Mount Alexander Shire Council

ELECTRIC LINE CLEARANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024-25

ELECTRICITY SAFETY (ELECTRIC LINE CLEARANCE) REGULATIONS 2020

S.R NO. 50/2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

This plan outlines the Mount Alexander Shire Council's compliance with the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020. The regulations are designed to manage vegetation around electric lines to minimise the danger of electric lines causing fire, electrocution or disruption to electricity supply. Management of vegetation around electric lines is a major part of the overall electricity safety framework. While based on the premise that trees and electric lines do not mix, the framework acknowledges that managed carefully, trees and electric lines can coexist.

Councils are responsible under the Act for trees on their public land and street trees in urban (Declared) areas. This plan details the management responsibilities, procedures and practices to be adopted and observed by the Mount Alexander Shire Council in managing vegetation in the vicinity of electric lines within the Declared Area of Castlemaine. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Electricity Safety Act 1998 and with Regulation 9 – Preparation and submission of management plans, Section 2 of the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.

The regulations acknowledge the need to balance the three key policy goals of safety, reliability and fire prevention with amenity and protecting the environment. This management plan also considers the relationship between Council's vision and goals and the strategic management of vegetation within the Shire. Council's vision and goals highlight the importance of the tree canopy to the character of the shire. It is therefore essential that vegetation is managed sustainably, sensitively and with consideration.

Castlemaine is the largest urban centre within the Shire. It is recognised as an important cultural centre and contains a unique collection of heritage buildings and significant streetscapes that contribute to the unique character of Castlemaine.

This document is specific to any vegetation which is in the vicinity of any powerlines that may encroach on the minimum clearance space of the powerlines, as prescribed in the Electricity Safety Act 1998 and the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.

A copy of this management plan will be available for inspection by the public on Council's website www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au.

2. 9 (2) PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF MANAGEMENT PLANS

A responsible person must prepare a management plan relating to compliance with the Code of Practice for Electric Lines Clearance before 31 March each year. For the purposes of this document the “Responsible Person” is the Mount Alexander Shire Council.

The document will be updated annually to ensure it always complies with the relevant Electricity Safety Act 1998 and Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations or its preceding documents.

A process has been developed to ensure that the Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan (ELCMP) is reviewed, amended and internally authorised before 31 March each year. The review will consider the effectiveness of procedures in meeting the Plans objectives, internal review and authorisation procedures and procedures to publish the updated Plan on Councils website when it takes effect.

The review will also ensure superseded versions are removed and ensure current versions of CFA mapping, regulations, codes, training and standards are included.

The Plan will be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

2.1 Process

Preparation of this document is scheduled as an annual action for the Tree Management Officer for the first week of February each year. The preparation of this document will include a review of all processes and procedures and their effectiveness in meeting the plan objectives.

The amended document will be submitted to the CEO for review and authorisation prior to 31 March each year.

The Tree Management Officer will submit the Plan within 14 days of a written request.

2.2 9 (4) A responsible person must ensure that a management plan prepared under subregulation (2) or (3) specifies the following –

(a) the name, address and telephone number of the responsible person;

Name	Mount Alexander Shire Council
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Darren Fuzzard
Address	27 Lyttleton St, Castlemaine, Victoria, 3450
Telephone Number	(03) 5471 1700

(b) the name, position, address and telephone number of the individual who was responsible for the preparation of the management plan;

Name	Heath Bambrough
Position	Tree Management Officer
Address	6 Bull Street, Castlemaine, Victoria, 3450
Telephone	(03) 5471 1774

(c) the name, position, address and telephone number of the persons who are responsible for carrying out the management plan;

Name	Heath Bambrough
Position	Tree Management Officer
Address	6 Bull Street, Castlemaine, Victoria, 3450
Telephone	(03) 5471 1774

(d) the telephone number of a person who can be contacted in an emergency that requires clearance of a tree from an electric line that the responsible person is required to keep clear of trees;

Name	Mount Alexander Shire Council
Telephone No (business and after hours):	(03) 5471 1770

(e) the objectives of the management plan;

The primary objectives of this management plan are to:

- Ensure that Mount Alexander Shire Council complies with the Electricity Safety Act 1998 and the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.
- Ensure public safety at all times in relation to fire risk, human injury and continuity of supply resulting from the contact between power lines and vegetation.
- Ensure provision of a safe working place for employees and contractors undertaking vegetation clearance pruning and any employee or contractors who conduct other vegetation maintenance works within the vicinity of powerlines.
- Ensure protection of areas of important local and significant vegetation throughout the Council's Declared Area. This protection includes, but is not limited to, sites containing botanically, historically or culturally important vegetation, or vegetation of outstanding aesthetic or ecological significance, and/or the habitat of rare or endangered species.
- Ensure community satisfaction with the manner in which the necessary works are carried out.
- Manage trees for aesthetic, cultural, ecological or environmental significance.
- Maintain continuity of power supply and electrical safety.

(f) the land of which the management plan applies (as indicated on a map);

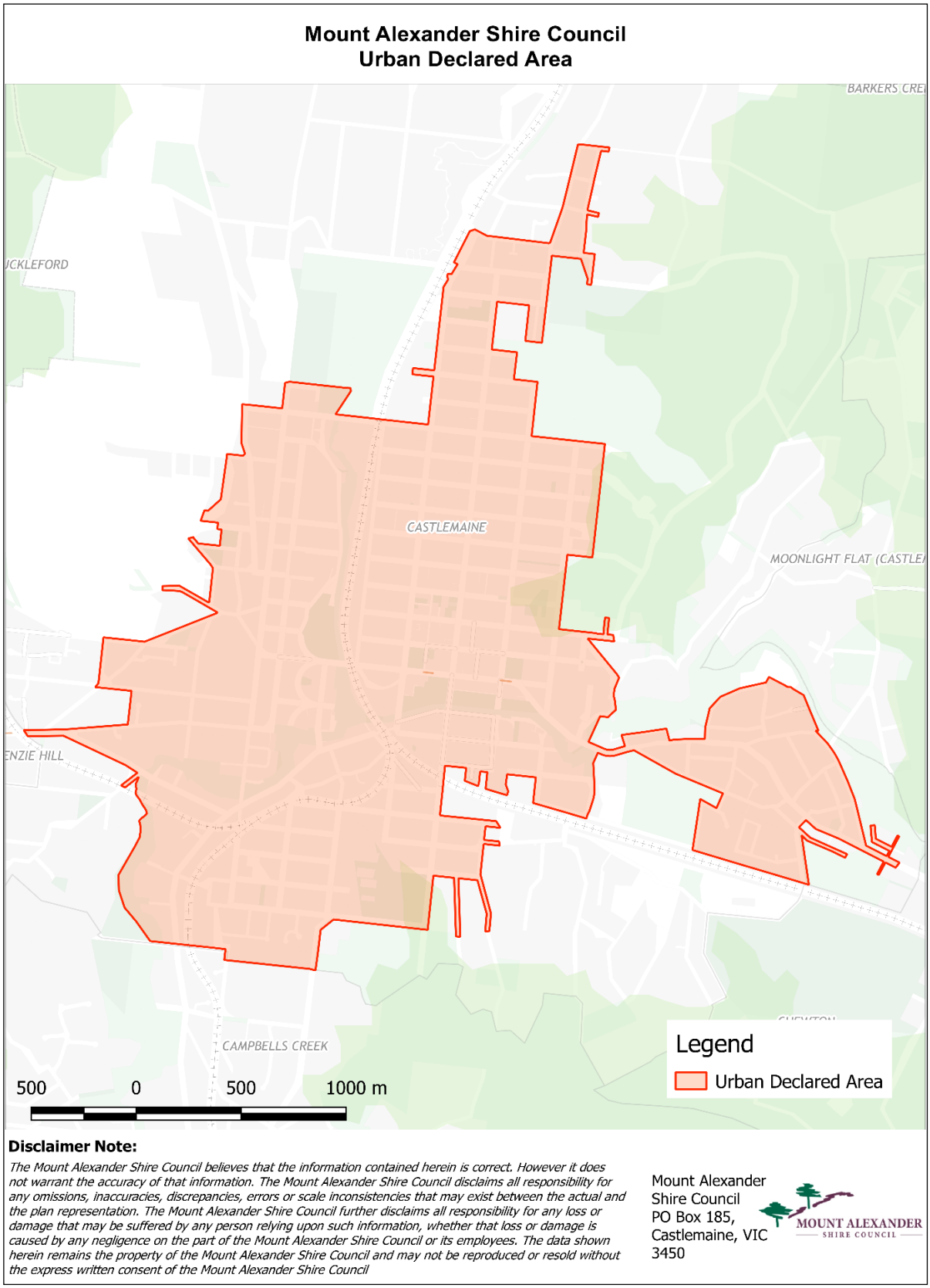


***Figure 1** – Map of Declared Area*

(g) any hazardous bushfire risk areas and low bushfire risk areas in the land referred to in paragraph (f) (as indicated on the map);

