

Benalla Rural City Council Electric Line Clearance Management Plan

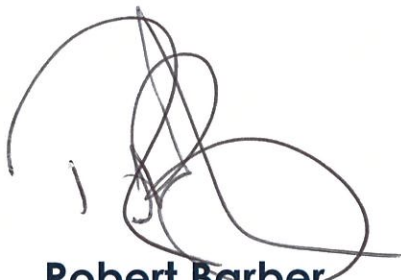
March 2025

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Authorised on 30 April 2025.



Robert Barber
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Note. Regulation 9(2) - Before 31 March in each year, a responsible person noted as (c) must ensure that a management plan relating to compliance with the Code for the next financial year is prepared; and the process to review the currency of all maps, standards, regulations and lists associated with the plan is undertaken; and 10(6), published on the responsible person’s internet site by 1 July.

Version Control	
Version one	Dean Steegstra – March 2025

Electricity Safety Regulations 2020 (Electric Line Clearance)

Preparation of a management plan

The following sections are as per Regulation 9 (4) of the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020*.

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

Name: Benalla Rural City Council
Address: 1 Bridge Street East, Benalla VIC 3672
Telephone No: 5760 2600
Chief Executive Officer: Peter Keane

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

Name: Adrian Gasperoni
Position: Manager Assets and Infrastructure
Address: 1 Bridge Street East, Benalla VIC 3672
Telephone No: 5760 2695
Email: adrian.gasperoni@benalla.vic.gov.au

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

Name: Dean Steegstra
Position: Coordinator Open Spaces
Address: 1 Bridge Street East, Benalla VIC 3672
Telephone No: 5760 2673
Email: dean.steegstra@benalla.vic.gov.au

(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: Dean Steegstra
Emergency No: 0419 786 907
Name: Adrian Gasperoni
Emergency No: 0409 768 085

e) The objectives of the management plan

To comply with the requirements of AS 4373 and the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020*:

- The establishment of this management plan which can efficiently and effectively deliver the services to meet the objectives of this plan.
- Benalla Rural City Council Chief Executive Officer being responsible for the preparation and review of standards, regulations, associated listings and submission of the Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan prior to 31 March in each year ensuring the plan objectives are being achieved.
- Council's commitment in funding ensures that auditing and pruning works are conducted annually to achieve the requirements set out in the *Electricity Safety Regulations 2020*.

To specify the processes and procedures required to ensure the plan objectives are being achieved through implemented key performance indicators and monitored to ensure objectives are being met.

- In recognition of Council's vision, "To provide a sustainable, thriving and cohesive community where lifestyle, culture, health and wellbeing are supported by strong leadership and community partnership", the relevant policies and procedures to best deliver the plans objectives have been adopted.
- Council is committed in prescribing standards and practices that are adopted and observed in tree cutting or removal in the vicinity of electric lines and the keeping of the whole or any part of a tree clear of electric lines annually; and prescribe management procedures to minimise danger of electric lines causing fire or electrocution.
- Due to the specialised services required to maintain electrical line clearance, Council tender such services out. Contract documentation ensures that all contracted staff are trained and experienced in the task required and that the objectives are being met.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI) have been inserted into contract documentation which ensures compliancy to the regulations. These contractual KPI are regularly audited, monitored and recorded for the life of the contract.
- Measurable key indicators that identify non-conformance or compliance to the code and AS4373 include; ensuring electrical safety - minimize incidents - zero incidents, minimise fire starts - zero fire starts, reliability of supply - zero power outages, contractual commencement and completion dates on schedule, reduced customer requests, reduction in lost time from request, reduction in non-compliant pruning cuts or damage to branch collars or branch bark ridge. Council will also inspect the defined HBRA area regularly to ensure compliance prior to, and for the duration of the declared fire danger period to ensure compliancy with the code.
- If any non-conformance is identified by the Supervisor, resident or a relevant electrical supply company or any other notifications to Council of any breaches to compliance, the Supervisor shall act with priority and take the necessary action to rectify the non-conformance. The non-conformities shall be inspected, noted and a record of the inspection shall be maintained in the Council offices. Re-occurring non-conformities shall be identified and works planned to prevent further issues from arising.

To ensure electrical safety, minimize fire starts and ensure reliability of supply.

- The Benalla Local Safety Committee is a multi-agency group that meets every second month to report, analyse and act on issues of local safety concerns. This Committee has been formed, through a strong partnership with the Benalla Police, local business and various community organisations. The Committee provides a forum for residents and community organisations to refer safety issues for consideration and action.
- Council has implemented long term strategies to minimise the long-term risk of electric lines starting fires and electrocution by identifying inappropriate vegetation to be removed and replaced with appropriate species.
- Annual tree planting programs aimed at planting varieties which will not enter power line clearance limits.
- Council will also inspect the defined HBRA area regularly to ensure compliance prior to, and for the duration of the declared fire danger period to ensure compliancy with the code.
- To protect areas of important vegetation on the basis of those areas containing botanically, historically or culturally important vegetation of aesthetic or ecological significance, and/or habitat of rare or endangered species:

Council has the following plans and policies to protect important vegetation.

- *Tree Asset and Maintenance Management Plan 2019-2021*
- *Road Management Plan 2021-2025.*
- *Roadside Vegetation Management Plan 2017-2019.*
- Council is responsible for enforcing a wide range of Local Laws and legislation which includes State Acts and Regulations.
- Council planning overlay govern any permits required as well as GIS heritage overlay of the defined area of Benalla.
- *Environment Strategy 2011-2020.*

Management of Vegetation to maximise the amenity value of the Shire's trees:

Council has developed various strategies and plans to help protect our environment and safeguard its ability to support our community into the future.

- *Tree Asset and Maintenance Management Plan 2019-2021.*
- *Road Management Plan 2021-2025.*
- *Roadside Vegetation Management Plan 2017-2019.*

Provision of a safe working place for employees and contractors:

- Council has in place policy and procedures that complies with all applicable legislation relating to health and safety.
- The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2017* is the principal legislation as well other Acts, Regulations, Codes of Practice and Australian Standards that all workers, volunteers and contractors are provided to ensure that adequate instruction, resources, training and supervision is put in place.

Ensure community satisfaction with the manner in which the necessary works are carried out:

- Council advertises in the local newspaper the dates that electrical line clearance works will commence.
- The Supervisor will have regular engagement with residents during pruning and the Customer queries or complaints will be logged in Councils Customer Relations Management System (CRMS).
- A community satisfaction survey is conducted every three years addressing nature strips and trees and is not electric line clearance specific.

To ensure objectives measured, achieved and recorded:

- Before 31 March in each year, Council will ensure that a management plan for the next financial year is prepared and adopted; and published on Councils internet site; and available for inspection at the Customer Service Centre during normal business hours.
- The Coordinator Open Space will submit before the 31 March every year, usually after written correspondence is received from Energy Safe Victoria.

(f) The land to which the management plan applies (as indicated on a map)

Appendix A The declared area of the City of Benalla consistent with maps held at Energy Safe Victoria. Area outside this map is declared as 'High Bushfire Risk Area'.

Appendix B Low voltage power lines.

Appendix C High voltage power lines requiring 'Auto Reclose'.

Appendix D Hazardous Bushfire Risk Areas 'HBRA'.

Appendix E Notification letter.

Appendix F ELCMP – Objectives 7 KPI's.

Appendix G ELCMP - Weekly Audit Sheet.

Appendix H Graphs Electric Line Clearance.

Appendix I Audit report.

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

Before 31 March in each year, a responsible person must ensure that the Hazardous Bushfire Risk Areas 'HBRA' boundary information is current in the management plan by consulting with CFA Spatial Data Officer David Griffin T. 03 9262 8336 email.

fire-hzd-ratings@cfa.vic.gov.au

- (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 – (i) indigenous to Victoria; or (ii) listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance; or (iii) a tree of cultural or environmental significance**

To ensure electrical line clearance staff are made aware of any tree is Indigenous, trees of cultural or environmental significance or listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance, Council has stipulated in the electric line clearance contract specifications, that Benalla township does have such areas and staff are reminded by the Supervisor of these areas when works are inspected at regular intervals.

In addition, Council has a regular program of inspection of trees in areas that it manages. This allows monitoring of the condition of existing listed trees and trees that could potentially be listed.

Council also stipulated in contract specification that no tree branch greater than 150 mm shall be cut with-out the prior approval of Supervisor and that works under the contract shall be carried out in strict accordance with the relevant standards and codes. All staff employed have the necessary qualifications and training to ensure their knowledge and training is at a level that they can correctly identify such a tree.

In order to avoid and minimise the impact of Electric Line Clearance work on trees of the above type, Council maintains significant tree registers and overlays that identifies such trees. The trees affected by line clearance are detailed below.

- **Avenues of Honour Register**

There is one listed avenue in urban Benalla which is located in Barkly Street Benalla. These trees are affected by wire clearance and are managed to comply with the requirements of AS4373 and the Electrical Safety Regulations 2020. There are other listed avenues in the rural areas of Benalla of which are not covered by this Management Plan.

- **Heritage Overlay in its Planning Scheme**

The current listings are in urban Benalla or private land. These trees are affected by wire clearance and are managed to comply with the requirements of AS4373 and the Electrical Safety Regulations 2020.

- **Listing of trees requiring biannual pruning cycles to achieve compliance**

The current listing of large trees that clearance cannot be maintained for a period of 12 months or longer. These trees are programmed for pruning every six months to achieve compliance.

- **Estimated numbers from the 2012 tree audit identified that a total of 1019 trees were affected by line clearance, divided between 382 Indigenous and 637 Exotic.**

Table of trees with significance

Significance	Street name	Zoning Urban	Voltage	Tree Genus
<i>Avenue of Honour</i>	Barkly Street	Benalla Urban	LV	Grevillea robusta
<i>Heritage overlay</i>			HV LV	
	Mitchell Street	Benalla Urban	LV	Ulmus sp
	Nunn street		HV LV	Ulmus sp
	Carrier Street		HV	Ulmus sp
	Benalla Street		HV LV	Various
	Church Street		HV LV	Ulmus sp
	Walker Street		LV	Various
	Nixon Street		LV	Ulmus
	Arundel Street		HV LV	Ulmus
	Wedge Street		LV	Ulmus
<i>Trees requiring biannual pruning</i>	Nil	Benalla Urban	LV	
<i>Indigenous</i> <i>Total 382 trees</i>	All	Benalla Urban	HV LV Service	Acacia, Callistemon, Eucalyptus, Grevillea, Lagunaria, Lophostemon, Melaleuca,

(i) The means which the responsible person is required to use to identify a tree of a kind specified in paragraph (h)(i), (ii) or (iii)

The responsible person must have a minimum level III in Horticulture (Arboriculture) and can determine or identify:

Tree of cultural or environmental significance means that a tree that is-

- (a) included in the Heritage Register established under Division 1 of Part 3 *Heritage Act 2017*; or
- (b) included in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register established under section 144 or the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*; or
- (c) flora that is – 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.

Regarding trees that are habitat of **rare or threatened species**, such trees are within waterway reserves, urban bushland without wires requiring line clearance or within private land or managed public open space.

Council Environmental Sustainability Coordinator is made aware of any additional areas of habitat by Councils Planning Officer or Land Management agencies. The Coordinators role would be to assist the Supervisor in defining areas, recording the trees in relevant registers, assessing the potential need for pruning versus conservation values and assisting Council in implementing measures to ensure protection of any existing or newly listed trees in this category.

The Supervisor will also check the following web-link to assist in identifying a tree specified paragraph (h)(i), (ii) or (iii):

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/services/heritage-register-vic/>

<http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/environment-and-wildlife/biodiversity/biodiversity-interactive-map>

<http://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/threatened-list>

<https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/cultural-heritage-management-plans>

Council also maintains the tree asset management database. The database records tree Genus, size, location, significance and maps each tree in GIS overlay. The GIS overlays include Heritage, Environmental, Planning and Public Land Management. Due to GIS licensing requirements overlays are not accessible to the public and are not annual updated due to staff capacity.

