

BANYULE CITY COUNCIL

Electric Line Clearance Management Plan

2024–2025



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Regulation 9 Preparation and submission of management plan

Regulations 9(2): Responsible Person and Plan

Under its obligations as a “responsible person” under the Victorian *Electricity Safety Act 1998*, Banyule City Council (‘Council’) has prepared this Electric Line Clearance Management Plan (ELCMP) in compliance and accordance with the Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020* – [Regulation 9 Preparation and submission of management plans](#) Obligations under Regulations 10(1)–(6) are also addressed in this ELCMP.

This ELCMP is structured in order of the specified regulations, using the same numbering for cross referencing.

The applicable distances for the minimum clearance spaces to be maintained under this plan are provided in [Appendix 1](#). Exceptions to the minimum clearance spaces under the Code are provided under [Schedule 1, Clauses 4–7](#) of the regulations and this plan.

This plan is applicable for the financial year from 1 July 2024–30 June 2025. The plan is stored in Council’s document management system and will be available for review at Council’s offices and on Council’s website at www.banyule.vic.gov.au.

In January each year, council officers review the plan and make all necessary changes in accordance with Council’s processes and procedures for the upcoming financial year. The plan for the upcoming financial year is prepared by 31 March each year and will be made available to Energy Safe Victoria within 14 days if requested.

Regulations 9(4)(a)–(d): Contact details

4(a) Responsible Person

Name Allison Beckwith
Position CEO
Address Banyule City Council
1 Flintoff Street,
Greensborough VIC 3088
T: 03 9457 9904

(b) Individual responsible for the preparation of the management plan

Name Darren Bennett
Position Director, Assets and City Services
Address Banyule City Council
1 Flintoff Street,
Greensborough VIC 3088
T: 03 9457 9927

(c) Person responsible for carrying out the management plan

Name Michael Tanner
Position Manager, Parks and Natural Environment
Parks and Natural Environment Service Centre
Address 268–270 Banksia Street
Bellfield, VIC 3081
T: 03 9049 3399

(d) Emergency telephone number for electric line clearance from a Council tree

Telephone T: 03 9490 4222 (available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week)

Regulation 9(4)(e): Objectives

By complying with the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020* and the Code of Practice as far as practicable, the objectives of this ELCMP are to:

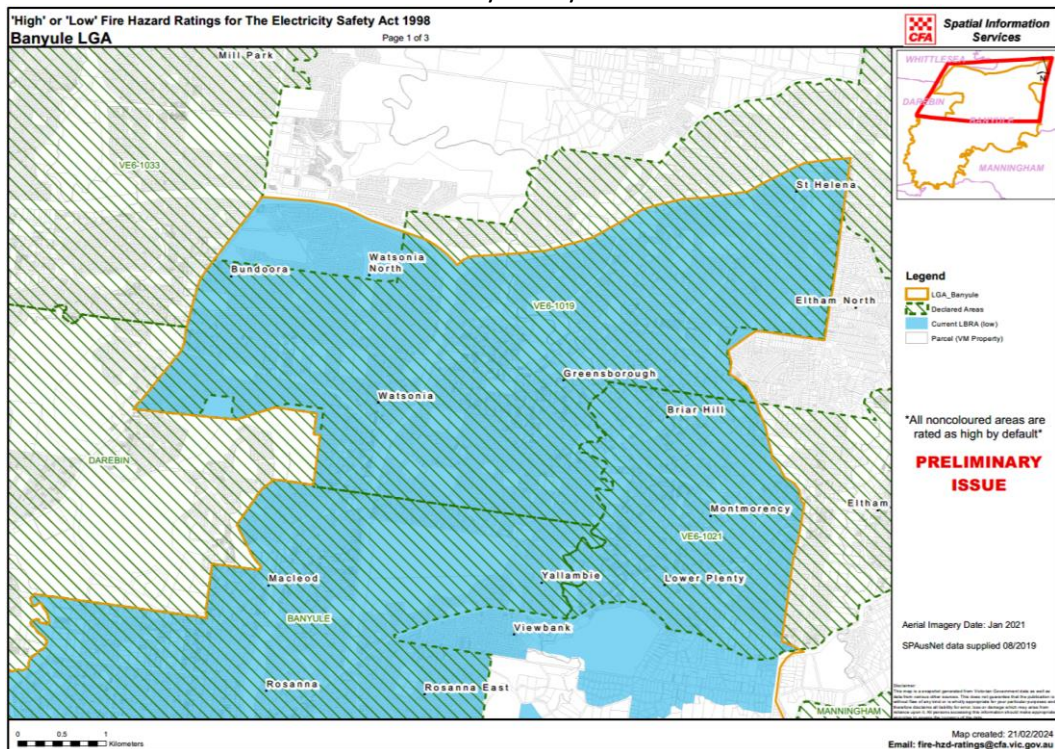
- Protect public safety at all times from the contact between power lines and vegetation in relation to fire risk, human injury and continuity of supply.
- Protect areas of indigenous and significant vegetation throughout Council's Declared Area. This includes areas containing vegetation that are botanically, historically, or culturally important or vegetation of outstanding aesthetic, ecological or local significance or that may be habitat for rare or endangered species.
- Provide 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.
- Maintain customer satisfaction in relation to vegetation clearance required by the plan consistent with Banyule City Council's [customer service promise](#).

These objectives will be achieved by:

- Maintaining regular interactions with contractors and the vegetation management group of relevant distribution companies so that all parties have a clear understanding of each other's priorities. Interactions include documented meetings, monthly communication of vegetation assessment results and various liaisons for live line works.
- Ongoing improvement of Banyule City Council's electronic Tree Database and a functional Geographical Information System (GIS) that allows users to efficiently locate tree assets and record information regarding adjacent electrical lines and the condition, size, species, structure, and management requirements for tree assets.
- Ongoing auditing and Contract performance monitoring as detailed in the relevant sections of this Plan.

Regulation 9(4)(f): Map of applicable land

Banyule municipality is displayed in the below maps (Figure 1 & 2) along with the fire rating and the declared areas under the Electricity Safety Act 1998.



