Steering Committee (ISSC) 31 – July 2004 “Guideline For Management Of Private Overhead Lines”, published by the Department Of Water and Energy
- Local Government Act 1993
- Managing Urban Stormwater – Soils and Construction 1998 (NSW Department of Housing)
- Model Agreement for Local Councils and Utility/Service Providers, August 1999, prepared by the NSW Streets Opening Conference, www.ipwea.org.au/streets
- Native Vegetation Act 2003 (NSW)
- National Parks and Wildlife Service Act 1974 (NSW)
- National Parks and Wildlife (Land Management) Regulation 1995 (NSW)
- Networks NSW Vegetation Management Common Requirement (VMCR) October 2014
- Noxious Weeds Act 1993 (NSW)
- NS 262 Private Mains Bushfire Risk Inspection
- NUS 174C Environmental Handbook for Construction and Maintenance
- Pesticides Act 1999 (NSW)

- Pesticides Regulation 2009 (NSW)
- Procedures for Power Line Maintenance in Lands Administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW, July 1994, produced by the Electricity Association of NSW
- Protection Of The Environment Operations Act 1997 (NSW)
- Protection Of The Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2009 (NSW)
- Real Property Act 1900
- Rural Fires Act 1997 (NSW)
- Soil Conservation Act 1938 (NSW)
- State Environmental Planning Policies (NSW), referred to as SEPPs, including:
 - SEPP 4 Development Without Consent And Miscellaneous Exempt And Complying Development
 - SEPP 14 Coastal Wetlands
 - SEPP 19 Urban Bushland
 - SEPP 26 Littoral Rainforests
 - SEPP 44 Koala Habitat
 - SEPP (Major Projects) 2005
 - SEPP 71 Coastal Protection
- Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (NSW)
- Tree Trimming and Vegetation Management around Power Lines - brochure
- Urban Erosion & Sediment Control Field Guide (NSW Dept of Environment and Climate Change)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (NSW)
- Work Near Overhead Power Lines: Code of Practice – WorkCover (NSW) 2006

ATTACHMENT 4 – How to Contact Ausgrid

Call us

Emergency Service	13 13 88	(24 hours, 7 days)
General enquiries	13 13 65	(8am-8pm Monday to Friday, 8:30am-12noon Saturday)
Faulty street lights	1800 044 808	(24 hours, 7 days)

Write to us

GPO Box 4009
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Visit our website

www.ausgrid.com.au

Your first port of call if you wish to complain about Ausgrid's service is the Customer Call Centre. We have established this service to help you with enquiries and problems.

If the staff at the Call Centre cannot immediately resolve your problem, they will put you in contact with somebody who can. The number for this service is 13 13 65. You can also write, or send a fax, to any of Ausgrid's offices.

In the case of a complaint where you feel you may be entitled to compensation for damage or loss, make sure you retain all details of the incident, including receipts. Request a claim form from Ausgrid on 1800 069 952 between 8:30am and 5pm Monday - Friday. This claim form, which states the basis of the complaint, should be completed and returned to us within 28 working days.

Contacting the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW

If you have a significant problem with Ausgrid which you feel you can't resolve directly with us, you also have the right to refer your complaint to the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW. You can request this in your written complaint, or you can contact the Ombudsman yourself on 1800 246 545 (Freecall).

The Ombudsman can respond to disputes over the supply of service, billing, credit and payment, disconnection, security deposits, and other disputes not related to capital contributions. The Ombudsman is there to protect your consumer rights in these areas.

ATTACHMENT 5 – Vegetation Management Notifications to Landowners/Occupiers

Ausgrid requires the continual *maintenance of vegetation safety clearances* which does not involve planned work carried out to a defined schedule, but *vegetation* growth is routinely audited and minor trimming is undertaken as required to maintain *safety clearances*. As such, written notification to residents on and adjacent to any site where *vegetation* is to be cleared is not carried out.

However, where any work is to be carried out that will substantially damage a tree, defined by the Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014, Part 5 - Tree Preservation Regulation under the Electricity Supply Act 1995, a notification process shall be followed utilising the notification forms in Attachments 6, 7 and 8. These notifications are provided to advise residents that more extensive work is being carried out on behalf of Ausgrid, the reason the work is required, any access requirements and the *vegetation* clearance methods to be used.

ATTACHMENT 6 – Vegetation Clearance Notification (7 to 21 Days)

Tree Trimming for Electrical Safety

Dear resident at.....

Safety around our electricity network is one of Ausgrid's key priorities. Keeping vegetation, particularly tree branches, clear of powerlines and power poles helps prevent injury to people and damage to property. It also reduces the possibility of blackouts occurring.

Ausgrid's Contractor, [insert name], will be trimming trees in your street sometime between seven and twenty-one days from _____ [date]. Tree cuttings will be collected within 48 hours of the work being completed. There is no charge for this service.

If you do not own this property, we would appreciate it if you would let the owner know about this notification immediately.

The vegetation clearance will:

- minimise the possibility of accidental electrocution;
- reduce the risk of fires caused by electricity;
- reduce the risk of power interruptions caused by branches touching overhead wires.

