

# Plan before you plant.

A guide to planting and  
managing trees near  
powerlines.



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## Vegetation management near powerlines

Our people are inspecting and responding to trees and other vegetation encroaching on electricity infrastructure every day. It's a constant job and an essential part of our maintenance program. We know many problems can be avoided if we take action early and encourage more appropriate vegetation to be planted near powerlines.

**For vegetation enquiries call 13 23 91**

**For supply interruptions call 13 20 80**

The right trees in the right place provide shade, privacy, wildlife habitat and help prevent erosion. The wrong trees planted near powerlines can become a safety hazard to the local environment and property, and may impact the reliability of your power supply. Vegetation must be managed near powerlines to maintain public safety. By working together with the communities we serve, we can achieve a sustainable outcome for everyone. In doing so we will minimise the risk of power supply interruptions caused by vegetation falling on, or coming into contact with, powerlines.

### Why vegetation management is important

Continuous vegetation management:

- > Reduces the potential harm to people, damage to property or the local environment
- > Minimises tree-related power supply outages
- > Reduces the incidence of branches contacting powerlines and potentially causing bushfires.

Our vegetation management program relies on a collaboration between councils, landowners or occupiers and the broader community to ensure all vegetation is kept a safe distance from powerlines.



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# The ideal safety measure

## How does Essential Energy determine which trees should be trimmed?

As part of our comprehensive network maintenance program, powerlines are regularly inspected to assess risk levels and ensure minimum safety clearance zones\* between vegetation and powerlines. Trimming further than the Minimum Vegetation Clearance Zone is also performed so vegetation regrowth will not encroach on this zone before trees are trimmed again. The voltage of nearby powerlines, local bushfire classifications and a tree's age, species and general health are also taken into consideration.

## Who is responsible for tree trimming?

Essential Energy has programs in place to identify trees and other vegetation that could damage or interfere with the power supply or pose a bushfire or public safety risk. We also encourage landowners or occupiers to alert us if they're concerned that vegetation is getting close to powerlines on their property by calling **13 23 91**.

Responsibility for the trimming or removal of trees identified as a risk may depend upon whether they're naturally propagated or if they've been planted and allowed to grow directly under or alongside powerlines. Our Vegetation Contractors will discuss this with you.

\* In NSW – the minimum accepted distance between vegetation and overhead powerlines, designed to accommodate safety clearances as well as regrowth, has been defined by the Industry Safety Steering Committee (ISSC) Guidelines *ISSC 3 Guideline for Managing Vegetation Near Powerlines*.

## Management of vegetation by-products or debris

In urban areas, the debris will generally be chipped and removed the same day as the tree was cut.

In rural areas, the debris will be cut and stacked and may be left onsite in accordance with any specific landholder requirements. If the cut materials are to be removed, this will generally occur within three business days from the time it was cut.

Report trees growing close to powerlines by calling **13 23 91**

If you see trees or tall growing vegetation touching or overhanging powerlines, please call Essential Energy on **13 23 91** so we can investigate. If you see a tree in contact with powerlines following inclement weather or any other incident, call us immediately and ensure all onlookers remain at least **8 metres** clear.

## Please do not attempt to trim trees near powerlines

Trimming vegetation near powerlines is extremely dangerous and should only be undertaken by qualified personnel. Ask Essential Energy for further advice.



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# Tree trimming

## Why is it important to use qualified vegetation contractors?

Essential Energy promotes best practice environmental management and all work is consistent with the Australian Standard AS4373 – Pruning of Amenity Trees. All vegetation contractors are required to comply with Workplace Health and Safety Regulations, use the latest internationally approved techniques and be competent in:

- > Arboriculture techniques
- > The safe use of tools and equipment
- > Herbicide application and storage
- > Working near powerlines.

They must also be qualified and authorised to meet industry regulatory requirements.

A list of qualified and authorised vegetation contractors can be obtained by phoning **13 23 91** or visiting [essentialenergy.com.au/trees](https://essentialenergy.com.au/trees)

## How are trees trimmed?

Like most Australian power companies, Essential Energy uses the standard arboriculture practice of directional pruning to ensure trees remain healthy and clear of powerlines. Directional pruning doesn't interfere with a tree's natural defence system and is well supported by years of research. Every effort is made to retain the visual appeal of trees, especially with significant or heritage trees, however, public safety and power supply reliability must be our top priority. In the event trees encroaching on powerlines pose a safety hazard to the community and a threat to the reliable supply of electricity, it may be necessary to remove the tree.

## Incompatible Trees

Some trees just aren't suited to be growing near powerlines. Trees that have typically been trimmed, may now be identified for removal to ensure ongoing compliance with Minimum Vegetation Clearance Zone requirements around the Essential Energy network. Such trees will have been identified as "incompatible" meaning they pose an unacceptable safety risk to our workers, the public or our network, or the growth rate and habit cannot be effectively maintained within the nominated vegetation management cycle.