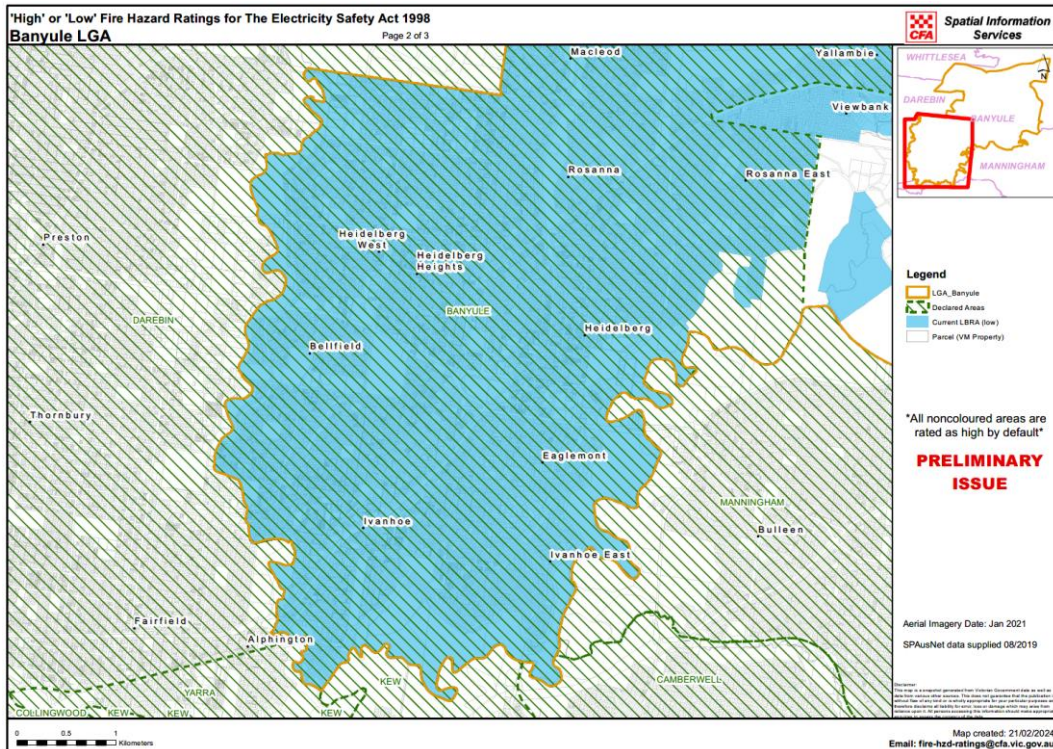


Figure 1. Maps 1 & 2 Low and high bushfire risk areas as well as the declared and undeclared areas under the Electricity Safety Act 1998

Regulation 9(4)(g): Hazardous and low bushfire risk areas

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) [fire hazard ratings for electric lines](#) apply as follows:

- Majority of the Banyule municipality fall in the low bushfire risk areas (LBRAs) which are blue in Figures 1 & 2.
- As can be seen from the green hatching (Figures 1 & 2), most areas of Banyule are declared except for areas in Watsonia North, Bundoora, Eltham North, Lower Plenty and Viewbank which are not declared. In the undeclared areas Council is not the responsible authority in relation to vegetation clearance around overhead electrical infrastructure.
- A smaller section is defined as hazardous bushfire risk areas (HBRAs) and they are the white areas of Figure 1 & 2.
- An even smaller section of the map (Figure 2) is both declared and a hazardous bushfire risk area. This area is hatched with green and has white background and includes a small section along Martins Lane, Banyule Road, and Hendersons Road, in Viewbank, adjacent to the Plenty River parklands.
- Every year, Council liaises with the relevant Distribution Businesses (Figur4, [Regulation 9 \(4\)\(j\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#)) to obtain up-to-date GIS layers for the distribution network. This helps to improve planning and identification of affected trees in the LBRA and HBRA areas.

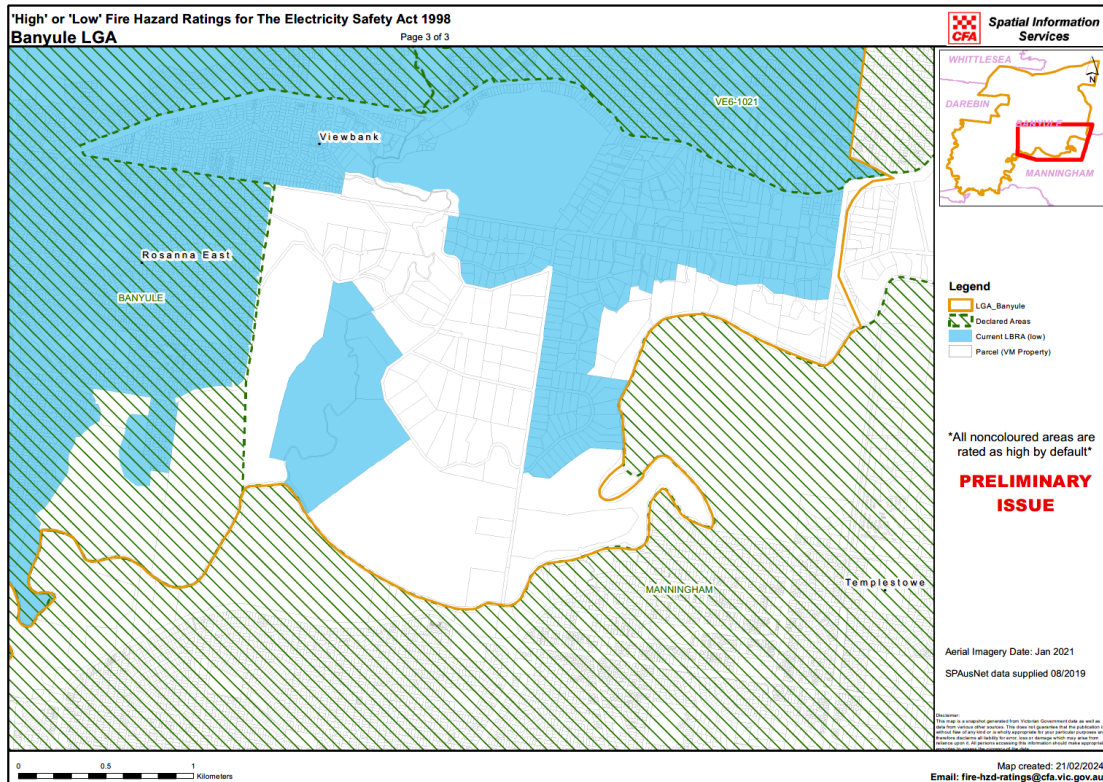


Figure 2 Low and high bushfire risk areas as well as the declared and undeclared areas under the Electricity Safety Act 1998

Regulations 9(4)(h)(i)–(iii): Specified areas with indigenous or significant trees

Council’s Tree Database can be used to identify the location of and record information regarding electrical lines, trees and associated data relating to their condition, size species, structure, origin (e.g. indigenous to Victoria, whether planted or remnant), significance (e.g. on Significant Tree Register or planning overlay), and management (i.e. last date of inspection or cutting).