Ausgrid is required to ensure vegetation is trimmed or removed where it is growing into safety clearance zones around its overhead wires and power poles. To maintain safety clearances, we will be trimming trees in the street and on private property that are growing too close to our overhead street wires, poles and streetlights.

Trees are generally pruned to remove the minimum amount of vegetation necessary to achieve safety clearances whilst preserving the health and safety of the tree.

Once the minimum safety clearance plus an allowance for regrowth is determined for each branch, it is then generally cut to the nearest branch collar (or growth point), outside the limit of clearance, in accordance with AS 4373 – Pruning of Amenity Trees.

Where trees have not been appropriately maintained before, extensive trimming may be required. This is because once the minimum safety clearance plus an allowance for regrowth is determined for each branch, it is then trimmed at the nearest collar (or growth point) outside the limit of clearance required, in accordance with the Australian Standard. This protects trees from infection or disease and reduces the development of weakly attached growth that can result from trimming trees mid-branch.

Should you require any further information, or wish to discuss our vegetation management operations, please do not hesitate to contact [insert name] on [insert contact number].

We thank you for your co-operation during these important works.

Yours Faithfully,

Name Of Contractor's Representative
Company Name

ATTACHMENT 7 – PRIVATE PROPERTY VEGETATION CLEARANCE NOTIFICATION (7 TO 21 DAYS)

Tree Trimming for Electrical Safety

Dear resident at.....

Safety around our electricity network is one of Ausgrid's key priorities. Keeping vegetation, particularly tree branches, clear of powerlines and power poles helps prevent injury to people and damage to property. It also reduces the possibility of blackouts occurring.

Ausgrid's Contractor, [insert name], will be trimming trees in your street sometime between seven and twenty-one days from _____ [date]. Tree cuttings will be collected within 48 hours of the work being completed. There is no charge for this service.

If you do not own this property, we would appreciate it if you would let the owner know about this notification immediately.

The vegetation clearance will:

- minimise the possibility of accidental electrocution;
- reduce the risk of fires caused by electricity;
- reduce the risk of power interruptions caused by branches touching overhead wires.

Ausgrid is required to ensure vegetation is trimmed or removed where it is growing into safety clearance zones around its overhead wires and power poles. To maintain safety clearances, we will be trimming trees in the street and on private property that are growing too close to our overhead street wires, poles and streetlights.

We need to enter your property to carry out the trimming. We will notify you again two days before work starts. Every effort will be made to ensure the work causes minimum disturbance. On the day work starts, our Contractors will try to contact you (if you are home) to confirm that our entry to your property is convenient. If you are not home, they will go ahead with the work. Please telephone (insert contact number) now if you do not consent to our Contractors entering your property to do this work.

Trees are generally pruned to remove the minimum amount of vegetation necessary to achieve safety clearances whilst preserving the health and safety of the tree.

Once the minimum safety clearance plus an allowance for regrowth is determined for each branch, it is then generally cut to the nearest branch collar (or growth point), outside the limit of clearance, in accordance with AS 4373 – Pruning of Amenity Trees.

Where trees have not been appropriately maintained before, extensive trimming may be required. This is because once the minimum safety clearance plus an allowance for regrowth is determined for each branch, it is then trimmed at the nearest collar (or growth point) outside the limit of clearance required, in accordance with the Australian Standard. This protects trees from infection or disease and reduces the development of weakly attached growth that can result from trimming trees mid-branch.

Should you require any further information, or wish to discuss our vegetation management operations, please do not hesitate to contact [insert name] on [insert contact number].

We thank you for your co-operation during these important works.

Yours Faithfully,

Name Of Contractor's Representative
Company Name

ATTACHMENT 8 – PRIVATE PROPERTY Vegetation Clearance Notification (48 Hours)

Tree Trimming for Electrical Safety

Dear resident

Date:

Address:.....

Time:

As we have advised previously Ausgrid's Contractor, [insert name], is trimming trees and other vegetation in your area to ensure safety clearance zones around our electricity network are maintained. This helps prevent injury to people, damage to property and reduces the possibility of blackouts occurring.

An inspection of the overhead wires and power poles in your area has revealed vegetation on or adjacent to your property is growing within the safety clearance zones of our street wires.

This means we need to enter your property to carry out the trimming. There is no charge for the trimming and every effort will be made to ensure the work causes minimum disturbance. On the day work starts, our Contractors will try to contact you (if you are home) to confirm that our entry to your property is convenient. If you are not home, they will go ahead with the work. Please telephone (insert contact number) now if you do not consent to our Contractors entering your property to do this work.

Trees are generally pruned to remove the minimum amount of vegetation necessary to achieve safety clearances whilst preserving the health and safety of the tree.

Once the minimum safety clearance plus an allowance for regrowth is determined for each branch, it is then generally cut to the nearest branch collar (or growth point), outside the limit of clearance, in accordance with AS 4373 – Pruning of Amenity Trees.

If you do not own this property, we would appreciate it if you would let the owner know about this notification immediately.

Should you require any further information, or wish to discuss our vegetation management operations, please do not hesitate to contact [insert name] on [insert contact number].

We thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

Name of Contractor's Representative

Company Name



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