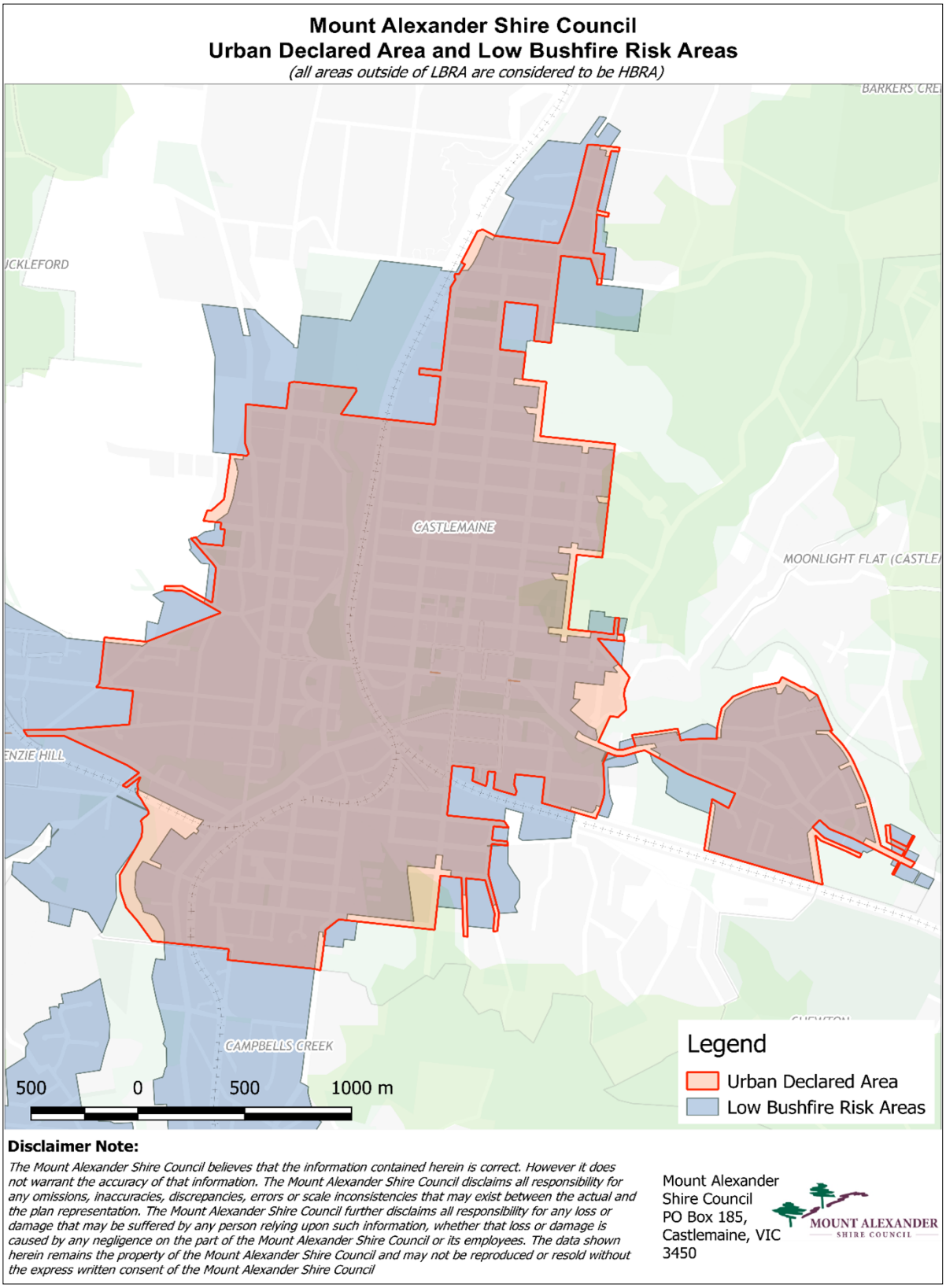


***Figure 2** – Map of Declared Area and Low Bushfire Risk Area*

(h) each area that the responsible person knows contains a tree that the responsible person may need to cut or remove to ensure compliance with the Code and that is –

(h) (i) indigenous to Victoria; or

All Council managed trees are recorded in Councils asset database (Assetic) and are inspected and updated within a cyclic tree management program. The asset database contains the following information:

- Asset Id
- Location
- Common Name
- Botanical Name
- Origin
- Age
- Health and Form
- Useful Life Expectancy (ULE)
- Height and Width
- Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)
- Suitability Factor (significance)
- History of Inspections

The street tree vegetation throughout the Declared Area of the Shire of Mount Alexander consists mainly of introduced (exotic) species that have been planted purely for amenity reasons. There is also indigenous remnant vegetation within the Declared Area and in the immediate vicinity of overhead powerlines.

Within the Declared Area of Castlemaine, there are three (3) Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) with bioregional conservation status (BCS) of least concern, depleted and endangered.

Bioregion	EVC no.	EVC Name	BCS
Goldfields	20	Heathy Dry Forest	Least Concern
Goldfields	61	Box Ironbark Forest	Depleted
Goldfields	67	Alluvial Terraces Herb-rich Woodland	Endangered

Further details in relation to the Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) can be found in the following links:

- https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/bioregions-and-evc-benchmarks
- https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/50511/Bioregional-Conservation-Status-for-each-BioEVC.pdf
- https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/48700/Gold_EVCs_combined.pdf

(h) (ii) listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance; or

There are various areas within the Shire of Mount Alexander that are protected, under the Council's Planning Scheme, for their Botanical, Habitat, Ecology or Environmental value. These areas are detailed in Council's Planning Scheme under the Environmental Significance

Overlay (ESO), Heritage Overlay (HO) and Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO), and their respective schedules.

- ESO5 – Waterway Protection is located within the Declared Area and relates directly to Barkers Creek.

- HO – The Heritage Overlay covers a considerable portion of the Declared Area. Tree protection relates directly to a small portion of the heritage places.

- SLO2 – Castlemaine Significant Landscape Area covers considerable sections within the Declared Area and relates particularly to waterways, parkland and rail corridors.

Further details can be found in the Council Planning Scheme document which is available for viewing at.

- http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/mountalexander.

(h) (iii) a tree of cultural or environmental significance; means that a tree is –

(a) included in the Heritage Register under Division 1 of Part 3 of the **Heritage Act 2017**; or

There is one (1) known tree on the National Trust Database within the Declared Area of Castlemaine. Basic details within Councils asset database (Assetic) are:

Asset Id	TR017824
Location	8 Goldsmith Crescent, Castlemaine 3450
Latitude	-37.0670568471262
Longitude	144.210784455868
Common Name	Grey Box
Botanical Name	*Eucalyptus microcarpa*

More information can be found at:

- http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/vic/heritage-register.

(b) means that a tree is – included in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register established under section 144 of the **Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006**; or

There are various areas within the Mount Alexander Shire Council that are protected under the Council's Planning Scheme, for their Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

For exact location of sites, an application must be made to access the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) with the following link.

- https://achris.vic.gov.au/#/dashboard

(c) flora that is –

(i) listed as threatened in accordance with section 10 (1) of the **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988**; or

(ii) listed in the Threatened Flora List with a conservation status in Victoria of "endangered" or "vulnerable"; or

(d) a habitat of threatened fauna.