Each year, as part of the preparation of this Plan, Council reviews all relevant acts, registers and other resources to identify trees indigenous to Victoria or significant trees specified in Regulations 9(4)(h)(i), (ii) and (iii) that may be impacted by line clearance works. These indigenous and significant trees are also recorded in Council’s Tree Database.

All trees indigenous to Victoria, and trees of cultural or environmental significance that are listed in Council’s Significant Trees Register are identifiable in Council’s GIS system.

Work crews access this information on mobile devices before undertaking works on vegetation managed by Banyule City Council, enabling awareness of the significance and requirements surrounding the subject vegetation by both Council and the tree pruning contractors.

Pursuant to Clauses 11 and 12 of the Code, Council will, as far as practicable:

- Restrict cutting or removal of indigenous or significant trees to the minimum extent necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of and schedule to the Code, or to make an unsafe situation safe. Unsafe situations include non-compliant tree assets in HBRA.

Avoid cutting or removing a tree that is habitat for [threatened fauna](#) during the breeding season, unless it is necessary to mitigate a high-risk hazard. Where it is not practicable to avoid tree pruning or removal during the breeding season, Council will:

- translocate the breeding threatened fauna before undertaking the tree works.

- The latest update to the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Act 2019. Threatened List will be consulted to identify all threatened species, and specialist advise about their breeding seasons will be sought.

Regulation 9(4)(h)(i): Indigenous to Victoria

Indigenous tree species are common and widely planted throughout the streets of Banyule municipality.

Before pruning in an area, the contractor is required to check whether any tree species are of indigenous origin via:

- Banyule City Council's electronic Tree Database within its Geographical Information System (GIS).
- Where a tree is identified as indigenous, the contractor must not cut the tree more than is necessary to ensure compliance with the Code or make an unsafe situation safe.
- Indigenous trees must not be removed unless it is necessary to ensure compliance with the Code or make an unsafe situation safe, or a vegetation assessor from Council has inspected the tree and advised that cutting it in compliance with the Code would make it unhealthy or unviable.

Regulation 9(4)(h)(ii): Listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical, or aesthetic significance

Identified areas of historical, cultural, environmental, ecological, and aesthetical importance in Banyule municipality are covered by Vegetation Protection and Environmental Significance Overlays in Council's [Planning Scheme](#) or listed on Council's [Significant Trees Register](#), which records the:

- Tree species (and approximate number of specimens if greater than one).
- Address.
- Address of other affected properties.

After each review of the Planning Scheme, Council reviews the trees that may be affected and updates its Tree Database.

Before pruning in an area, the contractor is required to check Council's Tree Database to determine if any trees are subject to a planning overlay protecting their significance.

- Where a tree is identified as protected, the contractor must not cut the tree more than is necessary to ensure compliance with the Code or make an unsafe situation safe.
- Protected trees must not be removed until approval is sought from Council.

Regulation 9(4)(h)(iii): A tree of cultural or environmental significance

Trees assessed as having cultural or environmental significance at local, state, and national levels are listed in the:

- [Banyule Significant Tree Register](#).
- The Banyule Significant Tree Register is updated each year using information from the <https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/heritage-protection/register/>, <https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/victorian-aboriginal-heritage-register>, <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/threatened-list>, and <https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl?wanted=flora>.

Before pruning in an area, the Contractor must check Council's Tree Database to determine if any trees adjacent to the powerlines are of local, state or national cultural or environmental significance. No work is to be done on these trees until approval is sought from Council.

Regulation 9(4)(i): Means used to identify indigenous or significant trees

Council reviews its Significant Tree Register annually as part of the preparation of the Plan and updates its electronic Tree Database.

All contractors carrying out Line Clearance works are required to consult Banyule’s Tree Database to ascertain the origin and significance of trees before commencing work in each pruning precinct.

Regulation 9(4)(j) Management procedures to ensure compliance with the Code

Regulation 9(4)(j)(i): Methods for managing trees and maintaining minimum clearance

Banyule City Council’s tree pruning and associated services contract ‘Manningham EF18-27082’ was terminated in March 2023. Council is looking to appoint a new contractor from 2024/ 2025 financial year onwards. For the 2024/2025 financial year, council will appoint both an inspections contractor and a pruning contractor. The inspections contractor shall be suitably qualified to conduct an initial inspection of all trees under powerlines. The aim is to identify all trees that require clearance pruning within that period. After the inspections are completed, the pruning contractor shall ensure all non-compliant trees are pruned to maintain minimum clearance space ([Appendix 1](#)) free of vegetation for the period.

Council has made provisions for any changes in clearance space requirements resulting from the annual review of Council’s ELCMP and/or changes in the regulations.

Council’s management procedures for managing trees to ensure compliance with the Code are categorised as: procurement, inspections, assessment of regrowth, tree works, communication and auditing, and record keeping.

The methods to ensure compliance with the Code for each of these procedure categories are provided in the following sections.

Procurement

- Council’s procurement procedure requires the successful contractors to employ suitably qualified and experienced arborists (9(4)(p)) to undertake the Line Clearance assessment and pruning in accordance with all requirements of the Code, which includes:
 - Formal training that incorporates modern tree pruning practices, including awareness of AS 4373–2007 *Pruning of amenity trees* and natural target pruning principles.
 - Project induction, including awareness training in the Code of Practice and this Plan (including pruning quality requirements).
 -

Inspections

Every tree managed by Banyule City Council under or adjacent to powerlines within the relevant precincts shown in regulation 9(4)(f) of this Plan is inspected according to the following schedule:

- An annual inspection of all trees adjacent to High Voltage electric lines.
- A biennial (two-yearly) inspection of all trees adjacent to Low Voltage electric lines.
- Within the HBRA areas, annual inspection and pruning of all Council trees in the vicinity of powerlines will occur before the declaration of the fire season (Table 1).

Table 1. Schedule for inspecting, pruning, and auditing Council trees adjacent to powerlines in the HBRA before the declaration of the fire season.