The Supervisor in his role of Coordinator Open Space will review and update the database if required annually during the review of the electric line clearance management plan.

- (j) The management procedures that the responsible person is required to adopt to ensure compliance with the Code, which must – (i) include details of the methods to be adopted for managing trees and maintaining a minimum clearance space as required by the Code; and (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 and sway; and
 - (b) may provide for different additional distances to be determined for different parts of an electric line span.

Council's method for managing trees and maintaining a minimum clearance space include Tree pruning and Tree planting.

Tree pruning

Council has awarded a three-year contract to, (not yet awarded at time of print) [with provision for renewal for a further two-year period] for the works of providing tree clearance in accordance with the code. The specified dates or timing of works in this contract are noted under (b).

Inspection and Audit report

First year of contract, audit completion dates will be negotiated. Second year audit will be completed by 30 September of that year.

Power line clearance pruning works

First year of contract, pruning works will be undertaken in one continuous period of work until completion.

Second, third year pruning works will be undertaken in one continuous period of work and be completed by 28 February of that year.

The Supervisor and Contracting staff will meet annually before the commencement of the contract and review the ELC management plan, training matrix and plant requirements.

The Contractor shall be the responsible person for the visual inspection on all individual trees annually that may impact any overhead power line or service wire in the declared area and to produce a fully documented report. The contractor will include in the Audit report details of the number of trees requiring pruning, location, degree of voltage, tree type and span distance.

The inspection will identify which trees are in breach of the Code; including additional trees which may also breach the Code before the next programmed cutting (normally one year). This inspection should also include the identification of any hazards outside the clearance and regrowth space that may require correction.

The Contractor shall contact the Distribution Company - Ausnet Services to obtain the sag and sway clearances required if any span is greater than 100m in LBRA and greater than 45m in HBRA. If any span is identified, it is recorded in the Audit report with a note of the required clearance distance to be pruned.

Council will contact Ausnet Services annually to meet and discuss any issues or seek clarification that may present.

The report is then submitted to the Supervisor to verify the accuracy of recorded data and to authorise the commencement of pruning works.

Any inaccuracies in the Contractors audit report shall be noted, recorded and sent to the Contractor for amendment before pruning works commence. All correspondence shall be maintained in the Council offices.

The Contractor shall be responsible for maintaining clearances between Ausnet Services overhead distribution (22kV and LV) and sub-transmission (66 kV) lines and vegetation. This may involve; pruning, trimming, hogging of small branches, removal/disposal of debris and cleaning up of sites on completion of work.

The Supervisor shall visually inspect all trees in the Benalla declared area, referenced in the audit report before and after remedial work has taken place and ensure the contractor is pruning to the minimum clearances required between trees and powerlines (excluding an allowance for regrowth) are set out in Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, and Australian Standard AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees.

The Supervisor shall also inspect the defined HBRA area to ensure compliance prior to, and for the duration of the declared fire danger period. If Council is notified by a Residents or the Distribution Company, of any breaches to compliance in the fire danger period, the Supervisor shall act with priority and take the necessary action to rectify the non-conformance.

The Supervisor will convey to the Contractor, the site of any pruning's notified by the Residents or the Distribution Company as being the result of emergency clearing. The work of removing the pruning's will be programmed by the contractor. The Residents or the Distribution Company will be notified of our intention and or completion.

LBRA trees that have been identified as being non-compliant and are outside of the Electric Line Clearance program are evaluated by the Supervisor, as a matter of priority, to determine the urgency of pruning works being either reactive or urgent and will undertake emergency cutting and pruning activities in the following situations:

- Where a tree is identified as encroaching the clearance space due to unanticipated growth.
- As a result of a tree falling or becoming damaged so that it requires cutting or removal to maintain the required clearance space.
- Where a tree has been assessed by a suitably qualified arborist and confirmed to have an imminent likelihood of contacting the electric lines having regard to foreseeable local conditions.

The Council will undertake its urgent works in accordance with the regulations and not remove or cut any more than one meter from the minimum clearance space around the electric line.

The non-conformities are noted and a record of the inspection and works shall be maintained in the Council offices. Re-occurring non-conformities shall be identified and works planned to prevent further issues from arising.

The Supervisor shall be responsible for the overall management to ensure compliancy to Regulations, Codes, Australian Standards and safety of activities on site works and shall reassign all works required until compliancy is achieved.

In achieving this, the Contractor and Benalla Rural City Council shall both be responsible person to ensure compliance with the Code.

Tree planting

Any tree programmed for planting in the proximity of electric line, will be replanted with a preferred species.

The tree planting programs will be aimed at planting varieties which will not enter powerline clearance limits.

Appropriate species planted in the proximity to power lines include; Callistemon sp. 'Kings Special', Geijera parviflora, Lagerstromia indica, Pyrus faurini 'Korean Sun', Prunus cerasifera and Zelkova 'Wireless'.

Required Clearances between Trees and Powerlines

The minimum clearances required between trees and powerlines (excluding an allowance for regrowth) are set out in *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020* and *Australian Standard AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees*.

The need to apply additional allowance for sag and sway to the clearance space detailed in the graphs in schedule 2 of the code when calculating the minimum clearance space in accordance with Division 1 of part 3 of the Code is also required. Note that these are minimum safe clearances only and on top of these clearances an additional allowance for regrowth until the next programmed cutting (normally one year) is required. Refer to **Appendix F**.

All staff employed by Council has a minimum Cert 11 in ESI and are trained in scoping or estimating distances of spans, span lengths and estimated known tree growth dependant of tree species.

Each cable distance and tree location in that span will be visually assessed by the approved assessor and trees that are non-compliant recorded.

The assessor will be aiming at recording all trees requiring pruning, to ensure that no trees or parts of trees in those areas could be a hazard to the safety of the electric lines under the range of weather conditions that can prevail in that area, and the variation of clearance distance will not breach the clearance zone from cable sag and sway before the next programmed pruning cycle.

All pruning should aim for optimum distance to allow for less annual pruning cycles, but still achieve the requirements of the AS4373, compliance with the regulations and be aesthetically pleasing.

Unless otherwise specified by the Supervisor, any work undertaken shall be to a minimum of these clearances plus an allowance for one to two years regrowth.

Council declared areas have very short span distances between 40-60 metres and the utilisation of sag and sway distance is marginal. Consultation to determine additional span distance can be received by phoning Spencer Few from Ausnet Services on M: 0439 563 262.

If any non-conformance is identified due to the increased minimum clearance distance due to sag and sway the Supervisor shall act with priority and take the necessary action to rectify the non-conformance and recorded against an individual span for a minimum of five years.

Clearing Standards

The Contractor shall conduct tree-pruning activities in accordance with AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees and the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020. Notwithstanding in some cases it may not be practicable to leave a tree in an aesthetically pleasing form and in such cases, removal may be sought. In all other situations cutting shall be conducted using appropriate tree pruning techniques.

All works are subject to inspections by the Supervisor and unsatisfactory workmanship may result in the Contractor being ordered to retreat and make good any unsatisfactory work at the contractor's sole expense.

(k) The procedures to be adopted if it is not practicable to comply with the requirements of AS4373 while cutting a tree in accordance with the Code

Benalla Rural City Council strives for its internal staff and contractors to meet the pruning standard set out in AS 4373 as far as reasonably practicable while completing cutting activities to clear vegetation from electrical assets.

Reasonably practicably in relation to AS4373 means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring continued tree health and future tree safety, taking into account:

- (a) The likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring - will the action create a defect, hazard, loss of tree health or aesthetic value in the present or future.
- (b) The degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk and the possible impact on the tree or future safety of the public.
- (c) What the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know about:
 - (i) The hazard or the risk – must have adequate knowledge to determine the hazard risks.
 - (ii) Ways of eliminating or minimising the risk – must have adequate knowledge in relation to alternative measures.
- (d) The availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk – are other resources or techniques available to complete works to the standard.
- (e) After assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk – does the cost required to complete works to the standard outweigh the value of the tree.

If it is not practicable or reasonable to prune a tree so that it is compliant with AS4373 (2007) Benalla Rural City Council will undertake one of the following options:

- Where the tree cannot be pruned to Code but meets the conditions for exemptions for minimal clearance space under Schedule 1, Part 2, Division 1 Clause 4,5 or 6 of the Regulations the tree will be placed on the annual inspections list for exemption trees.
- Commence the process for an alternative compliance mechanism where the tree cannot be pruned to Code but meets the conditions under Schedule 1, Division 2, clause 31 of the Regulations.
- Remove the tree if it is not suitable for retention.

To ensure compliance to AS4373, the Supervisor will, before contract commencement of any year, check the contractor's submitted training matrix to ensure all staff hold a minimum Certificate III in Horticulture (Arboriculture).

The Supervisor will conduct onsite inductions before commencement, ensuring all staff have relevant licenses, training requirements appropriate to the nominated staff conducting each ELC role, and all vehicles and plant are tested and tagged and are appropriate for the works.

The Supervisor will conduct regular onsite inspections to assess pruning cuts and that each defect has been completed. Regular inspections ensure the contractor is maintaining the pruning standard AS 4373 and the tree clearance is to code. Daily verbal communication with pruning staff and emails verifying each discussion ensure that the personnel are informed of their performance outcomes. Any unsatisfactory workmanship may result in the Contractor being ordered to retreat and make good any unsatisfactory work at the Contractor's sole expense.

Ongoing systemic poor pruning techniques will result in the Council requesting the offending staff/contractors undergo further training to ensure AS4373 can be met when its reasonably practical to do so. If poor cutting continues contractor /staff member will be removed from further works.

Detailed information about Australian Standards, drafts, amendments and new projects can be found by visiting www.standards.org.au or SAI Global

(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

At this stage the Benalla Rural City Council declared area does not have any trees that would require an Application for approval of alternative compliance mechanism in respect of a span of an electrical line or class of spans. If Council were to lodge an application, we would provide additional documentation as stated in Division 2 (3).

**(m) The details of each approval for an alternative compliance mechanism that –
(i) the responsible person holds; and (ii) is in affect**

As stated Council does not have any such approval requests.

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

The Supervisor / Coordinator Open Space– Development shall be responsible for the preparation of the Electric Line Clearance Management Plan prior to the 31 March each year and monitoring the performance of the plan.

The measures used to assess the performance of the responsible performance shall be based on:

- Completion of pruning programs according to schedule.
- Ongoing auditing of proactive pruning programs for compliance.
- Ongoing contractual monthly meetings.
- Preparation of ELCMP before 31 March.
- Monitoring of the Audit reports submitted by contractors against historical data from previous pruning contracts – Accurate estimates of vegetation distance to clearance zones.
- Assess performance indicators and historic data – amount of trees to be pruned.
- Monitoring and reviewing of reduced or increased pruning cycles.
- Monitoring the number of non-compliant trees recorded by Select Solution against historical data from previous pruning contracts.
- The number of customer complaints during the contracted period.
- The number of outages.
- The number of incidents or accidents.
- The appropriate treatment of significant, heritage and habitat trees.
- Compliance to the Code and AS4373.
- Vegetation in clearance space.
- Compliancy in commencement and completion dates.
- The frequency of pruning required and the effectiveness of recommendations for alternative approaches.

The Supervisor shall be the responsible person who will instigate any measures required to rectify deficiencies, non- compliance and if necessary, review procedures to avoid future problems:

The Supervisor shall when monitoring or measuring compliance, observe, examine, document and record outcomes in the current electrical clearance contract documentation, or electronically in Content Manager.

To ensure compliance and to measure continual improvement, the following actions will be undertaken and documented by the Supervisor:

- Annual review of management plan prior to 31 March.
- Updating of the plan on Council website by 1 July of every year.