Electrical Line Clearance personnel are made aware of the locations of native species, trees of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance or trees of cultural or environmental significance on the specific work instruction/work order.

As there has been an ongoing powerline clearance program around existing trees, there are no known trees from clause 9 (h) that will be significantly adversely affected by future powerline clearance works. Additional resources available to identify significant native trees are:

Reference to the Flora, fauna or habitat listed as "endangered" or "vulnerable" in accordance with section 10 of the **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988** is found in the following link.

- https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/threatened-list

(i) the means which the responsible person will use to identify a tree of kind specified in paragraph (h)(i), (ii), (iii);

The Mount Alexander Shire Council contains approximately 22,000 trees within its database (Assetic). All trees contain the data mentioned in this Electric Line Clearance Management Plan in section (h) (i). The trees history of inspections logs each time the tree is visited by either the Tree Management Officer or contractors.

All employees and contractors engaged with the Mount Alexander Shire Council must be a suitably qualified arborist who contain a minimum level of training which includes tree identification.

(j) the management procedures that the responsible person will adopt to ensure compliance with the Code, which –

(j) (i) must include details of the methods to be adopted for managing trees and maintaining a minimum clearance space as required by the Code; and

- The minimum clearance space is defined in the current regulations Electrical Safety (Electrical Line Clearance) Regulations 2020 S.R. 50/2020 Schedule 2—Applicable distance for middle 2 thirds of electric line span and code of practice and is referred to by electric line clearance personnel to determine the required minimum clearance between vegetation and overhead powerlines.

- Council introduced the Tree Management Guideline in 2014 to guide the management of trees within the urban areas of the shire.

- The Urban Tree Policy 2023-2028 guides the management of trees within the urban areas of the shire.

- Council has initiated a Supply of Tree Maintenance Services Contract defining tree management standards and qualifications.

- An annual inspection and pruning cycle of powerlines is conducted as specified in the Supply of Tree Maintenance Services Contract with Councils service provider.

- All remedial powerline pruning works are conducted in accordance with AS 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees. This minimises epicormic regrowth, the speed of the regrowth, and assists with tree health and condition by minimising the chance of entry by pathogens.

- All contractors engaged to prune trees in the vicinity of overhead powerlines are appropriately trained and qualified under the definition of a suitably qualified arborist.

- Under the Mount Alexander Shire Council contractual agreement, it is the Contractor's duty to ensure that trees are pruned to maintain the Clearance Space free of vegetation for the period of the program.

- Council's Tree Management Officer shall, as part of the annual maintenance program, assess every street tree in the Declared Area, outcome of the assessment is to identify all Council managed trees which currently infringe or will infringe on the prescribed Clearance Space before the next pruning cycle.

- The vegetation identified in the audit will be recorded electronically, identifying the tree's physical address, suburb, voltage and if the pruning can be completed while maintaining safe approach distances. The type and size of equipment required to complete the pruning task in the safest possible manner will be recorded by the contractor during quotation of works.

- The Tree Management Officer will also assess the genus and species of the vegetation, ascertain the regrowth potential and assess the tree for any other potential hazards.

- Council's contractor will prune all trees identified to ensure that the tree's foliage will remain free of the prescribed Clearance Space until the next pruning cycle.

- Trees that the Contractor considers cannot be successfully pruned as outlined above will be brought to the attention of the Mount Alexander Shire Council's Tree Management Officer. The Tree Management Officer will then inspect the tree and if it is determined that the tree cannot be pruned to comply with the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, Council will investigate and implement an alternative method to ensure compliance.

- Reports of non-compliance from Powercor, residents or other sources will be investigated by Council's Tree Management Officer. Once the investigation has been completed, Council's contractor will carry out any pruning action to rectify the non-conformance.

- The assessor inspecting the vegetation will have a minimum qualification of Level 5 in arboriculture. This qualification will ensure the assessor has basic knowledge in tree physiology and biology of the tree species growing in the municipality.

- Utilising this knowledge, the assessor will monitor the amount of regrowth for each species pruned. The degree of tree pruning will be adjusted in light of observed growth rates, depending on the significance of the tree, to ensure compliance with the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.

- The formula used to calculate the amount of vegetation to be removed is:

  Clearance (m) = regrowth (m/year) X cycle (1 year)

  An example of this formula is:

  Melaleuca linariifolia = regrowth 300mm per annum X 12 month = 300mm clear of the clearance space (area which must maintain clear of vegetation)

  Quercus robur = regrowth 800mm per annum X 12 months = 800mm clear of the clearance space (area which must maintain clear of vegetation)

- All future vegetation to be planted in the vicinity of open-wire powerlines is specifically selected to be of a slower and lower growing species that will mature below the powerlines. Alternatively, selected tree species will be suitable for directional pruning and shaped to grow around the powerline to remain clear of the clearance zone for a minimum period of twelve (12) months. If a tree matures at a greater height than anticipated, the selected slower and lower growing species will not respond with rapid epicormic re-growth when pruned ensuring Council can maintain the twelve (12) month pruning cycle.

- Council has a strong focus on ensuring community inclusion with the selection of replacement streetscapes and the development of appropriate street tree replacement and renewal strategies for the shire is undertaken in consultation with residents. Accordingly, Council has not yet adopted a preferred tree planting list.

- Unmanageable, low value species or inappropriate species which are directly underneath the open-wire powerlines will be removed.

- Where possible, new developments will have underground powerlines installed in accordance with the Mount Alexander Shire Council's planning scheme.

- An open dialogue with the Powercor Council Liaison Officer will be re-established with upon the re-appointment of the position.

- Council will investigate engineering solutions that minimise or eliminate the impact of powerline pruning in discussion with Powercor. These solutions could be as simple as raising the height of the conductors to clear the significant vegetation. The Mount Alexander Shire Council does not have one specific preference for any engineering solution.

(j) (ii) for the purposes of determining a minimum clearance space in accordance with Division 1 of Part 3 of the Code –

(A) Must specify the method for determining an additional distance that allows for conductor sag or sway; and

(B) May provide for different additional distances to be determined for different parts of the electric line span;

In the Declared Area, uninsulated spans over 100m in length in LBRA and over 45m in HBRA will require additional allowance for sag and sway in accordance with Part 3 – Minimum clearance spaces Division 1 – Standard minimum clearance spaces of the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020. The number of spans affected is likely to be minimal. Where a span requiring additional allowance for sag and sway is identified, the assessor will refer the span to Council for assessment and, if required, the sag and sway allowances provided by the Distribution Business will be applied. This information will be recorded against the tree asset in Council's Asset Management System (Assetic).

Unexpected conductor movement may occur under moderate wind, network faults or changes in conductor heating or cooling factors. Conductor movement of several metres may result in long span/s of electric lines.

Under the Mount Alexander Shire Council contractual agreement, it is the Contractor's duty to ensure that trees are pruned to maintain the Clearance Space free of vegetation for the period of the program.

If required, The Mount Alexander Shire Council will determine an additional distance for sag and sway in consultation with Powercor as the relevant Distribution Business in the Declared Area. There is no electric rail or tramway supply within the area.

The Distribution Company to be contacted for information is:

Distribution Business Powercor

Name of contact:	Jason Craig
Telephone No:	(03) 8846 9709
Mobile:	0402 386 940
Email:	JCraig@powercor.com.au

(k) the procedures to be adopted if it is not practicable to comply with the requirements of AS 4373 while cutting a tree in accordance with the Code;

Council introduced a Tree Management Guideline in 2014 to guide the management of trees within the urban areas of the shire.

The Urban Tree Policy 2023-2028 guides the management of trees within the urban areas of the shire.

Council has initiated a Supply of Tree Maintenance Services Contract defining tree management standards and qualifications.

Under the Mount Alexander Shire Council contractual agreement, it is the Contractor's duty to prune all trees as far as practicable in accordance with AS 4373.

All contractors engaged to prune trees in the vicinity of overhead powerlines are suitably qualified arborists.

