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Look out for poles and wires when burning off

Electricity distributor Essential Energy is reminding land holders to plan for safety and take care not to burn poles and wires when conducting hazard reduction or controlled burns.

Optimum growing conditions following rain and a mild winter have seen healthy regeneration of vegetation in several regions across Essential Energy's footprint which covers 95 per cent of New South Wales and parts of southern Queensland.

Operations Manager Ranges, Paul McWilliam said "These rains have been fantastic for our farmers and regional communities, but we're seeing an increase in hazard reduction burns in the lead-up to summer."

"We've noticed an increase in incidents of poles being burnt, so we're asking land holders to follow these handy tips to help burn safely."

- Obtain the appropriate permits prior to burning
- Notify Essential Energy of burn activities planned near the network
- Establish an exclusion zone of at least eight metres around the base of poles, clearing vegetation prior to burning
- Conduct burning on low fire danger days
- Stay alert to changing weather conditions
- Ensure you have sufficient water and firefighting equipment is at hand in case a burn gets out of control
- Check for network damage after burns. In particular, be alert to signs of smoke or ash near power poles, as they can smoulder for hours before catching alight

"If an electrical asset is damaged by a burn activity, contact Essential Energy immediately on 13 20 80 to isolate the power supply, and remain at least eight metres away from fallen powerlines," Paul said.

Land holders may be held responsible for the cost of any damage to the electricity network caused by burning activities.

"In previous years we've seen tens of thousands of dollars of damage to the network as a result of poles and wires being burnt. We're providing these handy tips to support landholders to burn safely and avoid costly damage"

"We're also keen for people to download the free Look Up and Live app, which is a great tool to help plan when working near the electricity network Just visit lookupandlive.com.au or search for 'Look Up and Live' on the App or Google Play store to plan for a safe operation," Paul said.

Land holders can access Essential Energy's free electrical safety fact sheets as well as resources and tools that support safe farm operations by visiting essentialenergy.com.au/agribusiness

FACT FILE:

- Essential Energy builds, operates and maintains one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks, servicing more than 875,000 customers across regional, rural and remote NSW and parts of southern Queensland
- Our footprint covers 95 per cent of NSW, traversing 737,000 square kilometres of landmass with 183,612 kilometres of powerline, including 163,417 kilometres 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 also includes 1.38 million power poles, equating to 1.6 power poles per customer

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