- 100 per cent compliant vegetation clearance of all trees in Audit – Increase as required the daily site visits by Supervisor to ensure the desired outcome is achieved. If it is found a tree contains habitat hollows any work required works will be scheduled outside the season where practicable.
- 90 per cent compliant pruning techniques - The number of daily site visit required by Supervisor to ensure the desired outcome is achieved. The Supervisor will engage a suitably qualified contractor for removal or pruning urgent trees with branches within the clearance space for electric lines.
- Diminish urgent pruning works or removals.
- Plan tree removals and replacement with appropriate trees.
- Establish good working relationship with service provider to ensure successful completion of identified tender requirements.
- Monitor and record the number of contractual meetings held to ensure compliancy.
- Instigate Engineering options such as Sleeving of power lines, Aerial bundling of cables.
- Investigate the undergrounding of cables and Powerlines re-routed.
- Increased data input into database.
- Data sharing with power company.

(o) Details of the audit processes that must be used to determine the responsible person's compliance with the Code

The Power line clearance, property service wire clearance and auditing service are tendered out, usually every two to four years. The tender document specifies commencement and completion dates, and that the Contractor will be in breach of contract if those target dates are not met. The Supervisor of this tender contract shall monitor or measure compliance, observe, examine, document and record outcomes in the current electrical clearance contract documentation, or electronically in HPE.

During the tender process Contractor submit documentation to assess their ability to do the work. Upon award of the tender more information is required including the submission of the relevant insurances, licenses, work procedures and staff training matrix. A prestart contractual meeting is held annually to identify and verify the qualifications requested of the Electrical line clearance (ELC) staff before work commences.

The Contractor is required to provide evidence of the Certificate II ESI training and the relevant training requirements appropriate to the nominated staff conducting each ELC role.

The Contractor performing the tree audit must be 'A Suitably qualified arborist' who must hold the qualification of National Certificate Level 3 in Arboriculture including "Perform a ground-based tree defect evaluation" unit of competency, or as equivalent qualification including the "Identify Trees" module; and at least three years of field experience in assessing trees.

The Supervisor must ensure the training matrix supplied by the Contractor outlines the elective units against employees and work roles and that the training is conducted by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

The ELC staff are requested to complete an online OHS induction and onsite induction where evidence of their qualifications, experience, ELC plant and equipment are sighted, duplicated, and stored in the appropriate contract file. The onsite induction also includes an overview of Council policies and procedures including dispute resolution processes. If any ELC staff are not qualified or cannot produce evidence of their qualification, they are immediately stood down until further notice.

Regular internal audits have been implemented into the electrical line clearance tender to ensure the Contractor is meeting their obligations to the contract and that all requirements of the Electric Line Clearance Management Plan are being achieved and line clearance maintained.

Council will monitor and measure the external audits completed by the Contractor who is responsible for clearance pruning annually or biannual if required. The completed audit report will state the number of trees, location, degree of voltage and services that need to be pruned to maintain line clearance.

After the report submission, the Supervisor will visually inspect the trees and determine the clearance space and the regrowth space based on:

- known rates of regrowth for the tree variety
- the requirements of the Electricity Safety (electric line Clearance) Regulations 2020
- the significance of the trees
- the aesthetic values standards of the area.
- Reference to Electrical Safety (Electric line clearance regulations 2020) Part 3- Minimum clearance spaces, page 38 Division 1 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29.

The Supervisor will verify that the report is true and accurate and all non-compliant trees have been identified and recorded in the audit report.

If a non-compliant tree is found it is re-submitted in the original audit report and programmed for works.

The Supervisor will also visually inspect the daily work sheets, pruning cuts and techniques, distances pruned from power lines, traffic management, staff licenses, certificates and that vehicles and plant are tested and tagged to ensure compliance to the code. Refer to **Appendix G**.

The method employed by the Supervisor regarding feedback to the Contractor of their performance outcomes is verbally on site followed by an email. Emails are filed in the relevant contract management file.

Council will monitor or measure any trees that are found to be non-compliant, either by the Supervisor or customer request or notification from the power company leading up to or after the annual programmed prune. The non-compliant tree will be regarded as an urgent

prune to which works will be undertaken as soon as possible by a qualified person. If there is an increase or high number of non-compliant trees measured, the Supervisor will investigate the contributing cause and rectify.

The Council will observe and examine past non-compliance and put in place a system to reduce this number. The system may incorporate biannual pruning, tree removals or performance manage contractor.

Council will retain all associated records or reference to the power line clearance and contract documentation for a period of no less than five years. All advertising and out correspondence is also recorded in Content Manager.

External audits have been conducted by Energy Safe Victoria to ensure compliance to the Code of Practice by visually inspecting BRC records of notification and consultations.

The Council has in place a Consultation and Community Strategy. This strategy provides guidance to the Council and community in the implementation of such processes required for consultation. The supervisor's manager will govern this strategy and receive feedback from Council representatives if notification or consultation is lacking.

Additional information – as per Schedule 1 Part 2 clearance responsibilities section (3)

(p) The qualifications and experience that the responsible person must require of the persons who are to carry out tree inspection, cutting or removal of trees in accordance with the Code and the Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019

The responsible person engaged by the Council, to inspect trees prior to work, will be a "Suitably Qualified Arborist" with a minimum Certificate III in Horticulture and Arboriculture, including the "Assess Tree module" and at least three years field experience in assessing trees.

Cert 3 Arboriculture	
Cert II in ESI	UET20321
Access vegetation in an electricity supply industry environment	UETDRV002
Recognise Plants (Elective)	AHCPM204

Contractors and all contract employees engaged by the Council to carry out the pruning or clearing of trees, are required to have documentary evidence provided to Council during the tender process and before works commence that they are trained by a Registered Training Organisation which carries out national recognised training (accredited) in the following fields:

- Minimum Certificate III in Horticulture (Arboriculture).
- Australian Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) UET20321 Certificate II Power line Vegetation Control and annual refresher training.

ELC personnel are acting "Qualified Person" as defined by the installations regulations.

Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019 614-617.

All ELC parties to have a minimum of two employees trained in the following at one time. Higher numbers of employees trained to allow greater flexibility is preferable.

ELC pruning from EWP - Minimum requirements all fields eight units comprising; five Core units plus two elective units from group A plus 1 elective unit within this qualification:

Cert II in ESI	UET20321
Core Units	
Operate and maintain chainsaws	AHCMOM213
Comply with environmental requirements	UETDREL002
Working safely near live electrical apparatus as a non-electrical worker	UETDREL006
Apply work health and safety requirements for powerline vegetation control	UETDRV001
Monitor vegetation control work in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus	UETDRV009
Group A	
Recognise Plants	AHCPM204
Access vegetation in an electricity supply industry environment	UETDRV002
Control vegetation in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus from an elevated work platform	UETDRV004
Control vegetation in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus from ground level	UETDRV005
Control vegetation in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus from within the tree	UETDRV006
Control vegetation using pruning techniques	UETDRV007
Perform rescue from within a tree in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus	UETDRV010
Use specialised plant to cut vegetation above ground in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus	UETDRV011
Group B	
Access trees for inspection	AHCARB322
Apply chemicals under supervision	AHCCHM201
Operate machinery and equipment	AHCMOM304
Fell small trees	AHCPM205
Operate a mobile chipper/mulcher	FWPHAR2208
Licence to operate a boom-type elevating work platform (boom length 11 Metres or more)	TLILIC0005
Maintain safety at an incident scene	PUAWHS002

Additional Requirements - other activities, including refresher training:

CPR	HLTAID002
EWP controlled descent escape	UETTDRRF08
EWP rescue	UETTDRRF03
Provide First aid in ESI environment	UETDRRF10
Safe Approach distances - Vegetation work	
Safe Approach SWER	
Control traffic with a stop-slow bat	RIIWHS205E
Implement Traffic management plans	RIIWHS302E

ELC pruning - climber as per ELC pruning from EWP +Additional Requirements - other activities, including refresher training:

Control vegetation in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus from within the tree	UETDRVC006
Perform rescue from within a tree in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus	UETDRVC010
Licence to operate a boom-type elevating work platform (boom length 11 Metres or more)	TLILIC0005

Safety Observer – as per ELC pruning from EWP + Additional Requirements - other activities, including refresher training:

Licence to operate a boom-type elevating work platform (boom length 11 Metres or more)	TLILIC0005
Perform rescue from within a tree in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus	UETDRVC010

Ground crew - Minimum requirements all fields:

Apply ESI safety rules, codes of practice and procedures for work on or near electrical apparatus (Green Book/Blue book)	UETTDRRF01B
Work safely in the construction industry (White Card) or equivalent	CPCCOHS1001A
Operate a mobile chipper/mulcher	FWPHAR2208
Operate and maintain chainsaws	AHCMOM213
Working safely near live electrical apparatus as a non-electrical worker	UETDREL006

Contractors must include details of qualifications of staff or contractors performing electric line clearance works, including the details of staff or contractor's completion of the approved course by Energy Safe Victoria. Include reference to the compliance with the Blue Book and notification to the power distribution company before any works commence.

Evidence of training qualifications is requested from all employees onsite before commencement of works and is usually a copy of the company skill matrix chart. The skills matrix chart is required to be updated before the next scheduled work program.

(q) Notification, consultation procedures, including the form of the notice to be given in accordance with Divisions 3 of Part 2 of the Code

Benalla Rural City Council notifies residents in the declared area at least 14 days and not more than 60 days before work commences by advertising in the local newspaper Benalla Ensign and Council Website. Evidence of such notification is kept along with the powerline clearance contract documentation for a period of no less than five years.

The public representatives (Councillors) are also notified at a Council meeting if a tree intended to be cut or removed is a tree of cultural or environmental significance or is likely to have an aesthetic impact to a streetscape. Notice under this clause will include details of the impact of removing that tree and the actions that will be taken to minimise that impact.

Evidence of such notification is recorded in the Council's meeting minutes.

Residents that are affected by removal works are notified by letter prior to commencement of associated works. Refer to **Appendix E**.

If the tree intended to be cut or removed is within the boundary of a private property, the Council's Coordinator Open Space refer to the relevant company that consultation must take place with the owner if the tree is to be cut within the boundary of property or occupier if the tree is to be removed.