Banyule Pruning Precinct	Programmed Inspection	Programmed Cut	Programmed Audit
HBRA	September 2024	October 2024	During programmed cutting period

During the initial inspection, the Inspections Contractor assesses and records the specific pruning requirements of each tree.

The Contractor follows the decision-making process shown in Figure 3 when determining pruning works to maintain line clearance.

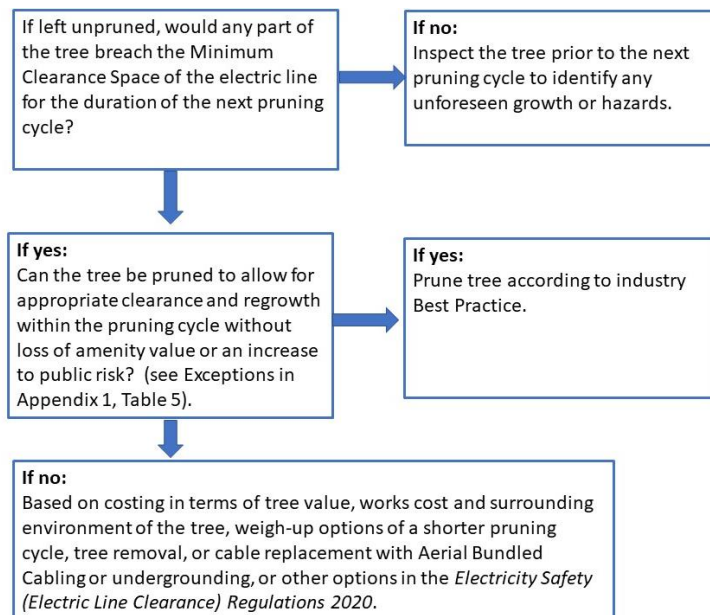


Figure 3 Flow-chart of decision-making process regarding pruning to maintain line clearance.

The Inspections Contractor reports to Council, any trees deemed unsuitable for pruning in accordance with the Code, and Council’s [Urban Forest Strategy](#). Approximately half of councils 70,000 trees within streets are affected by electric line clearance. Council aims to maintain compliance with the regulations while providing benefits to the community and environment as outlined in Council’s [Urban Forest Strategy](#).

Council will inspect those trees deemed unsuitable for pruning and will implement an alternative method to ensure the trees do not pose any risk to adjacent electrical line assets. Pursuant to Clause 20 of the Code, where Council and its Contractor are unsure of the safety of pruning or removing a tree, Council will consult with the relevant Distribution Business; or if the tree affects a railway supply line, it will consult the relevant Railway Operator to develop an appropriate action plan to mitigate the hazard or bring the tree into compliance with the Code. The contact details of the relevant organisations are provided in regulation [9\(4\)\(i\)ii\)\(B\)](#) of this Plan.

Tree works

After the initial inspections, Council’s arborist directs the Pruning Contractor to prune each tree in accordance with the work instructions.

Identified non-compliant trees near HV lines are pruned every year following the annual HV audit. All other trees near powerlines are pruned every 2 years in accordance with the current cyclic pruning schedule.

All pruning is in accordance with industry Best Practice. In cases where the minimum clearance space cannot be achieved when pruning to AS 4373, refer to [Regulation 9\(4\)\(k\)](#) of this Plan.

Where practicable, pruning may be undertaken using Elevated Work Platforms (EWP) or other similar methods to minimise overall site damage.

Hazard trees

During the inspections, the Inspections Contractor will also identify and inspect neighbouring Hazard Trees that may not have branches growing towards the clearance space but could impact electrical lines in the event of tree failure. Hazard trees have structural faults (e.g.

severe decay, major cracks, large deadwood), that if not actioned, will negatively impact distribution assets under foreseeable weather conditions or ground instability. Pursuant to Section 86B of Victoria's *Electricity Safety Act 1998*, and Clause 9 of the Code, Council specifies within its *Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP)* (Appendix C pages 14–17 of the MFMP):

- procedures and criteria for the identification of trees that are likely to imminently fall onto, or come into contact with, an electric line (hazard trees).
- procedures for notifying Council of hazard trees in relation to electric lines for which they are responsible.

Council-managed trees identified as hazardous by the Contractor during inspections, or reported to Council as hazardous, will be assessed by a qualified vegetation assessor appointed by Council.

In compliance with the Code, Council will remove or cut trees confirmed as hazardous to the electric line. If the hazard tree fits any of the criteria in regulation 9(4)(h) of this Plan, where possible, while mitigating high-risk hazards, Council will minimise the impact on the tree or fauna as per the requirements of the Code.

Banyule City Council maintains a 24-hour reactive/emergency service to manage emergency pruning or removal of Council-managed trees if:

- A tree has fallen or become damaged and requires removal to maintain the minimum clearance space.
- A tree has wholly or partially failed, with the potential to injure people or damage property.
- A qualified vegetation assessor has assessed the tree with regard to foreseeable local conditions and advised Council that the tree or a tree part is likely to fall onto or come into contact with an electric line, as per the procedures and criteria of the MFMP.

After undertaking emergency cutting or removal in accordance with the regulations, Council will, as soon as practicable after completion of the works, give notice to all affected persons, including residents of properties that are adjacent the tree and/or the tree is within their direct line of sight.

As part of such works, Council will record where and when the cutting or removal was undertaken, identify why the cutting/removal was required and record when the last inspection of the tree occurred. All previous works will be recorded and stored in Council's GIS database.

Allowing for regrowth

The additional regrowth space required beyond the minimum clearance space detailed within the Code is forecast in accordance with species type, local conditions and pruning frequency (also see [Clauses 4–7: Exceptions to minimum clearance space](#) of Schedule 1). Based on current observations about average annual growth rate under the municipality's growing conditions, council generally requires the pruning contractor to prune for an additional clearance of 50 cm beyond the minimum clearance space specified in the Code. The regrowth allowance will be monitored and updated on a yearly basis based on observations about annual growth rate patterns. These observations will be applied when determining the extent and frequency of any required pruning intervention. Decisions on maintaining the clearance space are made by the relevant office in consultation with other relevant authorities, dependent on advice from management regarding the availability of funds.

Auditing and communication

Compliance with this Plan is dependent on the performance of Council's tree inspection and tree maintenance contractor. The Contractors, and by extension, Council as a Responsible Person, will be assessed through the contract performance process as detailed in Regulation 9(4)(o).