Trees that the Contractor considers cannot be successfully pruned as outlined above will be brought to the attention of the Mount Alexander Shire Council's Tree Management Officer.

The Tree Management Officer will inspect the tree and if it is determined that the tree cannot be pruned in accordance with AS 4373, Council will investigate and implement an alternative method to ensure compliance.

(l) a description of each alternative compliance mechanism in respect of which the responsible person has applied, or proposes to apply, for approval under clause 31 of the Code;

The Mount Alexander Shire Council does not propose to request alternative compliance mechanisms.

(m) the details of each approval for an alternative compliance mechanism that-

(m) (i) the responsible person holds; and
(m) (ii) is in effect;

The Mount Alexander Shire Council does not propose to request alternative compliance mechanisms.

(n) a description of the measures that must be used to assess the performance of the responsible person under the management plan;

Council's responsible person has defined Key Performance Indicators to assist in measuring the implementation of the Plan:

- Preparation of the Electric Line Clearance Management Plan prior to the 31st March of each year;
- Completion of the Proactive Pruning Program for as per schedule;
- 95% compliance for electric line clearance;
- 90% compliance in annual HV audits for electric line clearance;
- 100% compliance in HBRA zone before the annual fire season declaration date;
- 100% of non-compliance rectified within 14 business days of notification;
- Less than 20 requests for electric line clearance received from the public or Powercor annually;

- Less than 10 requests for emergency clearances received from Powercor annually;
- No complaints from property owners;
- 100% of tree removals are undertaken in accordance with processes in Council's Tree Management Guideline and Urban Tree Policy
- No fires identified as having started as a result of tree branches/foliage contacting wires; and
- No vegetation caused outages as reported by Powercor.

Key Performance Indicators are monitored via:

- Mapping the inspection and pruning program against the zone maintenance progress;
- Post works auditing;
- Customer feedback and levels of customer requests relating to powerlines; and
- Compliance and outage results from Powercor (when supplied).

Results are reported via:

- Internal team meetings; and
- Contract meetings.

Reporting of Key Performance Indicators is used to aid in:

- Issuing of reworks where required;
- Development of procedures and processes;
- Review and development of pruning programs and Contract Specification; and
- Selection of suitable tree species for planting near powerlines.

(o) details of the audit processes that must be used to determine the responsible person under the management plan;

An annual inspection is conducted in August/September each year by the Tree Management Officer. Any tree which has or will enter the minimum defined clearance space in accordance with the Electricity Act within twelve (12) months, will be documented via the Councils asset database (Assetic) and programmed for works accordingly. Section (h) (i) of this electrical line clearance management plan states the data collected, additional data collected may

involve voltage of the subject powerline interfered by the vegetation, regrowth potential, priority of work, traffic management requirements and any other potential hazards.

A post works audit will be conducted by the Tree Management Officer to ensure that Mount Alexander Shire Council has met the requirements of the Electricity Safety Act 1998, Councils Tree Maintenance Services contract specifications, AS 4373-2007 Amenity Tree Pruning and the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.

Compliance and quality is audited using a random sample audit of 25% of the pruning works. The audit is completed on completion of the pruning works.

A process has been established to investigate, address and prevent deviations from, or breaches in the standards of Services provided by the Contractor.

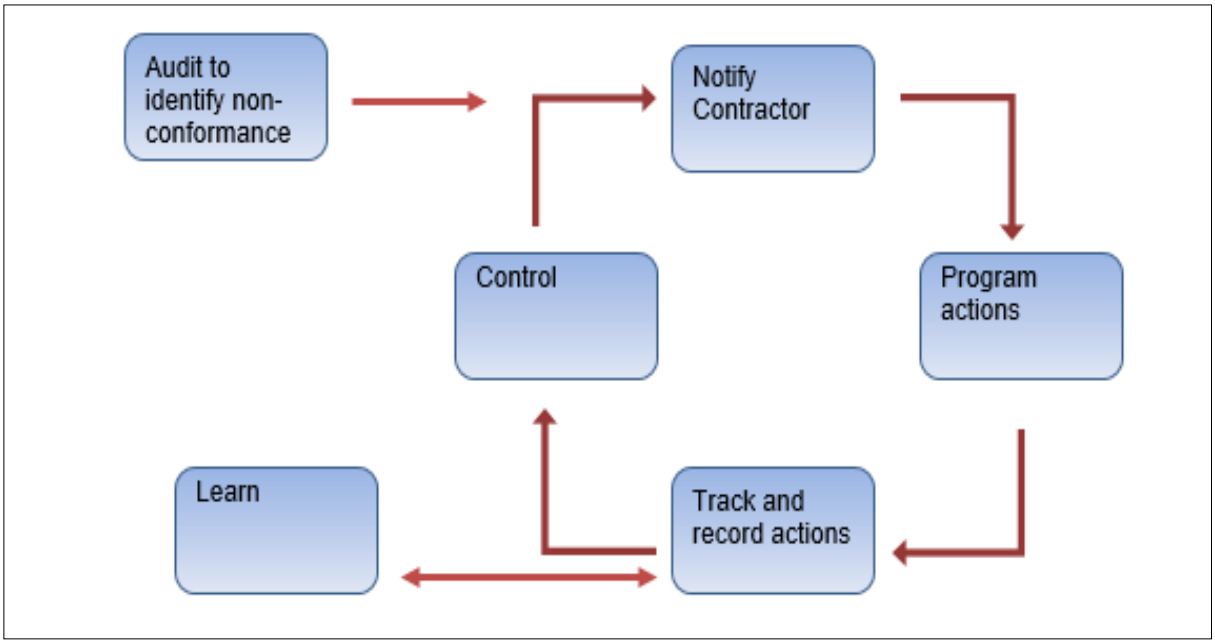


Figure 3 *– Process of Audit*

Details of all corrective actions shall be recorded by re-programming on the Councils asset database (Assetic), the minimum requirements of which shall include:

- the date of the Non-Conformance;
- a brief description of the Non-Conformance;
- the immediate action taken by the Contractor to rectify the Non-Conformance;
- the corrective action to be undertaken by the Contractor to prevent recurrence of the Non-Conformance; and
- the date by which the Contractor completed the corrective action

The contractor will be audited against the following standards of work.

Local Outcomes and Requirements

100 % compliance – no branches that have been pruned are to be left in the tree's canopy.

All trees listed for works as part of Council's audit must be pruned. Any tree claimed but not actually pruned will result in a non-conformance being issued to the contractor.

Pruning Techniques

85% compliance with AS 4373-2007 Amenity Tree Pruning and best modern arboriculture practices on each tree pruned.

Failure to follow this instruction will result in a non-conformance being issued.

Site Condition

95% compliance - The Contractor shall leave each work site in a clean and tidy condition and also in a condition which is safe for pedestrians and road users.

Failure to follow this instruction will result in a corrective action being issued.

If 5% of the total works is exceeded with corrective actions, they will be upgraded to non-conformances.

Quality Assurance Program

The Tree Maintenance Services Contract will be monitored under the contractual terms and conditions and discussed and documented at the contractors review meeting.

All non-conformances and service above expectation will be documented and both parties will keep copies. Council will ensure the records are appropriately filed on Council's document management system.

Auditing of Contractors

Records of the qualifications and training of all contractors undertaking pruning of vegetation in proximity to overhead electrical conductors are maintained in Councils document system (TRIM).

Council's Tree Management Officer is responsible for undertaking random audits of contractors engaged to undertake vegetation clearance of electrical conductors. The audit assesses a number of criteria including the pruning works to confirm compliance with AS 4373 and the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020.

In the event of a non-compliance with the Code, Council will ensure compliance is achieved as soon as possible.

Record keeping

All records will be kept by the Responsible Person. The contractor will keep all records in accordance with the terms and conditions clearly set out in the contractual agreement.

Further, the responsible officer will ensure all records are maintained in Council's document management system (TRIM).

(p) the qualifications and experience that the responsible person must require of the persons who are carrying out the inspection, cutting or removal of trees in accordance with the Code and the Electrical Safety (General) Regulations 2019;

When staff and contractors are undertaking electric line clearance works for the Mount Alexander Shire Council they are working as qualified persons as outlined in the Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019.