Additional information – as per Division 3 Notification, consultation and dispute resolution

(r) Procedure for the independent resolution of disputes relating to electric line clearance

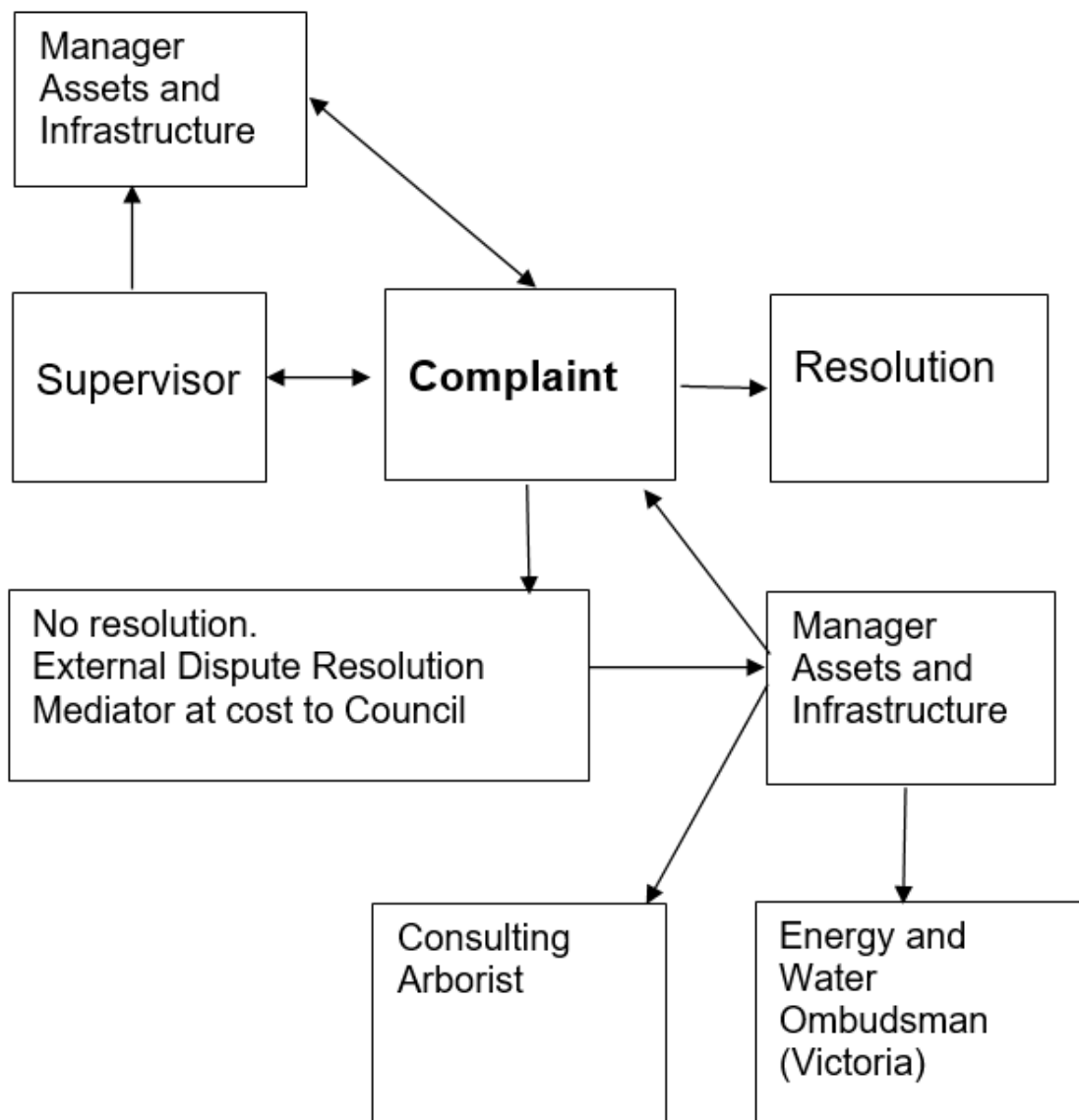
A detailed dispute process must be included in the plan for internal and external disputes.

If a dispute has arisen and the Supervisor cannot rectify, the dispute will be referred to Council dispute policy AP51 Complaints Handling and responsible person listed below:

- Person who is responsible for resolving disputes between the responsible person and members of the public:
Manager Assets and Infrastructure Adrian Gasperoni
Benalla Rural City Council, 1 Bridge Street East, Benalla VIC 3671
Tel: 03 5760 2600
- External dispute resolution procedure to be followed if the dispute cannot be resolved directly with the responsible person:
 - Consulting Arborist, or Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria).

The procedure would be to offer the services of such a mediator to the persons involved in the dispute, at cost to Council with both parties bound by the recommendation of the mediator.

Benalla Rural City Council Dispute Resolution Flow Chart



The procedure would be to offer the services of such a mediator to the persons involved in the dispute, at cost to Council with both parties bound by the recommendation of the mediator.

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

Benalla Rural City Council does not have a responsible person exempt from any of the regulations.

(10)(3) The responsible person must provide a copy of the management plan to Energy Safe Victoria on request within 14 days or such longer period as specified by Energy Safe Victoria:

Before 31 March in each year, a responsible person must ensure that a management plan relating to compliance with the Code for the next financial year is prepared and if requested sent to Energy Safe Victoria.

The Supervisor will email lineclearance@energysafe.vic.gov.au the reviewed and updated, if required, *Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan* annually.

(10)(6) The responsible person must ensure that a copy of the management plans is published on the responsible person's Internet site:

Following the approval of the submitted plan annually, the Supervisor will facilitate with the Communication team to ensure the current Electric Line Clearance Management Plan is available on the website by 1 July and the superseded plan is removed from the Benalla Rural City Council website.

<https://www.benalla.vic.gov.au/document/electric-line-management-plan-2024-25/>

Benalla Rural City Council website: www.benalla.vic.gov.au

Schedule 1– Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance

Part 2 Clearance responsibilities

(1) Responsible persons must keep minimum clearance space of clear of trees

Council Supervisor will ensure that, at all times, no part of a tree is within the minimum clearance distance by determining the clearance space and the regrowth space required based on:

- the requirements of the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance)* and AS 4373
- reference to Part 3 – Minimum clearance spaces
- evidence from previous annual auditing and pruning record
- known rates of regrowth for the tree variety, documented in previous annual audits.
- the significance of the trees
- the aesthetic values standards for the area
- maintain minimum pruning extent while ensuring compliance requirements.

The Supervisor will manage trees:

- growing in the vicinity of the power line to mitigate, as far as practicable, the risks associated with fire
- create and maintain the required clearance space around the power line
- record and document tree of significance
- at the review of this current plan there was no significant trees affected.

The Supervisor must, as far as practicable restrict the cutting or removal of native trees or trees of cultural or environmental significance to the minimum extent necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of this Code and the Schedule to this code or to make an unsafe situation safe by:

- frequent pruning cycles
- pruning to the Australian standards 4373
- regular onsite inductions and job supervision
- audit training matrix to ensure the trees are pruned by a suitably qualified contractor who holds a qualification of National certificate Level 3 in Horticulture and Arboriculture.

(2) Exception to minimum clearance space for structural branches around insulated low voltage electric lines

Council does not currently have any trees under these exception criteria.

The Supervisor is not required to ensure that a particular branch of a tree for which the person has clearance responsibilities is clear of the minimum clearance space for an electric line span if:

- (a) the electric line is:-
 - (i) an insulated cable; and
 - (ii) a low voltage electric line; and
- (b) the branch is wider than 130mm at the point at which it enter the minimum clearance space; and
- (c) the branch is more than 300 millimetres from the line; and
- (d) in the case of a span distance greater than 40 metres, the branch is more than 300 millimetres from the line; and
- (e) with-in the last 12 months-
 - (i) a suitable qualified arborist has inspected the tree of which the branch is a part; and
 - (ii) the arborist has advised the responsible person that the tree of which the branch is part does not have any visible structural defect that could cause the branch to fail and make contact with the electric line; and
 - (iii) the responsible person has completed an assessment of the risks posed by the branch; and
 - (iv) the responsible person has implemented measures to effectively mitigate the identified risks.

If Council were to leave a branch within the minimum clearance space for an electric line span in accordance with subclause (2) we would be required to keep records of the flowing matters for five years.

(3) Exception to minimum clearance space for small branches around insulated low voltage electric lines

Council does not currently have any trees under these exception criteria.

The Supervisor is not required to ensure that a particular branch of a tree for which the person has clearance responsibilities is clear of the minimum clearance space for an electric line span if:

- (a) the electric line is:-
 - (i) an insulated cable; and
 - (ii) a low voltage electric line; and
- (b) the branch is less than 10mm wide at the point at which it enter the minimum clearance space; and
- (c) the branch has been removed from the minimum clearance space with in the last 12 months.

(4) Exception to minimum clearance space for small branches growing under uninsulated low voltage electric lines in low bushfire risk areas

Council does not currently have any trees under these exception criteria.

The Supervisor is not required to ensure that a particular branch of a tree for which the person has clearance responsibilities is clear of the minimum clearance space for an electric line span if:

- (a) the electric line is:
 - (i) an uninsulated cable; and
 - (ii) a low voltage electric line; and
 - (iii) located in a low bushfire risk area; and
- (b) the branch is less than 10 millimetres wide at the point at which it enters the minimum clearance space and is no more than 500 millimetres inside the minimum clearance space; and
- (c) the point at which the branch originates is below the height of the electric line; and
- (d) in the case of a branch that comes within the minimum clearance space around the middle two thirds of the span, the span is fitted with-
 - (i) one conductor spreader if the length of the span does not exceed 45 metres; or
 - (ii) two conductor spreaders if the length of the span exceeds 45 metres; and
- (e) Within the last 14 months
 - (i) a suitably qualified arborist has inspected the tree of which the branch is a part; and
 - (iii) the responsible person has completed an assessment of the risk posed by the branch; and
 - (iv) the responsible person has implemented measures to effectively mitigate the identified risks.

The responsible person who leaves a branch within the minimum clearance space for an electric line span in accordance with subclause (2) must keep records for the following matter for five years.

(5) Exception to minimum clearance space for structural branches around uninsulated low voltage electric lines in low bushfire risk areas

Council does not currently have any trees under these exception criteria.

The Supervisor is not required to ensure that a particular branch of a tree for which the person has clearance responsibilities is clear of the minimum clearance space for an electric line span if-

- (a) the electric line is-
 - (i) an uninsulated cable; and
 - (ii) a low voltage electric line; and
 - (iii) located in a low bushfire risk area; and
- (b) in the case of a branch that comes within the minimum clearance space around the middle two thirds of the span, the span is fitted with-

- (i) one conductor spreader if the length of the span does not exceed 45 metres; or
- (ii) two conductor spreaders if the length of the span exceeds 45 metres; and
- (c) the branch is more than 130 millimetres wide at the point at which it enter the clearance space; and
- (d) the branch is no more than 500 millimetres inside the minimum clearance space and
- (e) Within the last 12 months-
 - (v) A suitably qualified arborist has inspected the tree of which the branch is a part; and
 - (vi) the responsible person has completed an assessment of the risk posed by the branch; and
 - (vii) the responsible person has implemented measures to effectively mitigate the identified risks.

The responsible person who leaves a branch within the minimum clearance space for an electric line span in accordance with subclause (2) must keep records for the following matter for five years.

(6) Owner or operator of transmission line must manage trees around minimum clearance

Council does not own or operate transmission line in the declared area.

(7) Responsible person may cut or remove hazard tree

Council will resolve to prune, remove or barricade immediately any tree that is deemed to be hazardous to persons or property, including powerlines and notify the electrical supply company to the fact there is a hazardous situation.

A suitable qualified Arborist will, if practical and the tree has been left standing, assess the tree having regard to local foreseeable conditions; and advice the responsible person that the tree, or any part of the tree, is likely to fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electric line.

Any tree regardless of whether it is not within, and is not likely to grow into, the minimum clearance space for a span of an electric line will be considered a hazard if it has the potential to fall onto or come into contact with and electric line.

Division 2 - Manner of cutting and removing trees

(8) Cutting of a tree to comply with Standard

All trees in the Benalla town ship that are impacted by overhead electrical lines are inspected and documented in the audit report for cutting or removal. The Supervisor being a qualified Arborist has oversight of the contractor's audit report and completed works report and during the life of contract, will visually inspect the pruned trees to verify the accuracy of assessment, the clearance space and that the pruning cuts are to the AS4373 standards.

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

If any tree that is identified as immediate cutting or removal during the annual inspection then the contractor is to immediately phone the Supervisor or If a person identifies a tree likely to fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electrical line, a responsible person may cut or remove the tree provided that:

- (1) must, as far as is practicable, not cut the tree more than is necessary to either:
 - (a) ensure compliance with Division 1; or
 - (b) make an unsafe situation safe.
- (2) must not remove, under Division 1, a tree of a kind specified in subclause (3) unless-
 - (a) it is necessary to remove the tree to either-
 - (i) ensure compliance with Division 1; or
 - (ii) make an unsafe situation safe: or
 - (b) a suitably qualified arborist has-
 - (i) inspected the tree; and
 - (ii) advised the responsible person that cutting the tree in accordance with subclause (1) would make the tree unhealthy or unviable.
- (3) the following kinds of tree are specified for the purposes of subclauses (1) and (2).
 - (a) Trees that are indigenous to Victoria
 - (b) trees listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical, or aesthetic significance.
 - (c) trees of cultural or environmental significance.