Record keeping

Tree pruning contractors have access to Council's works management software where they are required to record details of all cyclic inspections and previous works on trees.

Regulation 9(4)(j)(ii)(A): Determining an additional distance

To determine a minimum clearance space that allows for conductor sag and sway in accordance with Division 1 of Part 3 of the Code, Standard minimum clearance spaces ([Appendix 1](#)), the contractor must:

- Confirm the significance of the vegetation in the area to be pruned.
- Identify the conductor type.
- Identify the total span length.
- Identify tree location within that span.
- Apply the corresponding graph/formula of Schedule 2 of the Code.
- Reference the required clearance.

Regulations 9(4)(j)(ii)(B): Provision for additional distances for different parts of an electric line span

Council will maintain minimum clearance spaces in compliance with the clearance graphs in Schedule 2 of the Code (graphs 1, 2, 3 & 4 (LBRA) and 5 & 6 (HBRA)).

Uninsulated spans over 100 m in length in the LBRA, or over 45 m in the HBRA, require additional allowance for sag and sway ([Appendix 1](#)). Council has liaised with relevant Distribution Businesses to obtain maps of powerline spans. Powerline data obtained from the Distribution Businesses has been stored in council database. The data shows all powerline spans, their location in LBRA or HBRA, and the applicable information to determine sag and sway. This information is made available to council staff and contractors when doing powerline clearance works.

Where a span requiring additional allowance for sag and sway is identified, the sag and sway allowances specified in the Code will be applied, after consultation with the relevant asset owner, e.g. Distribution Business (Figure 4) or Railway authority.

Two power distributors operate within Banyule municipality (Figure 4).

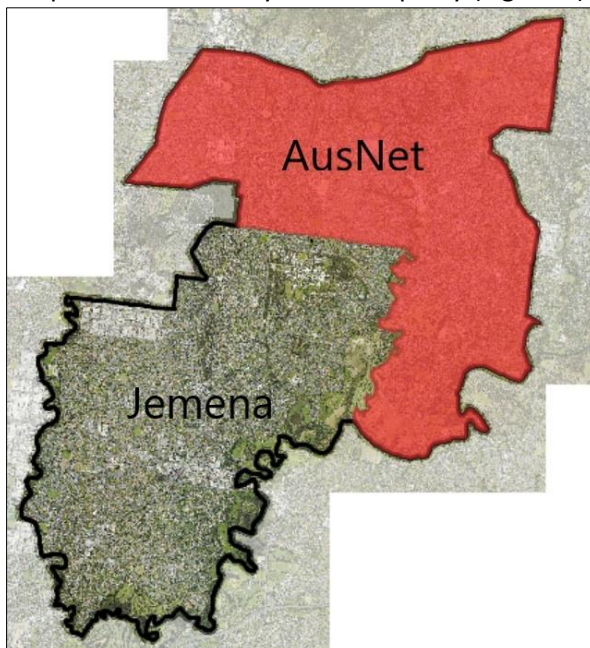


Figure 4 Power distributor boundaries within Banyule municipality.

The names and contact details for the Distribution Businesses and Railway Authorities that operate within Banyule municipality are:

Company Jemena
Contact Will Few
Address PO Box 16182, Melbourne VIC 3000
Telephone 1300 131 871 / 03 9173 6508
Faults and emergencies 131 626

Company AusNet Services
Contact Spencer Few
Telephone 03 9238 6353
Faults and emergencies 131 799

Company Metro Trains
Contact Katrina Lewis, Production Manager – Vegetation
Address Level 16, 700 Collins Street, Docklands VIC 3008
Telephone 0405 506 488

Company VicTrack
Address Level 8, 1010 La Trobe Street, Docklands VIC 3008
GPD Box 1681, Melbourne VIC 3001
Telephone 1300 842 872

Company Yarra Trams
Contact Tobias Meyer, Team Manager – Network Facilities
Address 555 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Telephone 0410 473 749

Council will consult the Distribution Businesses, Railway Authorities and Tram Operators if staff or contractors have any safety concerns with cutting or removing trees near power lines close to their assets. Council will keep records of all advice received from these businesses and authorities for at least 5 years.

Regulation 9(4)(k): Procedures when impracticable to comply with AS 4373

Council requires that pruning conforms to AS 4373, or as far as reasonably practical. The phrase ‘as far as reasonably practical’ in relation to AS 4373 means that the pruning works is capable of being done in a reasonable way without compromising the tree’s health, amenity value, or general safety standards. Consideration will be given to the minimum clearances required, the resources and techniques available, the risk of the tree to public safety, and viability of the tree following pruning works. Pruning contractors are made aware of the definition for “as far as reasonably practical” during induction meetings and monthly contractor meetings.

It will also be ensured that:

- Safe approach distances are maintained.
- A safe work environment is maintained when working at heights.
- Minimum clearance is achieved.
- An affordable level of productivity is achieved.
- Council acknowledges that conformance with AS 4373–2007 *Pruning of amenity trees*, especially in relation to the final pruning cut, cannot always be achieved when undertaking powerline pruning safely.

For trees that cannot be pruned in accordance with the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020* within the guidelines of AS 4373 *Pruning of amenity trees*, the Contractor must notify Council.

Council will then inspect the tree and if the tree cannot be pruned to comply with the Code, Council will investigate and implement an alternative method to ensure safety and continuity of supply.

Alternative methods will be considered in the following order:

- Additional pruning to remove structural limbs.
- Implementation of structural solutions.
- Application for exemption.
- Tree removal and replacement with a suitable species.

Where pruning will severely affect a significant tree or tree of value, or when an affected person objects to the pruning or clearing of vegetation near powerlines, Council Officers will consult with the affected person(s) about alternative methods, including:

- Reduced pruning cycle.
- Removal and replacement with a suitable species.
- Use of aerial bundled cable.
- Other engineering solutions.

Where an affected person requests the relocation or provision of alternate services such as aerial bundle cable, Council will refer the matter to the distribution company for further consideration.

Where vegetation significance or public need requires that an alternative course should be pursued, Council may undertake a cost benefit analysis on a case-by-case basis.

Regulation 9(4)(l): Alternative compliance mechanisms

Council does not intend to apply for any alternative compliance mechanisms at the time of preparation of this Plan.