The Mount Alexander Shire Council will ensure that all staff and contractors working as qualified persons will conform to:

- Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019
- Australian Standard AS4373-2007 – Pruning of Amenity Trees;
- The "Blue Book"; and
- Any organisational procedures, safe work method statements and Job Safety Assessments to ensure the work can be completed safely.

The Mount Alexander Shire Council will ensure that all staff and contractors are:

- trained both initially and when refresher courses are required by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
- performing tree pruning and removal works around electrical lines are suitably qualified and trained personnel who hold the following qualifications:

Arboricultural Inspector

- Minimum Certificate V Horticulture / Arboriculture, including the nationally accredited 'Assess' and 'Identify' modules;
- Minimum 3 years industry experience.

Arborist – EWP operator

- Minimum Certificate III Horticulture/Arboriculture.
- High Risk Work Licence – WP
- Certificate II - ESI in Powerline Vegetation Control (must include modules – UETDRVCC004 Control vegetation in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus from an elevated work platform and UETDRVC007 – Control vegetation using pruning techniques).

Safety Observer

- Certificate II - ESI in Powerline Vegetation Control (must include module – UETDRVC007 – Control vegetation using pruning techniques).

The Certificate III Horticulture/Arboriculture and Certificate II ESI cover many aspects of required training such as Chainsaw use, OH&S principles, First Aid, pruning techniques and

High-Risk licences. Additional staff such as grounds person/labourer may be required to hold training in:

- Traffic management;
- Chipper and other equipment competency operation/induction;
- Chemical application (A.C.U.P or similar); or
- Tree Climbing.

All contractors are required to provide evidence of appropriate qualifications and training prior to the commencement of Councils annual Electrical Line Clearance Management Program. All records are stored in Council's document management system (TRIM).

To ensure staff are aware of site and employee requirements new staff and contractors are subject to both internal and external induction processes and specific task related site safety assessments.

Any staff or contractor found on site without appropriate qualifications, training or experience is to be excluded from the site immediately

As part of the preparation for the Plan, Council will consult with all relevant bodies and standards to ensure all organisational procedures are current.

(q) notification and consultation procedures, including the form of the notice to be given in accordance with Division 3 of Part 2 of the Code;

The Mount Alexander Shire Council understands the importance of providing notification of programmed tree pruning works to affected persons.

Council will provide notification to persons affected by electrical line clearance works at least 14 days, and no more than 60 days, before the intended pruning or removal is to occur. If pruning does not commence within these timeframes then affected residents will be re-notified. Notification methods may include:

- A written notice in the weekly local newspaper. This provides a broad overview on planned pruning throughout the municipality and directs residents to Council's Customer Service for further information.
- Council's website.
- Councils social media.

An example of a public notice can be viewed at Appendix 2.

(r) a procedure for the independent resolution of disputes relating to electric line clearance;

Mount Alexander Shire Council has an established process for managing disputes related to electric lines clearance.

All enquiries received by Council are recorded on Council's internal customer tracking system (TechOne). Each enquiry has a unique identification number that is monitored electronically until the enquiry is resolved. If initially a customer is not satisfied, a clear, hierarchal process is followed.

There will be times when the Mount Alexander Shire Council cannot appease the person lodging an enquiry. When internal processes have been exhausted, Council will direct the person to the responsible person at Energy Safe Victoria, or in some cases to the State Energy and Water Ombudsman. (Refer to Figure 4).

TREE MANAGEMENT OFFICER
Heath Bambrough
h.bambrough@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

PARKS AND GARDENS COORDINATOR
Stewart Campbell
s.campbell@mounalexander.vic.gov.au

MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES
Karen Evennett
k.evennett@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT
Michael Annear
m.annear@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Darren Fuzzard
(03) 5471 1700

ENERGY SAFE VICTORIA
1800 800 158
info@energysafe.vic.gov.au

ENERGY & WATER OMBUDSMAN
1800 500 509
www.ewovinfo@ewov.com.au

Figure 4 *– Dispute Resolution Process Flow Chart*

(s) if Energy Safe Victoria has granted an exemption under regulation 11 relating to a requirement of the Code, details of the exemption or a copy of the exemption.

Mount Alexander Shire Council has not been given any exemptions.

3. 10 OBLIGATIONS RELATING TO MANAGEMENT PLANS

3.1. 10 (6) the responsible person must ensure that a copy of the management plan is published on the responsible person's Internet site.

The Tree Management Officer will ensure the Plan is updated on the website each year as per the following process:

- Draft of the new plan completed by 1st February;
- Draft of the new plan sent to Manager Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities for review by the 15th February, amendments made as required;
- Send amended plan to Director Infrastructure and Development for review by the 1st March.
- Send final plan to Chief Executive Officer for approval by the 15th March.
- After plan is approved, liaise with Communications and Customer Service to remove superseded Plan and publish new plan to Council website before 31st March.

4. PART 2 – CLEARANCE RESPONSIBILITIES – DIVISION 1 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

(4) Exception to minimise clearance space for structural branches around insulated low voltage electric lines

The Mount Alexander Shire Council does not contain any exceptions in place or intend to manage any exemptions to the minimum clearance space of structural branches around insulated low voltage electric lines.

(5) Exceptions to minimum clearance space for small branches around insulated low voltage electric lines

The Mount Alexander Shire Council does not contain any exceptions in place or intend to manage any exceptions for clearance space of small branches around insulated low voltage electric lines.

(6) Exception to minimum clearance space for small branches growing under uninsulated low voltage electric lines in low bush fire areas

The Mount Alexander Shire Council does not contain any exceptions in place or intend to manage any exceptions for clearance space of small branches growing under uninsulated low voltage electric lines in low bush fire areas.

(7) Exception to minimise clearance space for structural branches around uninsulated low voltage electric lines in low bushfire areas

The Mount Alexander Shire Council does not contain any exceptions in place or intend to manage any exemptions to the minimum clearance space of structural branches around uninsulated low voltage electric lines in low bush fire areas.

(8) Owner or operator of a transmission line must manage trees around the minimum clearance space

The Mount Alexander Shire Council does not own or operate a transmission line.

(9) Responsible person may cut or remove hazard tree

The Mount Alexander Shire will cut or remove trees, or parts of trees that have been assessed as likely to fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electric line given foreseeable local conditions.

The pruning or removal of a hazard tree will be identified by the Councils Tree Management Officer and work requirements will be logged via Councils asset database (Assetic). The appropriate contractor will be notified as a matter of urgency to carry out works as instructed.

It must be noted that the Mount Alexander Shire Council is not responsible for the inspection, pruning or removal of privately owned trees.

5. DIVISION 2 – MANNER OF CUTTING AND REMOVING TREES

(10) Cutting of tree to comply with Standard

The manner of cutting trees to comply with standard AS 4373 as detailed this management plan.

(11) Cutting or removal of indigenous or significant trees must be minimised

It is the Mount Alexander Shire Council's vision to minimise any tree pruning works within the vicinity of overhead powerlines. The strategies used to achieve this may include:

- undergrounding of electric lines;
- alternative siting of electric lines (relocation);
- installation of Aerial Bundled Cables (ABC);
- appropriate tree species selection; and
- improved tree pruning techniques.

The Mount Alexander Shire Council respects the preservation of native trees and trees of ecological, historical, aesthetic, cultural or environmental significance. Where a tree that is identified as significant is identified as requiring pruning or removal, the tree will be assessed by a suitably qualified arborist.

If a Council employee or contractor identifies a tree as likely to fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electric line or has regrowth that will enter the clearance space before the next scheduled visit the tree may be pruned or removed provided that:

The tree has been assessed by a suitably qualified arborist who must consider:

- the likelihood of contact with electric line;
- tree health, defects, size of failure, target potential;
- whether the tree qualifies for any of the exceptions of the Code;
- local environmental and safety factors, as per current Safe Work Method Statement requirements;
- history and significance of the tree; and
- the presence of habitat or fauna;

- the tree is in accordance with the Mount Alexander Shire Council's Tree Management Guideline;

As the asset owner of the trees covered under this plan, the Mount Alexander Shire Council reserves the right to prune further than one (1) metre from the minimum clearance space or remove hazard trees where they cannot be made an acceptable risk or be retained as useful assets.