All qualifications are verified ensuring ELC staff are trained to recognise Indigenous trees and are made aware of any trees that is listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance or trees of cultural or environmental significance by regular discussion with ELC staff during regular routine inspections undertaken by Supervisor.

The Supervisor shall act with priority, assess and take the necessary action to rectify the non-conformance. I.e. pruning of regrowth to make an unsafe situation safe.

(10) Cutting or removing habitat for threatened fauna

The Supervisor will discuss with Contractor how to avoid and minimise the impact of Electrical Line Clearance work on any habitat trees that exist, including flora or a habitat of fauna -

- (a) listed as threatened in accordance with section 10 of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988; or
- (b) listed in the Threatened Invertebrate Fauna List with a conservation status in Victoria of ‘vulnerable’, “endangered” or “critically endangered”; or
- (c) listed in the threatened Vertebrate Fauna List with a conservation status in Victoria of “vulnerable”, “endangered” or “critically endangered”.

Council will not cut or remove a tree that is the habitat for threatened fauna during the breeding season for the threatened fauna unless-

- it is necessary to cut or remove the tree to make unsafe situation safe; or
- it is not practical to undertake cutting or removal of that tree outside the breeding season.
- If it not practical to undertake cutting or removal of that tree outside the breeding season, the responsible person must translocate the fauna before undertaking the cutting or removal if it is practical to do.

If it is not practicable to undertake cutting or removal of that tree outside the breeding season, the Supervisor will translocate the fauna before undertaking the cutting or removal if it is practicable to do so.

At the review of this plan, there was no habitat trees identified in the declared area.

(11) Restrictions on timing of cutting or removal if notification is required

Council will notify residents in the declared area at least 14 days and not more than 60 days before the Provision of powerline clearance, property service wire clearance and auditing service work commences by advertising in the local newspaper Benalla Ensign.

Residents that are affected by removal works are notified by letter prior to commencement of associated works and works must not commence cutting or removal of the tree on a day that is earlier than the first day that is specified, or before the first day of the period that is specified, in the notice under clause 16(6) or 17(4)(b)(as the case requires).

If a tree is intended to be cut or removed for urgent works as defined in the code, the Supervisor must notify all affected persons as soon as possible before or after the urgent works have been completed. Notification to residents impacted by urgent pruning will be by door knocking or a hand delivered letter placed in their mailbox prior to commencement of associated works. Refer to **Appendix E**.

If the tree intended to be cut or removed for urgent works as defined in the code, the Supervisor will record where and when the cutting or removal was undertaken, why the cutting or removal was required and the last time this section of line was inspected. Records of all urgent pruning must be kept for five years.

If the cutting is urgently required for a reason set out in clause 18(1), in these circumstances, clauses 15(2) 16(2) and 17(2) do not require the giving or publication of a written notice, or the undertaking of consultation, before the cutting.

(12) Restrictions on urgent cutting of trees

Council is required to comply with clause 19(2) in relation to cutting that is required – as a result of encroachment or growth of trees that was not anticipated in the management plan or during the fire danger period declared under the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*.

To ensure that urgent pruning or clearing to maintain that clearance space between each clearing or pruning time specified in the plan should not be required, Council has the following plans:

- Pruning is undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced contractors working to a clear specification requiring that pruning works are more than adequate to remove vegetation to an extent where regrowth will not grow to a point requiring urgent pruning.
- The contract includes a requirement for the contractor to conduct an audit of all trees in the vicinity of high voltage, low voltage and combined high voltage and low voltage. This ensures that all trees needing pruning are identified.
- Pruning is conducted annually and this allows for trees to be shaped rather than severely pruned. Severe pruning often results in vigorous regrowth. Tree pruning will be pruned to the AS4373 and the distance from line will be determined by the species of tree 1 year regrowth.
- If the clearance cannot be maintained annually, secondary inspection and pruning program will commence addressing trees that are likely to encroach. These trees are listed in (g)
- In addition, where replacement or additional trees are planted in areas covered by this plan appropriate species are used and located in a manner to minimise future wire clearance pruning requirements.
- The HBRA is well defined and the responsible person are aware that any trees in the HBRA must be pruned before the 23 October of every year.

The Supervisor will ensure the responsible person must not cut a tree further than one metre from the minimum clearance space for a span of an electric line.

(13) Restrictions on urgent removal of trees

The responsible person must not remove the tree unless:

- the tree has fallen or become damaged and is to be removed to keep the minimum clearance space for a span of an electric line free of trees or
- a suitable qualified arborist has assessed the tree having regard to foreseeable local conditions; and advised the responsible person that the tree is likely to imminently fall onto or otherwise come in to contact with an electric line.

In circumstances in which urgent pruning were to be required on public land, Council would utilise the service of the designated Electric line clearance contractor, who would be required to comply with all contract conditions and requirements including liaise with the relevant network operator. The circumstances requiring urgent pruning could also occur following a storm or vehicle accident affecting trees.

Division 3 Notification, consultation and dispute resolution

(14) Responsible person must provide notification before cutting or removing certain trees

Benalla Rural City Council notifies residents in the declared area before cutting or removing certain trees by written notice, either electronically or by mail, or by advertising in the local newspaper Benalla Ensign.

Under Council planning scheme any tree that is a native tree, trees listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical, or aesthetic significance; or, trees of cultural or environmental significance that is to be removed, and application of a permit is required. The permit submission must be advertised as such and persons directly affected are to be notified by letter and given 14 days to submit any opposition to that tree removal.

The public representatives (Councillors) are also notified at a Council meeting if a tree intended to be cut or removed is a tree of cultural or environmental significance or is likely to have an aesthetic impact to a streetscape. Notice under this clause will include details of the impact of removing that tree and the actions that will be taken to minimise that impact.

Evidence of such notification is recorded in the Council's meeting minutes.

If a dispute has arisen from the request to cut or remove a certain tree and the Supervisor cannot rectify, the dispute will be referred to Council dispute policy AP51 Complaints Handling and responsible person listed below:

- Person who is responsible for resolving disputes between the responsible person and members of the public:

Manager Assets and Infrastructure Adrian Gasperoni
Benalla Rural City Council, 1 Bridge Street East
Benalla VIC 3671 Tel: 03 5760 2600

The *Council Administration Policy* AP51 is available by request, during normal office hours at the Customer Service Centre 1 Bridge Street Benalla Vic 3672.

- External dispute resolution procedure to be followed if the dispute cannot be resolved directly with the responsible person:

Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria)

The procedure would be to offer the services of such a mediator to the persons involved in the dispute, at cost to Council with both parties bound by the recommendation of the mediator.

(15) Responsible person must publish notice before cutting or removing certain trees

Benalla Rural City Council notifies residents in the declared area at least 14 days and not more than 60 days before work commences by advertising in the local newspaper Benalla Ensign or on Council website.

Council will notify residents again in the declared area if the works have not been completed after 60 day period at least 14 days before work commences by re-advertising in the local newspaper Benalla Ensign or on Council website.

Public notice is hereby given that Power line and Service wire clearance will be undertaken in accordance with the following details:

Location: Benalla and surrounding area

Date of pruning: 1 October 2025 to 28 February 2026

For further enquires may be directed to Dean Steegstra on 03 5760 2673.

Contractual terms and commitments ensure the pruning commencement dates of notification, at least 14 days and not more than 60 days are upheld by the contractor. Council has the right to exercise any defaults or termination under the contract if commitments are not met.

(16) Responsible person must consult with occupier or owner of private property before cutting or removing certain trees

Benalla Rural City Council does not cut or remove certain trees on private property.

(17) Notification and record keeping requirement for urgent cutting or removal

The Supervisor must as soon as possible give written notice of that cutting or removal to the owner or occupier if the tree was cut or removed in reference to 18(1)(a), (b), (c), (d) was on land that is managed by a Council and not by the responsible person.

The written notice given under subclause (2) must specify-

- where and when the cutting or removal was undertaken; and
- why the cutting or removal was required; and
- the date of the last inspection of the span of the electric line in relation to which the cutting or removal was required before it was identified that the urgent cutting or removal was required.

Evidence of such notification is kept along with the powerline clearance contract documentation for a period of no less than five years.

If the cutting is urgently required for a reason set out in clause 18(1), in these circumstances, clauses 15(2) 16(2) and 17(2) do not require the giving or publication of a written notice, or the undertaking of consultation, before the cutting.

Division 4 Additional duties of responsible persons

(18) Duty relating to the safety of cutting or removal of trees close to an electric line

If the Council concerns relate to a span of an electric line that is part of a railway supply network or tramway supply network – the owner of operator of that supply networks details are listed below:

Vic track
Property Division
Tel: (03) 9619 1111
Email: customer.service@victrack.com.au
Web: www.victrack.com.au

Australian Rail Track Corporation.
Tel: (08) 8217436
enquires@artc.com.au

In any other case - where clarification may be sought by the distribution company in whose distribution area the electric line is located, details are listed below:

Spencer Few – Vegetation Management Lead
Ausnet services
M: 0439 563 262 E: spencer.few@ausnetservices.com.au
Level31, 2 Southbank Boulevard Southbank Vic 3006
www.ausnetservices.com.au

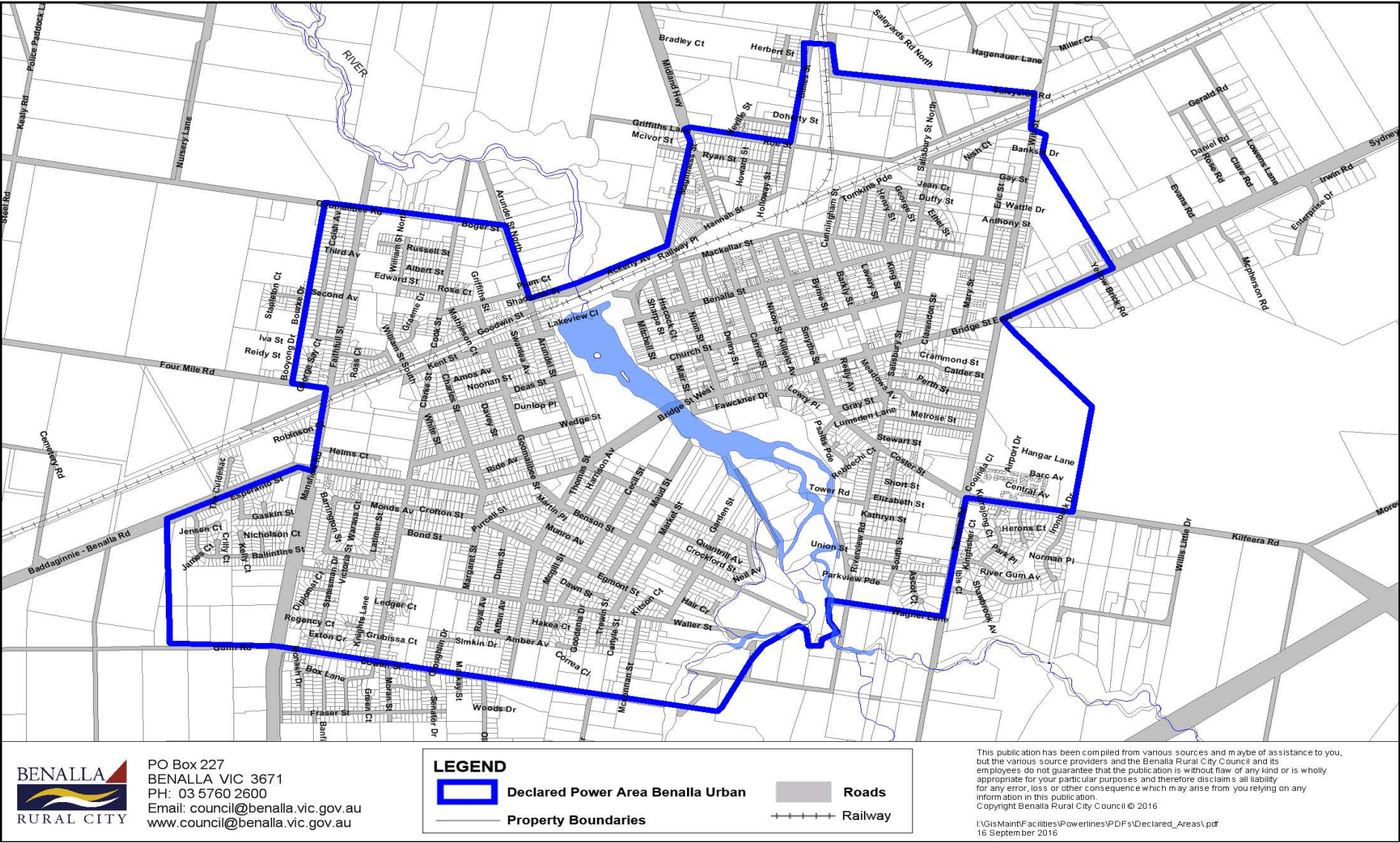
Suppression HV – Permit application or enquiry
Ausnet - Extec Services
P: 0359 417 333
E: nogozone@extec.com.au
<https://www.ausnetservices.com.au/safety/working-near-lines>