If alternative compliance mechanisms are required, Council will apply to Energy Safe Victoria. The application would include the:

- Details of the alternative compliance mechanism.
- Procedures to be adopted for commissioning, installing, operating, maintaining and decommissioning the proposed alternative compliance mechanism.
- Published technical standards that will be complied with when commissioning, installing, operating, maintaining and decommissioning the alternative compliance mechanism.
- Location or class of the span to which the alternative will be applied.
- Specification for the proposed minimum clearance space in relation to the span, or class of spans.

The application will also include a copy of:

- The formal safety assessment prepared under Clause 32 of the regulations.
- Written agreement from the owner or the owner or operator of the span; or
- Written agreement from the owner of the owner or operator of the class of spans.

If, and as, requested by Energy Safe Victoria, Council will provide further information or material about the application.

Regulations 9(4)(m)(i)–(ii): Approval for alternative compliance mechanism

At the time of preparation of this Plan, no trees have been identified during past pruning that cannot be pruned in compliance with AS 4373–2007 *Pruning of amenity trees*.

Therefore, Council does not hold an approval for an alternative compliance mechanism, and none is in effect.

Contractors are required to report any such trees to Council so that they can be identified on the Tree Database.

Regulation 9(4)(n): Performance assessment measures

Council’s performance under this Plan is assessed against three criteria, using the measurement methods outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Performance assessment criteria and measures.

Criteria	Measurement method	KPI
Completion of the annual inspection and pruning program	- Assessment records - Contract compliance records	100% completion on schedule
Safety of public and workers	- Incident reports & Contractor monthly reports - Contractor performance audits - Contractor monthly reports	No injuries
Review of historical works and past performance	- Historical records on trees pruned near powerlines - Records on past breaches of vegetation clearance - Records on past responses to pruning requests from the Distribution Businesses - Records on past responses to pruning requests from customers - Records on past responses to emergency clearance requests - Historical records on clearing not meeting quality requirements (AS4373)	100% completion on schedule

The Contractors’ performance is measured through Council’s contract performance process, which involves:

- Weekly reports from the Contractors listing the inspected areas and trees pruned, as well as any incident reports and complaints received.
- Post-work audit of each assessed area by the Contract Supervisor (Regulation 9(4)(o)).
- Issue of a Return Service Notification for trees identified in the post-work audit that do not meet the Code.
- Re-auditing of any non-conformances.

Council’s Contract Supervisor also assesses the Contractor’s pruning quality (Regulation 9(4)(o)) to identify any instances of poor performance, as part of Council’s normal contract management processes.

If poor pruning quality is identified, normal contract management processes are implemented, including:

- Contract meetings.
- Increased compliance audits.
- Remedial training.
- Where necessary, application of contract non-conformance penalties.

Regulation 9(4)(o): Audit processes to determine compliance

Council audits the Pruning Contractor each week when pruning works are ongoing. The weekly audit covers;

- Personnel qualifications and competences.
- Safety of equipment and machines.
- Procedures and procedures such as setup for traffic control and responding to emergencies.

Council also audits 100% of the Pruning Contractor’s completed work relating to powerline clearance to:

- Ensure that all requirements outlined in this Plan are being met.
- Any non-compliance with the Code is identified and promptly resolved.

Weekly safety audits are conducted by a suitably qualified officer with minimum of AQF Level 5 qualification in Arboriculture. Audit of completed pruning works is conducted by an Inspections Contractor suitably qualified with minimum Certificate III in Arboriculture. Screenshots of audit proformas are presented in Appendix 2.

All auditing data is electronically recorded in the field data collection software and filed at Council's office as per the Code.

As outlined in the following, Council uses five categories of criteria to audit all contractors or personnel undertaking line clearance pruning.

Statutory Clearance of Vegetation

Council will communicate any non-conformance issues to the Pruning Contractor if:

- Less than 100% of trees pruned comply with the clearance requirements stipulated in the contract and current Code of practice.
- The contractor fails to notify Council's arborist if the required clearance pruning results in:
 - Removal of structural branches with diameter greater than 150 mm.
 - Removal of more than 30% of the tree's crown.
 - Permanent tree damage.
- The contractor fails to notify Council's arborist that the tree cannot be pruned to achieve the minimum clearance.

Local Outcomes and Requirements

Council will communicate any non-conformance issues to the Pruning Contractor if:

- Pruned branches are left in the tree's crown (hangers).
- Trees listed for pruning are not pruned.

Pruning techniques

Council will communicate any non-conformance issues to the Pruning Contractor if: All (100%) of final pruning cuts on each tree pruned are not compliant with AS 4373 *Pruning of amenity trees* and best management practices.

Site condition

Council will communicate to the Contractor if:

- Any sites are left untidy with visible debris.

Auditing all of the Contractor's work occurs as follows:

- Line clearance works in each pruning precinct is audited before completion of programmed works in that precinct.
- Pruning quality will be assessed by the Contract Supervisor to identify any instances of poor performance (see Regulation 9(4)(n)).

Council forwards to the Contractor a list of reworks. Once a list of reworks is issued to the Contractor:

- Council and the Contractor agree on a reasonable timeframe for resolution, depending on the volume.
- The Contractor rectifies the non-compliance on the timelines specified in the tree maintenance contract.
- Council requires the Contractor to supply regular updates during this timeframe.
- Once completed, Council re-audits, closes out and files all associated information.

Council will investigate any non-conformance recurrences to determine the root cause and will follow up with the contractor during Monthly Contractor Meetings.

Following investigation of any non-compliance and establishment of the cause, Council will draw to the attention of the persons concerned the importance of compliance with this Plan and the Code as follows:

- On the first occasion, verbal instruction will be given, and the incident recorded on file.

- If a second occasion occurs, the notification shall be in writing, and the incident recorded on file.
- If a third occasion occurs with the same offender, the training program will be reviewed, and more serious action considered.

Where remedial action is required, the work can be carried out as soon as possible by Council staff or the Contractor.

Remedial works identified during an audit of the Contractor's schedule pruning work are done by the contractor.

Urgent works resulting from occurrences before scheduled cyclic pruning are Council's responsibility. Methods for identifying these urgent works include a proactive annual audit of all HV powerlines conducted in March each year, as well as monthly audit of powerline clearance by the Distribution Businesses. Where identified non-compliant trees are not live line, council officers will drop notification flyers in the mailbox of all properties where the tree is within the line of sight. The notification flyers will advise that line clearance pruning will be completed as soon as possible. Where identified non-compliant trees will require live line resources, the relevant Distribution Business will be contacted to arrange live line pruning. Where assistance for remedial work is required by others (Regulation 9(4)(j)(ii)(B)), a consultation procedure (Regulation 9(4)(q)) shall be used to assist in attending to the non-compliance issue as soon as possible.