(12) Cutting or removing habitat for threatened fauna

The Mount Alexander Shire Council respects the preservation of habitat trees. Where a tree that is habitat to fauna that is listed as threatened in accordance with section 10 of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, or listed in the Threatened Invertebrate Fauna List with a conservation status in Victoria of vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered requires pruning or removal, works will be undertaken outside the breeding season for that species where practicable.

If a tree that is identified as a habitat tree is deemed to be a High or Medium Risk, Council will look for a long-term solution to ensure retention of the tree. This could include an engineering solution to minimise future pruning to the tree.

If it is not practicable to undertake cutting or removal outside of the breeding season, translocation of fauna will be investigated. Although it is not Council's preferred option, in some instances fauna may be required to be relocated. This option will be used following investigation of all other options.

If required, a qualified and experienced ecologist/wildlife specialist will be engaged to ensure safe relocation.

As per regulation in section (h) of the Plan, Council is not currently aware of any threatened fauna which may be affected by the implementation of this plan. Should threatened fauna be identified, the following process shall be followed:

- Location of threatened fauna and associated habitat mapped on Councils asset database and tree maintenance teams notified;
- Tree assessment conducted by the Councils Tree Management Officer considers;
- Tree health, structure and potential risk;
- Considers the history, location and foreseeable local conditions; and aims to identify if the fauna using the tree is a threatened species;
- Once identified, the breeding season for the fauna using the tree will be determined.
- Specialist advice may be sought to identify fauna, determine breeding season if required or to relocate fauna;

- Assessment results and information regarding management of the fauna will be referred to the Coordinator Parks and Gardens for approval prior to commencing works;
- Where practicable, works will be undertaken outside the breeding season; or
- Relocation of the fauna can be considered to make safe an unsafe situation, if it is not practical, undertake works outside of the breeding season.
- As part of the preparation for the Plan, Council will consult with all relevant bodies and standards to ensure all organisational procedures are current.
- Updated information be provided to contractors as required.

(13) Restriction on timing of cutting or removal if notification is required

Where Mount Alexander Shire Council is required or has agreed to give notice under clauses 16(2) and 17(2) prior to tree work, Council will not commence cutting or removal:

- Prior to 14 days from notification; and
- After 60 days from notification.

(14) Restriction on urgent cutting of trees

Mount Alexander Shire Council will conduct urgent cutting if required as a result of encroachment or growth that was not anticipated, a tree falling or becoming damaged, if the Tree Management Officers inspection confirms the imminent likelihood of contact with an electric line or during the fire danger period.

Mount Alexander Shire Council will engage a suitably qualified contractor for urgent pruning of trees under powerlines. No more than one (1) metre minimum clearance space around electric wires will be provided as part of any urgent tree pruning works.

Where urgent pruning is required, Council will not provide notice until after work is completed.

Council will record the details of the work conducted via the Councils asset database (Assetic). The records are maintained to the particular asset until the asset no longer exists and then disposed from Councils asset database. Records will include:

- when and where the cutting was undertaken;
- why the work was required; and
- the date of the last inspection.

If the risk to complete the pruning work is outside the capabilities of Council's approved contractor/s, Council will contact Powercor to arrange the completion of the works using live linesman.

(15) Restriction on urgent removal of trees

Mount Alexander Shire Council will conduct urgent removal if required as a result of encroachment or growth that was not anticipated, a tree falling or becoming damaged, if the Tree Management Officers inspection confirms the imminent likelihood of contact with an electric line or during the fire danger period.

Mount Alexander Shire Council will engage a suitably qualified contractor for urgent removal of trees under powerlines. No more than one (1) metre minimum clearance space around electric wires will be provided as part of any urgent tree removal works.

Where urgent removal is required, Council will not provide notice until after work is completed.

Once the asset no longer exists, it will then be disposed from Councils asset database.

6. DIVISION 4 – ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

Where Council has any concerns about the safety of cutting or removal of a tree for which it has responsibility for, the Responsible Person will consult with Powercor as the distribution company responsible for distributing power within the Shire.

Consultation may include developing an appropriate action plan to mitigate the hazard and/or bring the tree into compliance with the Code. Council will engender cooperation with Powercor to achieve appropriate outcomes with regard to vegetation management and electricity supply.

Mount Alexander Shire Council will report any issues relating to the powerlines that are observed by a Council employee or contractor who has an understanding of the regulation requirements. The responsible person will notify Powercor.

Name:	Powercor
Business Address:	Locked Bag 14090, Melbourne 8001
Telephone No:	13 22 06
24 Hours:	13 24 12
Website:	www.powercor.com.au/contact-us/general-enquiry

Authorised by: Darren Fuzzard

Signed: _____

Title: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Organisation: Mount Alexander Shire Council

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS

Abbreviation	Explanation
Act	Electrical Safety Act 1998
ACM	Alternative compliance mechanism
AS4373	Australian Standard AS4373 'Pruning of amenity trees' as published or amended from time to time
Code	Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance
DB	Distribution Business
Declared Area	An urban area identified in Victorian Government Gazettes as 'declared' whereby a council is deemed responsible for keeping trees on public land clear of electric lines
EWOV	The Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria
ELC	Electrical Line Clearance
ESV	Energy Safe Victoria
HBRA	Hazardous Bushfire Risk Area as determined by a fire control authority
LBRA	Low Bushfire Risk Area as determined by a fire control authority
KPI	Key Performance Indictor
LCA	Line Clearance Assurance
Plan	Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan

RP	A responsible person required to keep vegetation clear of electric lines under sections84, 84C & 84D of the Act
Regulations	Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

For Immediate release
MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 1st October 2024

Street tree pruning around powerlines to start soon

Tree pruning will commence in approximately two weeks to provide clearance around powerlines in Castlemaine, as part of Mount Alexander Shire Council's ongoing street tree maintenance program. Tree pruning will continue for up to two months.

"The works will be undertaken by qualified contractors to achieve clearance around electrical lines to meet electric safety regulations," said Heath Bambrough, Tree Management Officer - Mount Alexander Shire.

The regulations set out the minimum clearances required between powerlines and trees to reduce the risk of fire, blackouts and power surges.

"We'll be aiming to retain the shape and character of the trees and general streetscape as much as possible. Council will not prune trees on private property," said Mr Bambrough

Council has responsibility for maintaining vegetation that may interfere with powerlines on road reserves in the Declared Area of Castlemaine.

The local energy distributor Powercor is responsible for maintaining the trees on road reserves outside the boundary, including areas such as McKenzies Hill. Powercor also has the authority to prune trees on private property in order to maintain clearance lines.

The Country Fire Authority offers an online vegetation clearing tool to determine if you need a permit to clear trees, branches and other vegetation from around your home. If you would like more information visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au.

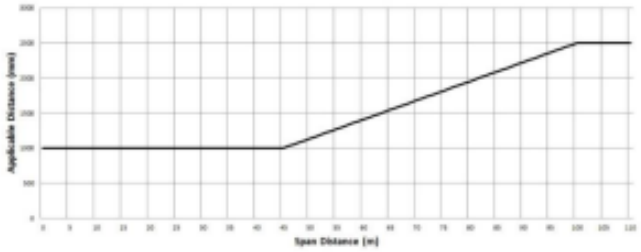
For more information about the pruning program, contact Council on 5471 1700.