Ausnet services Electricity Faults or Emergency 13 17 99 (24 hours, seven days)

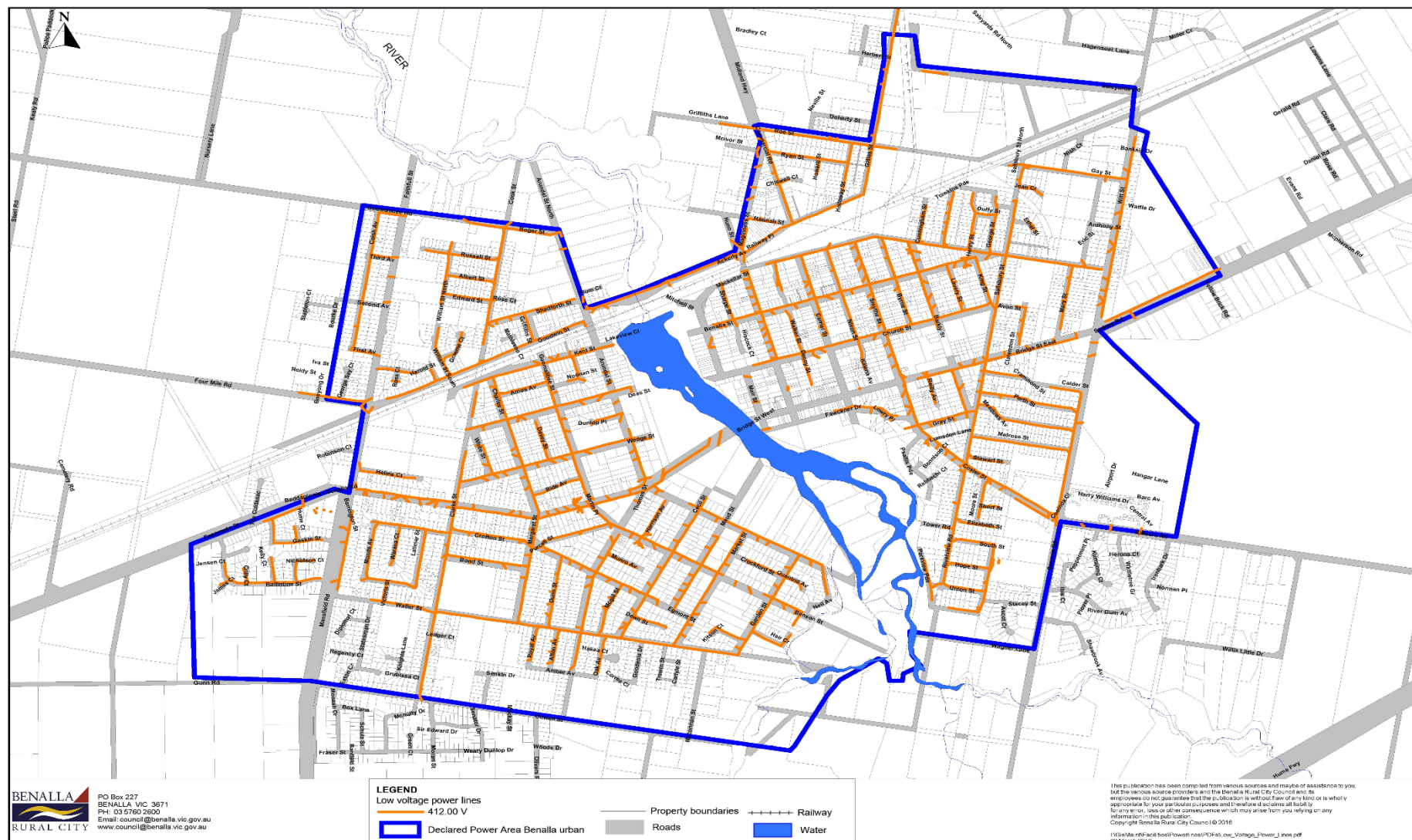
Appendices

- Appendix A – Maps of Declared Areas
- Appendix B – Low voltage power lines
- Appendix C – High voltage power lines requiring 'Auto Reclose'
- Appendix D – Hazardous Bush Fire Areas
- Appendix E – Notification letter
- Appendix F – ELCMP – Objectives 7 KPI's
- Appendix G – ELCMP – Weekly Audit Sheet
- Appendix H – Graph 1 Insulated Minimum clearance spaces surrounding a powerline
 - Graph 2 Uninsulated low voltage powerline Low Bushfire Risk Area LBRA
 - Graph 3 Uninsulated low/high voltage powerline other than 66kv LBRA
 - Graph 4 Uninsulated 66kv high voltage powerline LBRA
 - Graph 5 Uninsulated low/high voltage other than 66kv HBRA
 - Graph 6 Uninsulated 66kv high voltage powerline HBRA
- Appendix I – Annual tree pruning audit report.

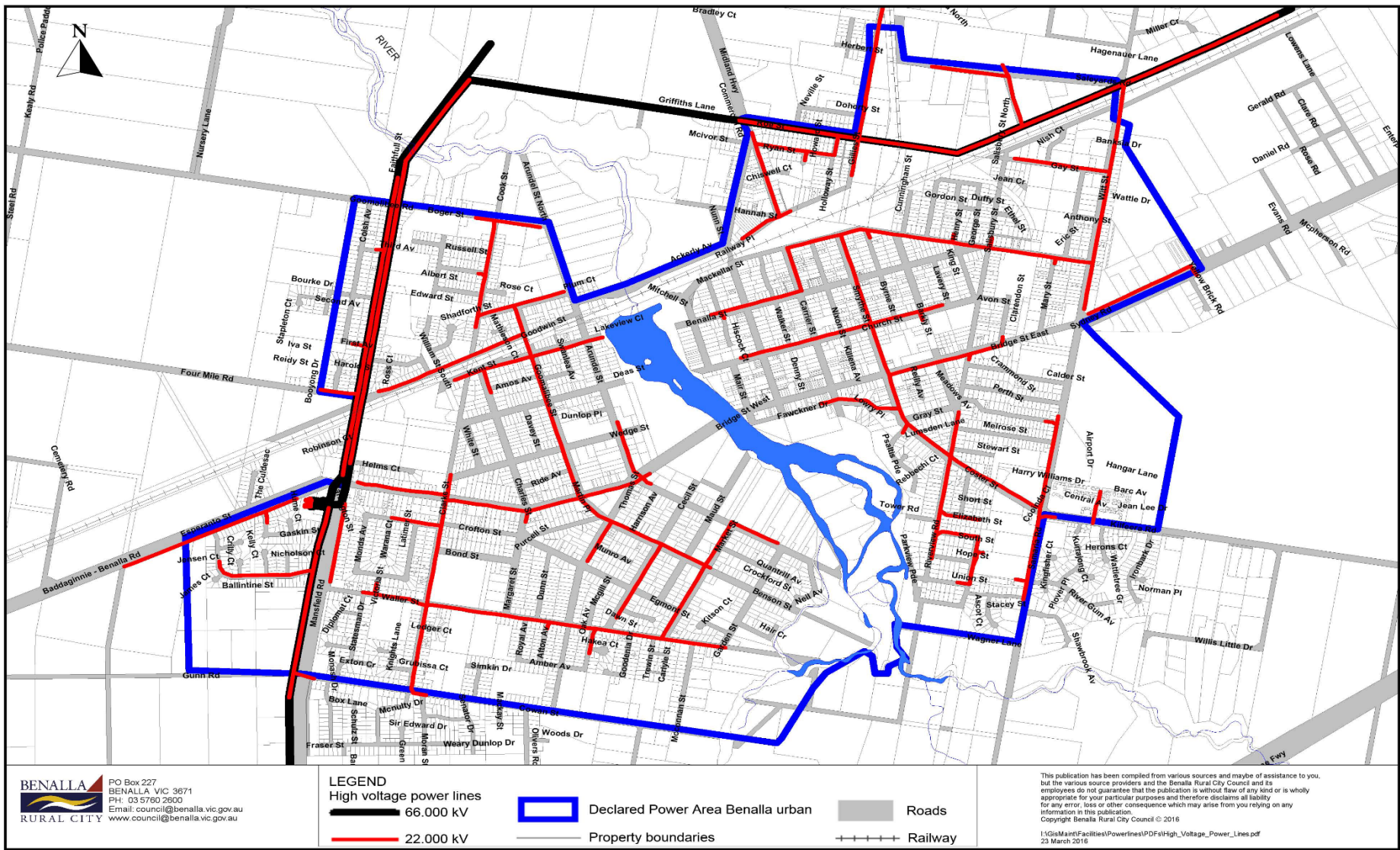
Appendix A – Map of Declared Areas Benalla Township