While the line clearance maintenance program is in operation, Contractor OHS compliance is also audited quarterly (minimum) using the Tree Care Contractor OHS Checklist.

Regulation 9(4)(p): Qualifications and experience

Under its Line Clearance Management contract with Council, all employees of the Contractor involved in work under this Plan are required to be a "qualified person". Under Regulation 616(2) of the [Electricity Safety \(General\) Regulations 2019](#), a qualified person means "a person who holds a current certificate that is approved by Energy Safe Victoria, specifying satisfactory completion of a training course in tree clearing" from a Registered Training Organisation.

Contractors and council staff pruning vegetation should be appropriately qualified, use the right equipment for the job and be aware of distances between powerlines and their area of work, their body and their tools. The minimum qualification is a Certificate 2 in ESI- Powerline Vegetation Control, including the relevant electives for work roles. The most recent training package for required qualifications is updated from the Australian government official online register for training and qualifications (training.gov.au). Table 3 shows a training matrix with minimum qualifications for various work roles.

Table 3. Works roles and required qualifications

Description of Work Role	Minimum Qualifications, Training, and Experience
EWP Operator and EWP Safety Observer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certificate II ESI – Powerline Vegetation Control (UET20321), including all core units and the following elective units of competency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Control Vegetation in the Vicinity of Live Electrical Apparatus from Elevated Work Platform (UETDRVC004) ii. Control Vegetation Using Pruning Techniques (UETDRVC007) - Worksafe High Risk Work Licence – Licence to Operate a Boom-Type Elevating Work Platform (Boom Length 11 Metres or More) (TLILIC0005) - Implement Traffic Management Plans (RIIWHS302E) - Control Traffic with Stop-Slow Bat (RIIWHS205E) - Prepare to Work Safely in the Construction Industry (CPCCWHS1001) - Shift Materials Safely Using Manual Handling Methods (TLID0020)
Arborist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certificate III in Arboriculture (AHC30824), including all core units and the following elective units of competency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Perform a Ground-Based Tree Defect Evaluation (AHCARB408) - Certificate II ESI – Powerline Vegetation Control (UET20321), including all core units and the following elective units of competency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Control Vegetation in the Vicinity of Live Electrical Apparatus from Elevated Work Platform (UETDRVC004) ii. Control Vegetation Using Pruning Techniques (UETDRVC007) - Implement Traffic Management Plans (RIIWHS302E) - Control Traffic with Stop-Slow Bat (RIIWHS205E) - Prepare to Work Safely in the Construction Industry (CPCCWHS1001) - Shift Materials Safely Using Manual Handling Methods (TLID0020)

Description of Work Role	Minimum Qualifications, Training, and Experience
<p>Inspections Contractor / Vegetation assessor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certificate III in Arboriculture (AHC30824), including all core units and the following elective units of competency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Perform a Ground-Based Tree Defect Evaluation (AHCARB408) - Certificate II ESI – Powerline Vegetation Control (UET20321), including all core units and the following elective units of competency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Control Vegetation in the Vicinity of Live Electrical Apparatus from Elevated Work Platform (UETDRVC004) ii. Control Vegetation Using Pruning Techniques (UETDRVC007) - Minimum of 3 years field experience assessing trees - Implement Traffic Management Plans (RIIWH302E) - Control Traffic with Stop-Slow Bat (RIIWH205E) - Prepare to Work Safely in the Construction Industry (CPCWHS1001) - Shift Materials Safely Using Manual Handling Methods (TLID0020)
<p>Suitably Qualified Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tertiary qualification in Arboriculture or Horticulture with minimum of Australian Qualifications Framework Level 5. - Certificate II ESI – Powerline Vegetation Control (UET20321), including all core units and the following elective units of competency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Control Vegetation in the Vicinity of Live Electrical Apparatus from Elevated Work Platform (UETDRVC004) ii. Control Vegetation Using Pruning Techniques (UETDRVC007) - Minimum of 3 years experience in Arboriculture - Implement Traffic Management Plans (RIIWH302E) - Control Traffic with Stop-Slow Bat (RIIWH205E)

Description of Work Role	Minimum Qualifications, Training, and Experience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare to Work Safely in the Construction Industry (CPCCWHS1001) - Shift Materials Safely Using Manual Handling Methods (TLID0020)

Council staff and contractors working on vegetation near powerlines will also be required to renew the following qualifications when they are due;

- First Aid (UETDRMPO10) and CPR (HLTAID009).
- Perform Elevated Work Platform Rescue (UETDRMP005).
- Perform Elevated Work Platform Controlled Descent Escape (UETDRMP004).
- Safe Approach Distances – Vegetation Work.

Live line cutters working within no-go zones will be required to have appropriate qualifications and training for the live line task, as well as have appropriate permissions and authorisations from the Distribution Businesses.

- Council conducts annual desk-top audits of Contractors' training certificates and qualifications.

Before being employed or engaged to perform powerline clearance works, Council requires all staff and contractors to provide evidence of appropriate qualifications and training. Details of these qualifications are recorded in a Training Matrix in council's database. Where Elevated Work Platform (EWP) Operator, EWP Safety Observer and other vegetation clearance personnel are found on work site without appropriate training or qualifications, council officer will inform the personnel to stop all works with immediately and report to their supervisor. A written notification will be sent to the contractor to direct them that the personnel without appropriate training or qualification must not be engaged in the performance of electric line clearance works until adequate proof is provided to show appropriate training and qualifications.

- The contractor must inform itself of all OH&S policies, procedures or measures implemented or adopted by council for various work activities, including;
- Traffic management.
- Chipper operations.
- Elevated work platform.
- Tree climbing.
- Use of chainsaws.

Regulation 9(4)(q): Notification and consultation procedures

Council's tree pruning program is made available to all residents via its website. Prior to pruning in each precinct, Council also places advertisements on its website and in its quarterly publication [Banyule Banner](#).

Pursuant to Clause 16(3) of Division 3 of the Code, prior to cutting or removing a tree identified under Regulation 9(4)(h)(ii) or (iii) of this Plan, unless cutting or removal is required urgently, written notice will be given if:

- the tree is within the boundary of private property—an owner or occupier of the property; or
- the tree is on land that is managed by a Council that is not the responsible person—that Council; or

- the tree is on land that is contiguous to private property and the use of that property may be affected during the cutting or removal—an owner or occupier of that property.