Media enquiries:
Anne-Marie Middlemast
Communications Coordinator
Mount Alexander Shire Council
Tel: 5471 1700
Email: a.middlemast@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

APPENDIX 3: SCHEDULE 2 – APPLICABLE DISTANCE FOR MIDDLE 2 THIRDS OF ELECTRICAL LINE SPAN

GRAPH 2—UNINSULATED LOW VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINE IN LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

Clauses 3 and 25



Graph 2 Formula

The formula by which the applicable distance for the middle 2 thirds of an electric line span to which clause 25 applies is calculated as follows:

For $0 < SD \leq 45$, AD = 1000 mm

For $45 < SD \leq 100$, $AD = 1000 + ((SD - 45) \times (1500 \div 55))$

For $100 < SD$, AD = 2500 mm

Where:

SD = Span Distance

AD = Applicable Distance

Notes to Graph 2

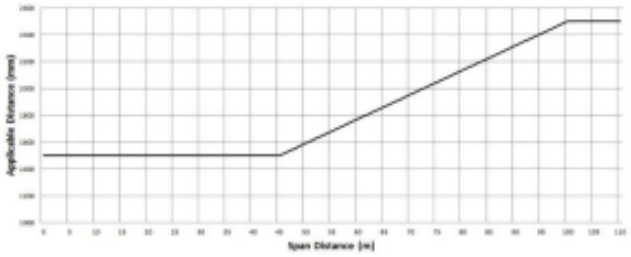
(1) The applicable distance includes allowances for sag and sway of the conductor for a span up to and including 100 metres in length.

(2) For a span longer than 100 metres, the applicable distance must be extended by an additional distance to allow for sag and sway of the conductor. This is done by adding that distance to the applicable distance (see clause 25(2)(b)).

(3) A distribution company, or an owner or operator of a railway supply network or a tramway supply network, must assist a Council, if requested, by determining the additional distance that allows for sag and sway of the conductor (see clause 21(2)).

GRAPH 3—UNINSULATED HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINE (OTHER THAN A 66 000 VOLT ELECTRIC LINE) IN LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

Clauses 3 and 26



Graph 3 Formula

The formula by which the applicable distance for the middle 2 thirds of an electric line span to which clause 26 applies is calculated as follows:

For $0 < SD \leq 45$, AD = 1500 mm

For $45 < SD \leq 100$, $AD = 1500 + ((SD - 45) \times (1000 \div 55))$

For $100 < SD$, AD = 2500 mm

Where:

SD = Span Distance

AD = Applicable Distance

Notes to Graph 3

(1) The applicable distance includes allowances for sag and sway of the conductor for a span up to and including 100 metres in length.

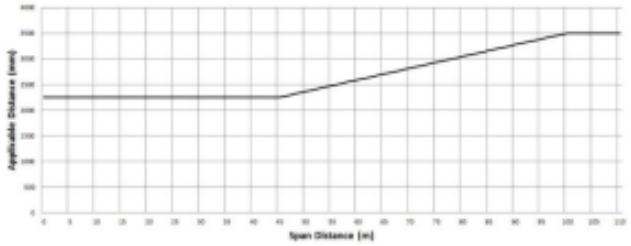
(2) For a span longer than 100 metres, the applicable distance must be extended by an additional distance to allow for sag and sway of the conductor. This is done by adding that distance to the applicable distance (see clause 26(2)(b)).

(3) A distribution company, or an owner or operator of a railway supply network or a tramway supply network, must assist a Council, if requested, by determining the additional distance (see clause 21(2)).

(4) The minimum clearance space for an electric line span to which this Graph and clause 26 apply is partially illustrated in Figures 1 and 3.

GRAPH 4—UNINSULATED 66 000 VOLT ELECTRIC LINE IN LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

Clauses 3 and 27



Graph 4 Formula

The formula by which the applicable distance for the middle 2 thirds of an electric line span to which clause 27 applies is calculated as follows:

For $0 < SD \leq 45$, $AD = 2250$ mm

For $45 < SD \leq 100$, $AD = 2250 + ((SD - 45) \times (1250 \div 55))$

For $100 < SD$, $AD = 3500$ mm

Where:

SD = Span Distance

AD = Applicable Distance

Notes to Graph 4

(1) The applicable distance includes allowances for sag and sway of the conductor for a span up to and including 100 metres in length.

(2) For a span longer than 100 metres, the applicable distance must be extended by an additional distance to allow for sag and sway of the conductor. This is done by adding that distance to the applicable distance (see clause 27(2)(a)(ii)).

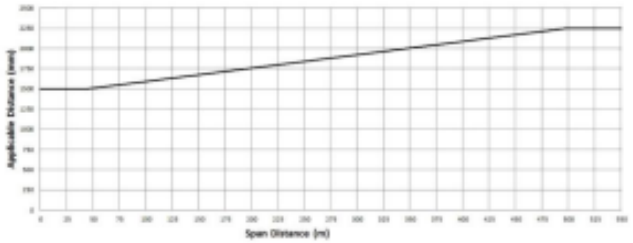
(3) A distribution company, or an owner or operator of a railway supply network or a tramway supply network, must assist a Council, if requested, by determining the additional distance (see clause 21(2)).

(4) The minimum clearance space for an electric line span to which this Graph and clause 27 apply is partially illustrated in Figures 1 and 5.

line span to which clause 26 applies is 1500 millimetres.

GRAPH 5—UNINSULATED LOW VOLTAGE AND HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINE (OTHER THAN A 66 000 VOLT ELECTRIC LINE) IN HAZARDOUS BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

Clauses 3 and 28



Graph 5 Formula

The formula by which the applicable distance for the middle 2 thirds of an electric line span to which clause 28 applies is calculated as follows:

For $0 < SD \leq 45$, AD = 1500 mm

For $45 < SD \leq 500$, AD = 1500 +((SD - 45) × (500 ÷ 303))

For $500 < SD$, AD = 2250 mm

Where:

SD = Span Distance

AD = Applicable Distance

Notes to Graph 5

(1) The applicable distance must be extended by an additional distance to allow for sag and sway of the conductor. This is done by adding that distance to the applicable distance (see clause 28(2)(a)).

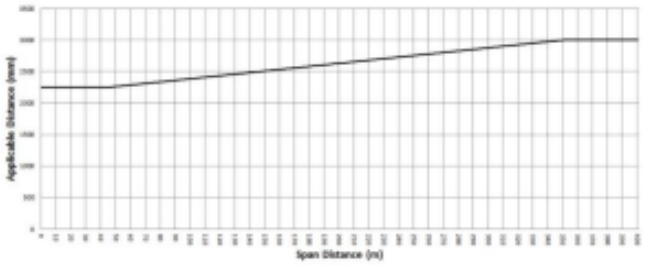
(2) A distribution company, or an owner or operator of a railway supply network or a tramway supply network, must assist a Council, if requested, by determining the additional distance (see clause 21(2)).

(3) The minimum clearance space for an electric line span to which this Graph and clause 28 apply is partially illustrated in Figures 1 and 5.

(4) The applicable distance for the first and last sixths of an electric line span to which clause 28 applies is 1500 millimetres.

GRAPH 6—UNINSULATED 66 000 VOLT ELECTRIC LINE IN HAZARDOUS BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

Clauses 3 and 29



Graph 6 Formula

The formula by which the applicable distance for the middle 2 thirds of an electric line span to which clause 29 applies is calculated as follows:

For $0 < SD \leq 45$, AD = 2250 mm

For $45 < SD \leq 350$, $AD = 2250 + ((SD - 45) \times (750 \div 305))$

For $350 < SD$, AD = 3000 mm

Where:

SD = Span Distance

AD = Applicable Distance

Notes to Graph 6

(1) The applicable distance must be extended by an additional distance to allow for sag and sway of the conductor. This is done by adding that distance to the applicable distance (see clause 29(2)(a)).

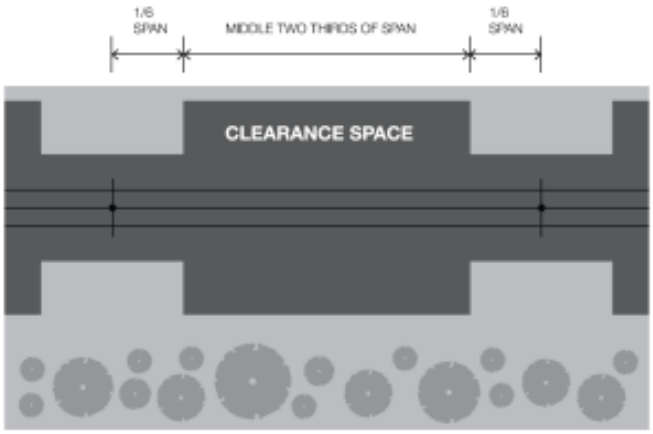
(2) A distribution company, or an owner or operator of a railway supply network or a tramway supply network, must assist a Council, if requested, by determining the additional distance (see clause 21(2)).