Trees identified as incompatible will not be removed without prior consultation and landholder consent.

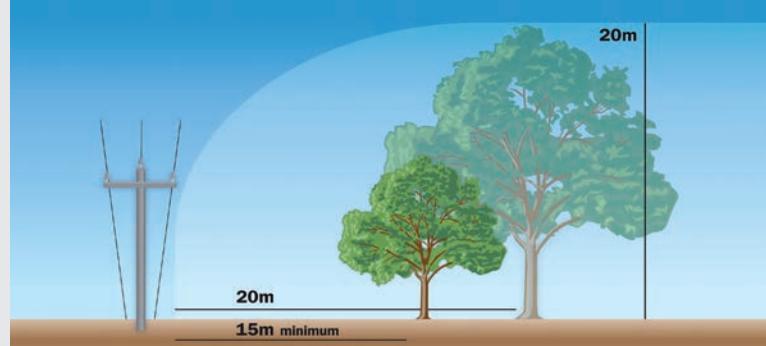
## Accessing private property

If access to your property is required, or a tree cannot be accessed from the road reserve, our vegetation contractors will make reasonable attempts to contact you to discuss the work required to enable services to be carried out safely with as little inconvenience as possible. On rural properties, we may also enquire about the possible location of noxious weeds or soil-borne diseases, so appropriate procedures can be followed to prevent their spread.

## Service Mains

For service mains, the one that connects power to the house, trees can safely grow quite close and not cause any problems.

# Vegetation Management benefits everyone



- Always plant a tree at least 15 metres away from powerlines or a distance equal to its mature height – whichever is greater
- Make sure any vegetation is kept well clear of powerlines
- Remember – tree trimming can be hazardous near overhead powerlines and should only be performed by qualified tree trimmers
- To avoid the need for tree trimming we encourage landowners to plant responsibly. Use this guide as a source of information to Plan Before You Plant
- Look up before you plant
- Consider how big the tree or vegetation will grow and what structures will be affected
- Plant taller varieties further away from powerlines using the planting guide above
- Do not plant on the nature strip without local council approval
- Remember that access to powerlines is required for future maintenance and repairs
- Select plant species that are native to your area
- Avoid plant species that could invade the surrounding environment. Consideration should also be given to underground powerlines to avoid roots damaging the underground network
- Plant away from underground electricity pits, pillar boxes and padmount transformers to ensure electricity assets are accessible for inspection, maintenance or repair
- Consult a local nursery before planting to determine the height that particular tree species may grow in your area
- Tall growing species including the trees shown in the tables (overleaf) are unsuitable under or near powerlines.

## Unsuitable for planting near powerlines

Botanical Name	Common Name
Acacia species (large)	Wattle
Acer species	Maples (not Japanese)
Acmena species (large)	Lilly Pilly or Bush Cherry
Alnus species	Black and Evergreen Alder
Araucaria species	Bunya-Bunya, Hoop or Norfolk Island Pine
Bambusa species	Bamboo
Banksia species (large)	Banksia
Betula species	Birch
Brachychiton species	Lace-Bark, Flame and Kurrajong
Caesalpinia ferrea	Leopard tree
Casuarina species	She-Oak
Cedrus species	Cedar, also Fir and Spruce
Celtis species	Nettle tree
Cinnamomum camphora	Camphor Laurel
Cupressus species	Cypress trees
Delonix regia	Poinciana or Flamboyant
Erythrina species	Coral tree
Eucalyptus species	Gum tree
Ficus species	Fig tree
Fraxinus species	Ash
Gleditsia species	Honey Locust
Grevillea robusta	Silky Oak
Hymenosporum flavum	Native Frangipani
Jacaranda mimosifolia	Jacaranda
Ligustrum species	Privet
Liquidamber species	Liquid Amber
Lophostemon confertus	Brush Box
Magnolia grandiflora	Bull Bay Magnolia
Melaleuca species (large)	Paperbarks
Melia azedarach	White Cedar
Palm species	Palm
Pinus species	Pine
Platanus species	Plane tree
Populus species	Poplar
Quercus species	Oak
Salix species	Willow
Schinus species	Peppercorn tree
Stenocarpus sinuatus	Queensland Firewheel tree
Syncarpia glomulifera	Turpentine
Syzygium species	Lilly Pilly or Bush Cherry
Tamarix aphylla	Athel Pine
Tilia species	Linden or Lime tree
Tipuana tipu	Racehorse tree
Ulmus species	Elm
Zelkova serrata	Japanese Elm
	Tall growing fruit and nut trees

Please note: most trees are unsuitable for planting under or near powerlines.

**PLAN**  
**BEFORE YOU**  
**PLANT**



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For general enquiries  
call **13 23 91**

For supply interruptions  
call **13 20 80**

For interpreter services  
call **13 14 50**

**[essentialenergy.com.au/trees](https://essentialenergy.com.au/trees)**



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