



## Media Release

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### **Ausgrid trials new tree trimming guidelines**

Ausgrid has developed new tree trimming guidelines which will improve the aesthetic impact of its vegetation management program in Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter region.

Chief Operating Officer Trevor Armstrong said Ausgrid has listened to feedback from residents and has made changes to the way it trims trees.

“Communities have told us they wanted us to review the way we trim the trees and we’ve listened,” Mr Armstrong said.

Ausgrid has worked collaboratively with local councils and developed Local Government Plans for councils in Sydney, the Hunter and the Central Coast. The plans include detail of trees and areas of significance, as well as strategic planning for future years.

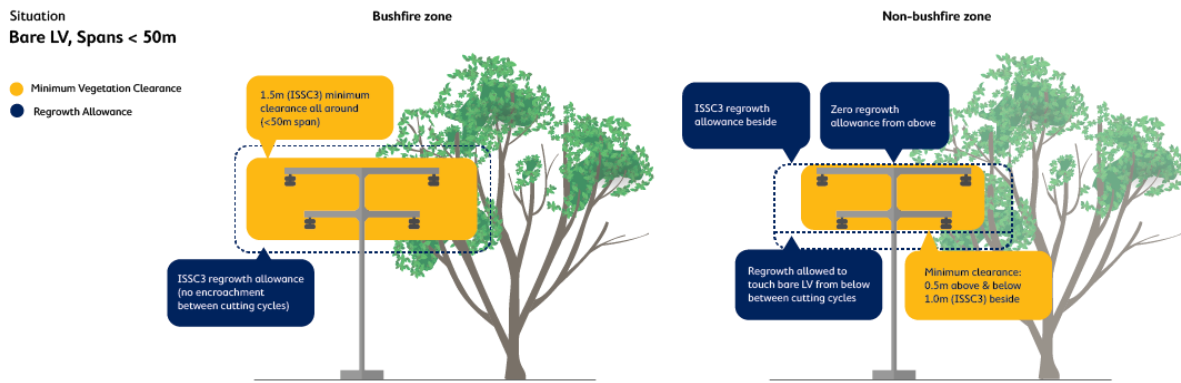
“We talked to 33 councils and conducted risk assessment studies this year and from this information, we developed a new standard for trimming trees around powerlines, minimising the aesthetic impact without sacrificing safety.

One quarter of network outages are caused by trees or branches coming into contact with powerlines. We have an obligation to maintain a safe and reliable electricity network for our customers and that means we need to trim trees growing too close to powerlines.

Tree trimming is the largest component of Ausgrid’s maintenance expenditure and as a regulated business; it is paid for by portions of customer electricity bills.

“Ausgrid invests \$40 million a year in vegetation maintenance to keep the electricity network safe and deliver a reliable power supply.

Trees growing near bare low voltage powerlines in urban areas (not deemed a bushfire area) will be trimmed to a minimum clearance of 0.5m above and below the lines along with a suitable allowance for regrowth (determined by the species of tree).



Under the guidelines, where there are insulated powerlines (Aerial Bundled Cable) and where it is safe to do so, the clearance will be reduced to ten centimetres.



Ausgrid employs arborists whom advise maintenance crews, when needed on potential regrowth rates for various types of trees.

“Ausgrid is continuing to consult with councils in tree workshops to develop greater clarity on tree species-specific regrowth patterns and allowances,” he said.

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