(3) The minimum clearance space for an electric line span to which this Graph and clause 29 apply is partially illustrated in Figures 1 and 5.

(4) The applicable distance for the first and last sixths of an electric line span to which clause 29 applies is 2250 millimetres.

FIGURE 1—PLAN VIEW OF ELECTRIC LINES IN ALL AREAS

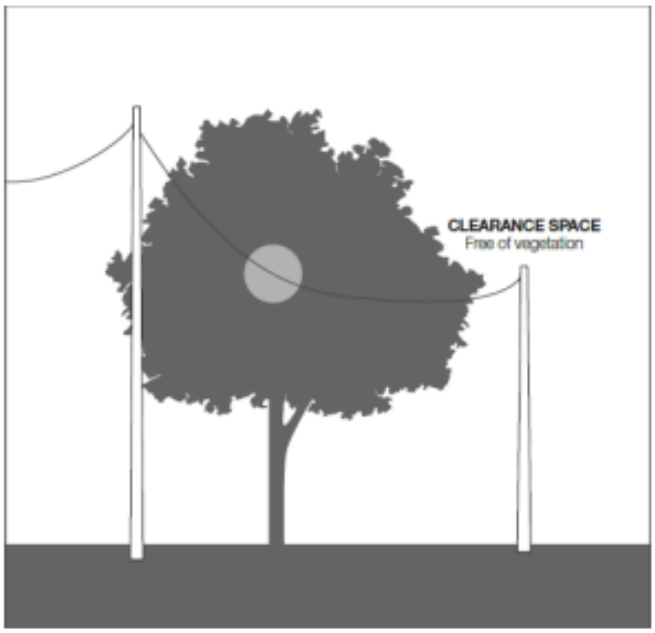
Clauses 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29,
Graphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 2—INSULATED ELECTRIC LINES IN ALL AREAS

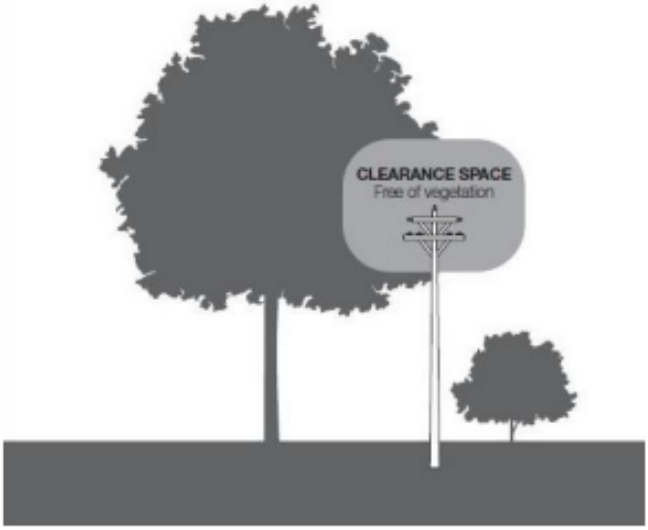
Clause 24, Graph 1



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 3—INSULATED ELECTRIC LINES IN ALL AREAS AND UNINSULATED HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINES (OTHER THAN 66 000 VOLT ELECTRIC LINES) IN LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREAS

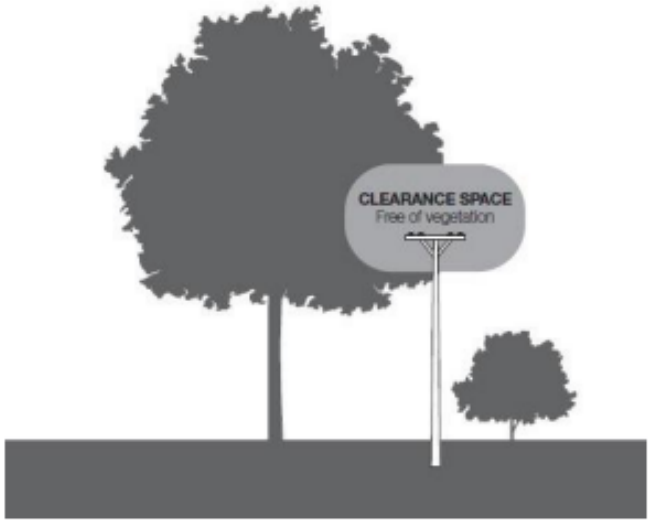
Clauses 24 and 26, Graphs 1 and 3



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 4—UNINSULATED LOW VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINE IN A LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

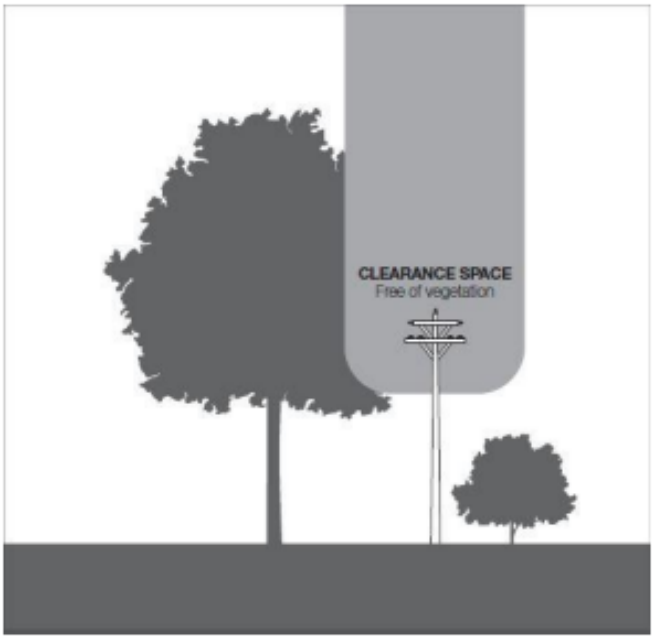
Clause 25, Graph 2



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 5—UNINSULATED 66 000 VOLT ELECTRIC LINE IN A LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA AND UNINSULATED ELECTRIC LINE IN A HAZARDOUS BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

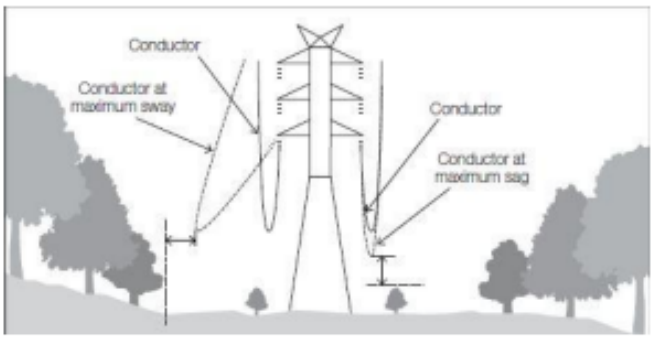
Clauses 27, 28 and 29, Graphs 4, 5 and 6



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 6—END VIEW OF THE TRANSMISSION LINE

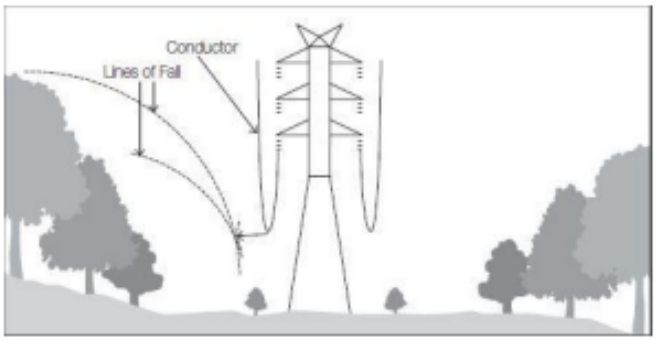
Clause 30



NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 7—TREES ADJACENT TO THE TRANSMISSION LINE

Clauses 8 and 30



NOT TO SCALE