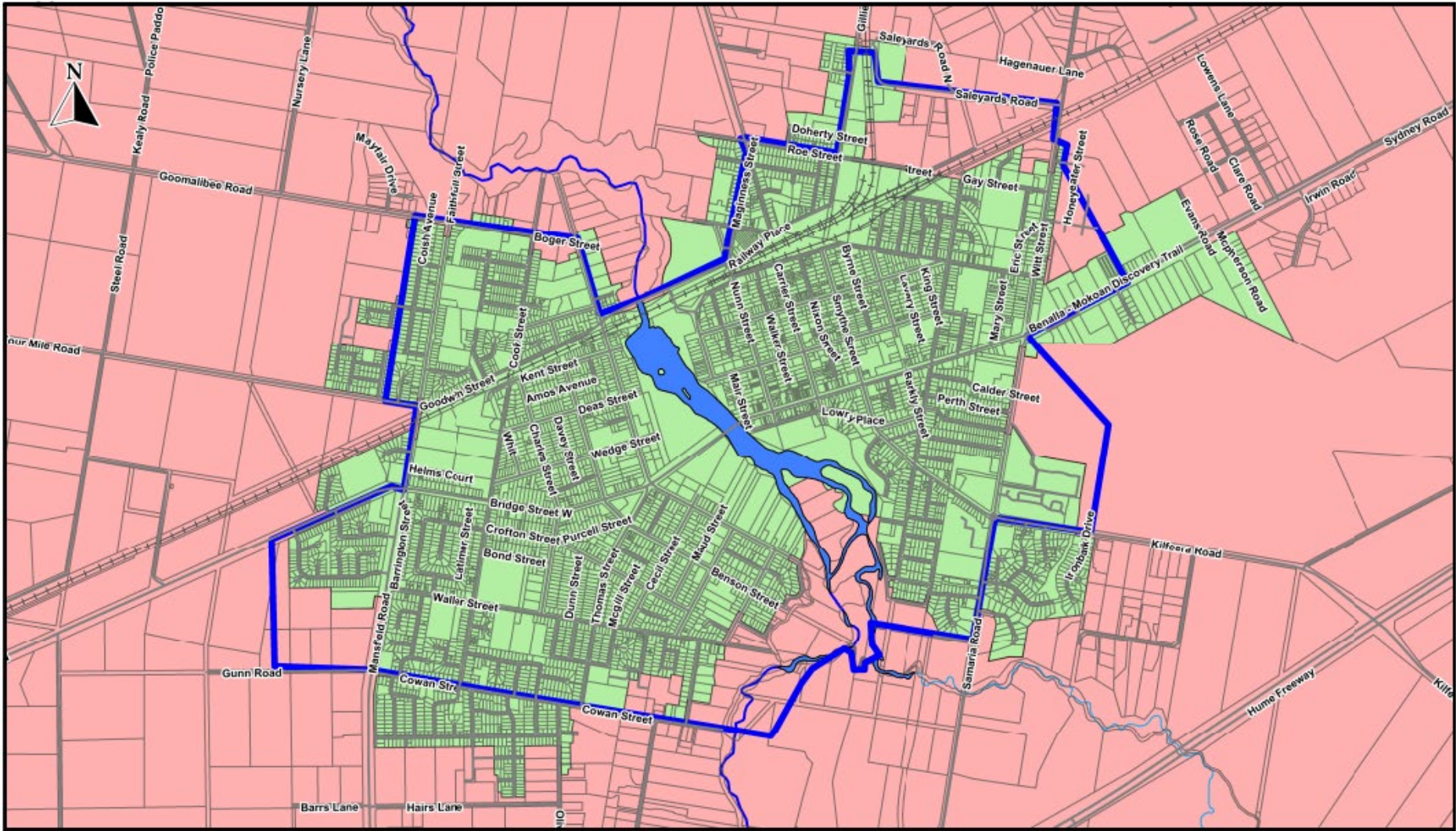
Appendix B – Low voltage power lines



Appendix C – High voltage power lines requiring ‘Auto Reclose’



Appendix D – Hazardous Bushfire Risk Area



Appendix E - Notice to Owner/Occupier

Street Tree Maintenance

Location: _____

Property Number: _____

Date: _____

The Council wishes to notify you that has or will be carrying out maintenance works on the street tree at the above location. This work is to be carried out as part of the Council's responsibility to comply with the *Electricity Safety Act and the Electricity Line Clearance Regulations 2020* and to manage its infrastructure for the health and amenity of the tree, and the safety of all users of the street.

If you have any concerns regarding this program, please contact Coordinator Open Space Dean Steegstra 03 57 60 2673.

The last inspection of this electrical span was September of every year and associated pruning works commence immediately after. The tree in this electrical span has subsequently been identified after this period and before the next scheduled annual inspection and pruning works.

The tree requires attention in one or more of the areas listed below.

- ☐ as a result of encroachment or growth of trees that was not anticipated in the management plan
- ☐ as a result of a tree falling or becoming damaged so that it is required to be cut or removed to maintain the minimum clearance space
- ☐ because a suitably qualified arborist has;
assessed the tree having regard to foreseeable local conditions and that the tree, or any part of the tree, is likely to imminently fall onto or otherwise come into contact with an electric line

Works are programmed to commence or have been undertaken on this date:

Appendix F - ELCMP – Objectives and KPI's

Auditors Name:		Date:	
Objective	KPI	Measure	Remedial action required - Non-conformance
Compliance with the Electrical Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020 and Code of Practice	100%	Delivery of annual vegetation program as per tender specification, including target dates.	
Electrical safety	0% Incidents	Number of incidents, Emergency clearances, Ausnet notifications for clearance	
Minimize fire starts	0% Fire starts	Number of fires	
Electrical supply to Customers	0% Reliability of supply	Number of outages	
Community satisfaction - Council are conducting the necessary works to achieve clearances	100% Customer satisfaction and confidence ELCMP process are followed	Number customer request for pruning or complaints	
Protection of Significant trees - Heritage and Amenity value	0% damage to trees with significance as specified Page 9	As per AS4373 Customer complaints Non - compliant pruning cuts or damage	
Protection of habitat trees	100% Identified and recorded	Number of translocation or	
Safe workplace	0% Incidents	Number of incidents or down time Experienced and trained staff	

Appendix G - ELCMP Weekly Audit Sheet

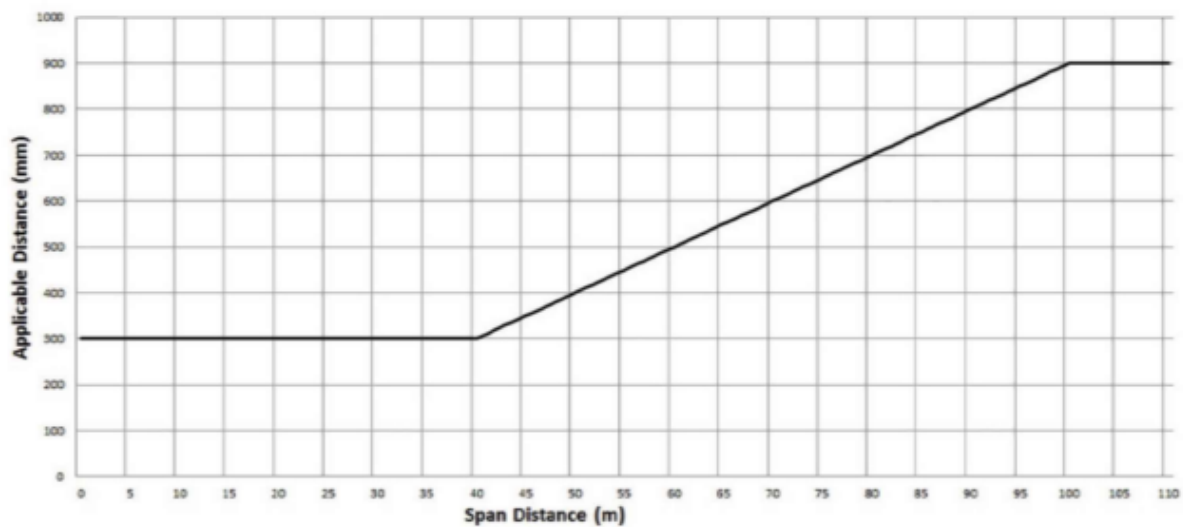
Weekly Audit Sheet		Name of Auditor			
		Delegated role and name:			
Date and time	Name of street	Cutter	Safety Observer	Groundsman	Registration EWP
Mon					
Tues					
Wed					
Thur					
Fri					
Date and time	Pruning cuts to AS4373	Clearance achieved	Traffic Management	EWP earthed	JSA complete
Mon					
Tues					
Wed					
Thur					
Fri					
Date and time	Prunings removed	Footpath clear	PPE compliant	Compliance to habitat tree	Compliance to significant tree
Mon					
Tues					
Wed					
Thur					
Fri					
Comments:					
Boxes must be marked either Conform (C) / Non Conformance (NC)					

Appendix H

GRAPH 1 - MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING A POWERLINE—INSULATED ELECTRIC LINES IN ALL AREAS

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS		
Type of Powerline	For the first and last 1/6 th of the span	For the Centre 2/3rds of the span
Aerial Bundled Cable Insulated Cable	300 mm	Refer to Graph 1

Graph 1



The Clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway of the conductors. Refer to Schedule 2 of the code for further details.

The direction of the clearance space from around the conductors are illustrated below:

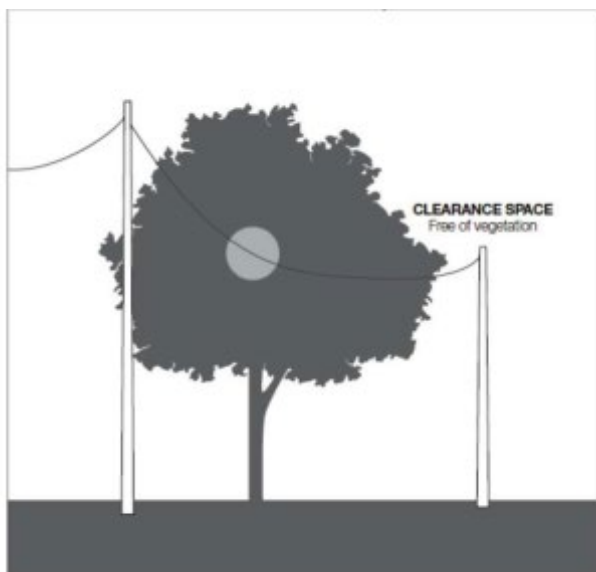
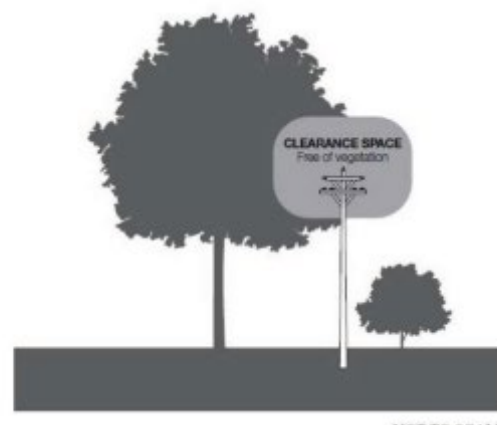


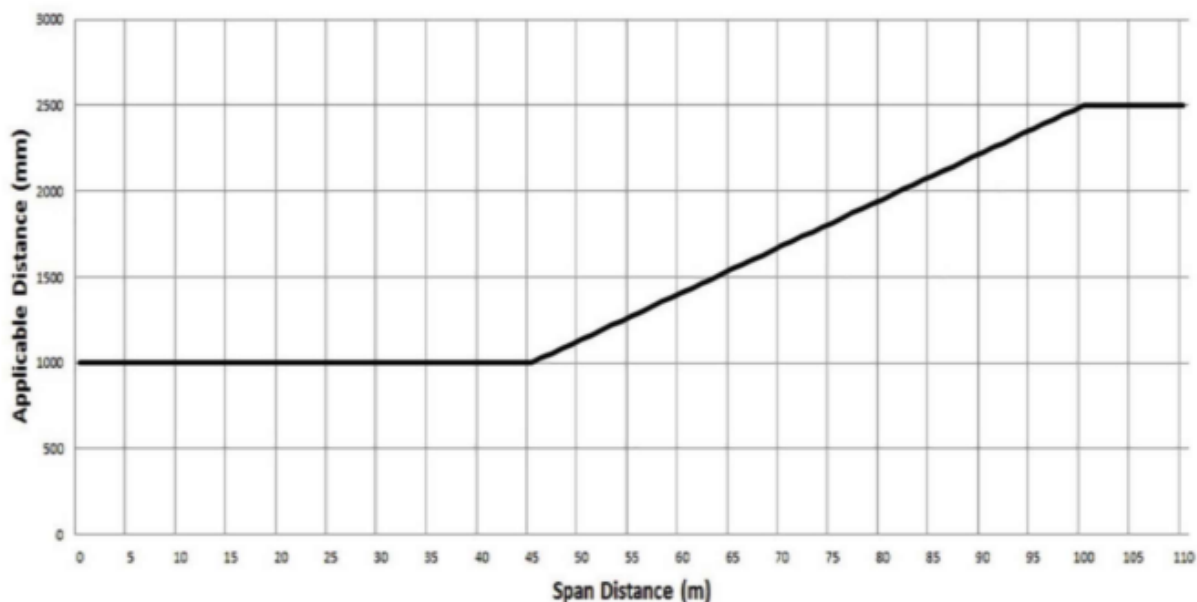
FIGURE 3—INSULATED ELECTRIC LINES IN ALL AREAS AND UNINSULATED HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINES (OTHER THAN 66 000 VOLT ELECTRIC LINES) IN LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREAS

Clauses 24 and 26, Graphs 1 and 3



GRAPH 2 – UNINSULATED LOW VOLTAGE POWERLINE IN LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

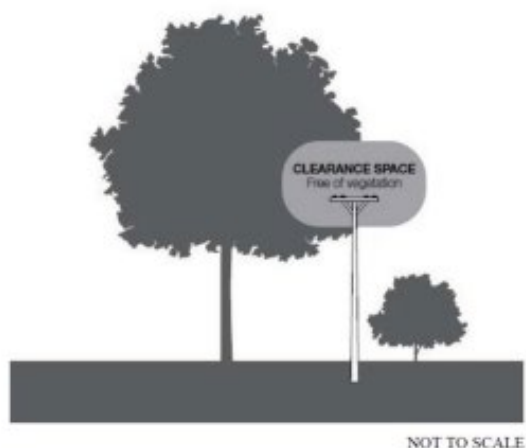
MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS		
Nominal voltage	LBRA spans near the pole	For the Centre 2/3rds of the span
Up to 1 kV	1000 mm*	Refer to Graph 2



The Clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway for spans up to 100m. For spans greater than 100m an allowance for sag and sway is required. Very few spans if any are greater than 100m, however, as a requirement, Ausnet Services will be consulted if a span greater than 100m is identified to assist in determining the amount to allow for sag and sway. This information will be recorded in Council ELCMP and discussed annually through contractual meetings and utilised in the ELC program.

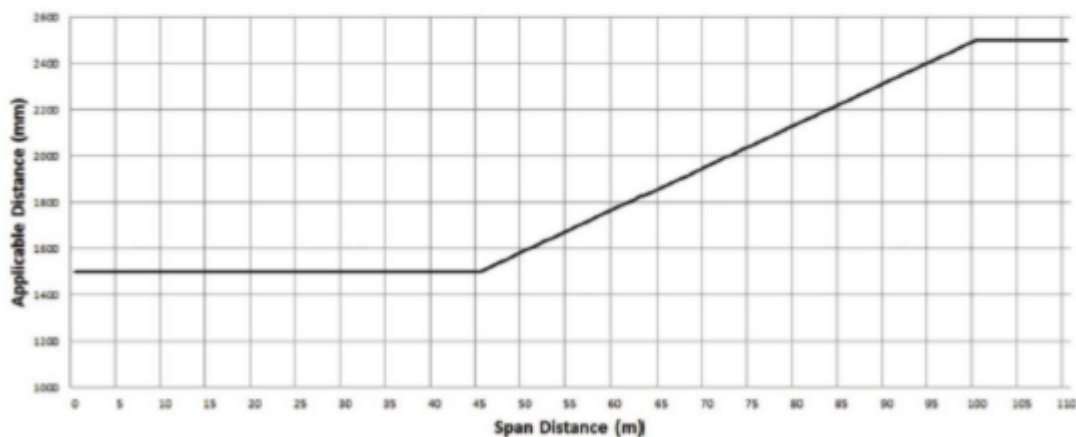
FIGURE 4—UNINSULATED LOW VOLTAGE ELECTRIC LINE IN A LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

Clause 25, Graph 2



GRAPH 3 - MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING A HIGH VOLTAGE UNINSULATED ELECTRIC LINE (Other than 66kV Electric Lines) in LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

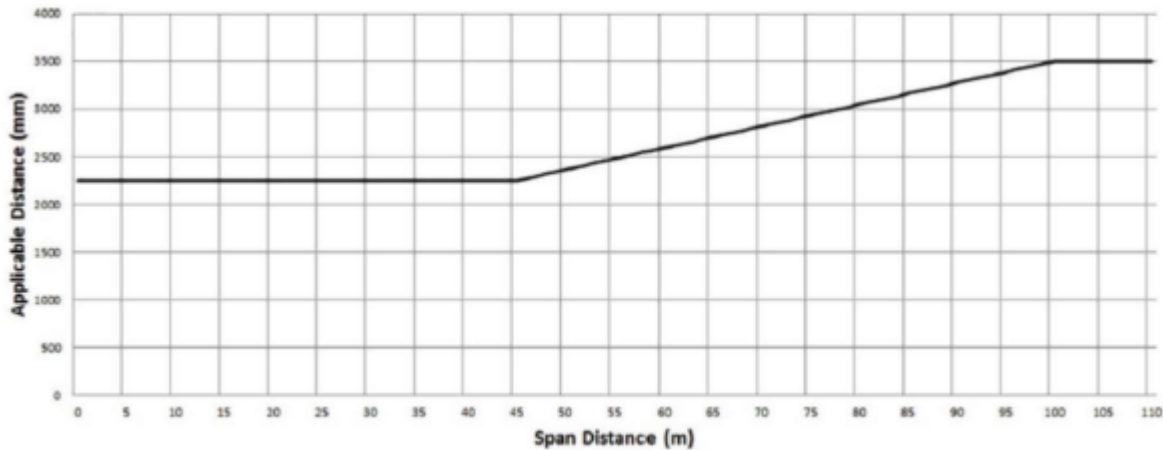
MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS		
Nominal voltage	LBRA spans near the pole	For the Centre 2/3rds of the span
Other than 66 kV	1500 mm*	Refer to Graph 3



The Clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway for spans up to 100m. For spans greater than 100m an allowance for sag and sway is required. Very few spans if any are greater than 100m, however, as a requirement, Ausnet Services will be consulted if a span greater than 100m is identified to assist in determining the amount to allow for sag and sway. This information will be recorded in Council ELCMP and discussed annually through contractual meetings and utilised in the ELC program.

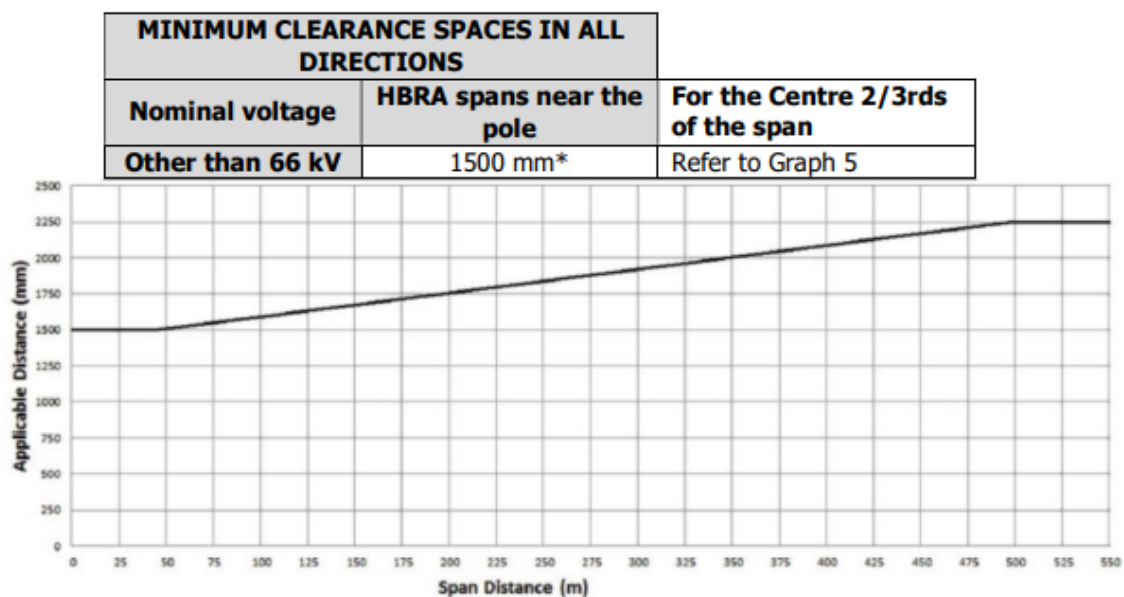
**Graph 4 – MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACE SURROUNDING A HIGH VOLTAGE POWERLINE
UNINSULATED 66kV in LOW BUSHFIRE RISK AREA**

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS		
Nominal voltage	All spans near the pole	For the Centre 2/3rds of the span
66kV	2250 mm*	Refer to Graph 4



The Clearances in the above graph allow for sag and sway for spans up to 100m. For spans greater than 100m an allowance for sag and sway is required. Very few spans if any are greater than 100m, however, as a requirement, Ausnet Services will be consulted if a span greater than 100m is identified to assist in determining the amount to allow for sag and sway. This information will be recorded in Council ELCMP and discussed annually through contractual meetings and utilised in the ELC program.

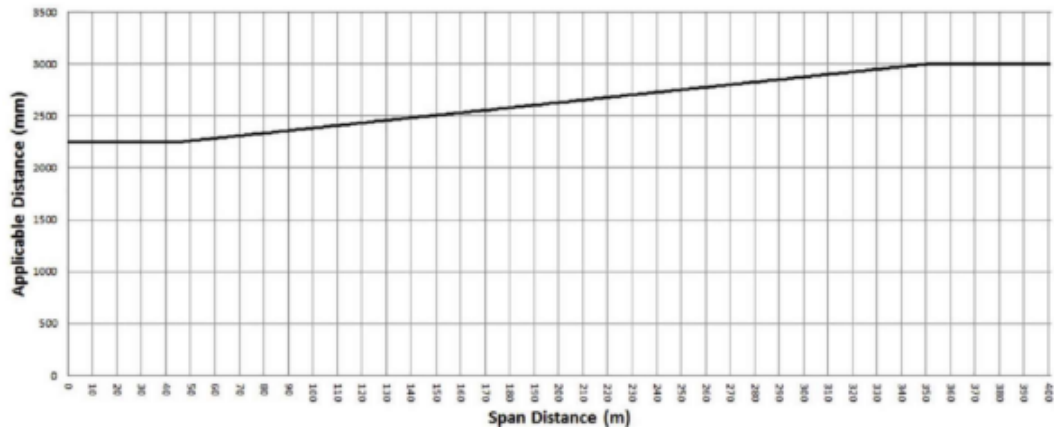
**GRAPH 5 - MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING A POWERLINE—
UNINSULATED LOW VOLTAGE AND HIGH VOLTAGE (Other than 66kV Electric Line) in
HAZARDOUS BUSHFIRE RISK AREA**



The Clearances in the above graph do not allow for sag and sway for spans. For spans greater than 45m an allowance for sag and sway is required. Very few spans if any are greater than 45m, however, as a requirement, Ausnet Services will be consulted if a span greater than 45m is identified to assist in determining the amount to allow for sag and sway. This information will be recorded in Council ELCMP and discussed annually through contractual meetings and utilised in the ELC program.

**GRAPH 6 - MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES SURROUNDING A POWERLINE—
UNINSULATED 66kV ELECTRIC LINE in
HAZARDOUS BUSHFIRE RISK AREA**

MINIMUM CLEARANCE SPACES IN ALL DIRECTIONS	
Nominal voltage	HBRA spans near the pole
66kV	2250 mm*



The Clearances in the above graph does not allow for sag and sway for spans. For spans greater than 45m an allowance for sag and sway is required. Very few spans if any are greater than 45m, however, as a requirement, Ausnet Services will be consulted if a span greater than 45m is identified to assist in determining the amount to allow for sag and sway. This information will be recorded in Council ELCMP and discussed annually through contractual meetings and utilised in the ELC program.

Appendix I

Date:

Auditor:

Annual Tree Pruning Audit Report

Benalla Rural City Council Annual Tree Pruning Audit Report										
Ref No.	Tree Location Street name	Pruning Required – number of trims				Feeder No.	Zone	Tree Genus	Span Distance in Meters	General comment – * severity of prune
		H.V	L.V	Service Wire	Combined H.V.& L.V.					

*Severity of Prune as estimated at time of audit – 1. AVERAGE 2. SIGNIFICANT 3. ABNORMAL,
Use comment column to record observations for discussion with superintendent.

benalla.vic.gov.au

PO BOX 227

Benalla VIC 3671

(03) 5760 2600

council@benalla.vic.gov.au