Within 14–60 days prior to the commencement of Line Clearance works Council will provide the following notification on its website:

NOTICE OF POWERLINE CLEARANCE WORKS
We will soon be pruning trees on our nature strips and various properties we own to maintain a safe distance around powerlines. The Victorian *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020* and the *Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance* set out in the Schedule to these Regulations require us to maintain vegetation clearance around powerlines for public safety.
The locations we will be pruning are in streets throughout.....
This will not affect any private property.
Works will begin in the week starting.....,and will be completed within 60 days.
Relevant parties will be contacted regarding any pruning done on trees of cultural or environmental significance, and information on what we are doing and why will be provided.
If you have any questions about this work, call us on 9490 4222.

If the pruning works do not occur between 14 – 60 days after notifications, all affected residents will be notified again about the delays via the [Banyule website](#).

Regulation 9(4)(r): Independent dispute resolution procedure

Under this Plan, a dispute is a situation where the normal processes of consultation and negotiation relating to trees affected by powerlines fail to provide a satisfactory result. If a dispute arises between Council and a member of the public, Council will initiate its [internal dispute resolution procedure](#). The person responsible for resolving tree dispute issues is below;

Name: Ben de Klepper
Title: Coordinator Urban Forestry
Phone: 03 9490 4222
Email: ben.deklepper@banyule.vic.gov.au

Under this process, a dispute will first be managed by a council officer at a lower management level. If a resolution is not reached, the dispute will be escalated to the next level of management until a resolution is reached. The process of escalation is as follows;

1. Team Leader Urban Forestry
2. Coordinator Urban Forestry
3. Manager Parks and Natural Environment
4. Director Assets and City Services

If the dispute is not resolved using this procedure, the dispute will be referred in writing to the [Energy and Water Ombudsman](#) (Victoria) or an alternative dispute resolution entity.

If a dispute arises between Council and a network operator:

- In the first instance, the person responsible for this Plan will negotiate with the network operator’s designated contact.
- If the dispute remains unresolved, it will be escalated within Council’s management system for negotiation with the equivalent management level of the network operator.
- If a dispute cannot be resolved between Council and a network operator, Energy Safe Victoria will be contacted for clarification of the statutory requirements and assistance in resolving the disputed matter.

Regulation 9(4)(s) Exemptions and exceptions

Exemptions

Under Clause (11) of the Regulations, Banyule City Council has not been exempted by Energy Safe Victoria from any of the requirements of these Regulations subject to any conditions specified by Energy Safe Victoria.

Exceptions

Where an inspections contractor or vegetation assessor identifies that removal of a branch to meet the minimum line clearance space will significantly alter the shape of a tree or compromise its structure, Council will undertake an individual assessment of the tree to determine whether an Exception is applicable. Exceptions allowed under the Code are provided under [Clauses 4–7](#) in Table 2.

Regulations 10(1)–(6): Obligations relating to this Plan

Regulations 10(1)–(4): Requests from Energy Safe Victoria

If requested in writing by Energy Safe Victoria, Banyule City Council, the responsible person for this Electric Line Clearance Management Plan (ELCMP), prepared under Regulation 9, will within 14 days or otherwise specified:

- Provide a copy of this Plan to Energy Safe Victoria.
- Supply further information or material relating to this Plan.
- Amend the Plan if instructed to do so.

Regulation 10(5): Plan compliance

Pending the approval of this Plan by Energy Safe Victoria, Banyule City Council will comply with all requirements.

Regulation 10(6): Plan publication

A copy of this Plan will be made available on [Banyule City Council’s website](#) by 1 July each year. Any approved revisions of the Plan will supersede the current plan on the Banyule website. The superseded Plan will be removed from the website and replaced with the revised Plan.

Date: 31 March 2024

Authorised by:

Reviewed by:

Darren Bennett
Director, Assets and City
Services

Michael Tanner
Manager, Parks & Natural
Env.

Ben de Klepper
Coordinator, Urban Forestry

Appendix 1: Applicable minimum clearance space

Code: Part 3, Division 1: Standard minimum clearance spaces

Clause	Line type	Area type	Minimum clearance space	Applicable distance (AD)
24	Insulated	All	The space extending away from the line in all directions perpendicular to its axis for the applicable distance (Figures 1, 2 & 3 of the Code)	For the first & last sixths of the span: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 mm For the middle 2/3rds of the span (Graph 1 of the Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the span is ≤ 40 m: 300 mm • if the span is > 40 m & ≤ 100 m: $300 + (\text{span distance} - 40) \times 10 = \text{AD}$ • if the span is > 100 m: 900 mm
25	Uninsulated, low voltage	LBRA	The space extending away from the line in all directions perpendicular to its axis for the applicable distance and if the span is greater than 100 m, additional distance to allow for sag & sway (Figures 1 & 4 of the Code).	For the first & last sixths of the span: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1000 mm For the middle 2/3rds of the span (Graph 2 of the Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the span is > 45 m & ≤ 100 m: $1000 + (\text{span distance} - 45) \times (1500 \div 55)$ • if the span is > 100 m: 2500 mm
26	Uninsulated, High voltage (other than 66 000 V line)	LBRA	The space extending away from the line in all directions perpendicular to its axis for the applicable distance and if the span is greater than 100 m, additional distance to allow for sag & sway (Figures 1 & 3 of the Code).	For the first & last sixths of the span: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1500 mm For the middle 2/3rds of the span (Graph 3 of the Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the span is > 45 m & ≤ 100 m: $1500 + (\text{span distance} - 45) \times (1000 \div 55)$ • if the span is > 100 m: 2500 mm
27	Uninsulated, 66 000 V	LBRA	The space extending away from the line in all directions perpendicular to its axis for the applicable distance and if the span is greater than 100 m, additional distance to allow for sag & sway (Figures 1 & 5). The space above these spaces must also remain clear.	For the first & last sixths of the span: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2250 mm For the middle 2/3rds of the span (Graph 4 of the Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the span is ≤ 45 m: 2250 • if the span is > 45 m & ≤ 100 m: $(2500 + (\text{span distance} - 45) \times (1250 \div 55))$ • if the span distance is > 100 m: 3500 mm
28	Uninsulated, low & high voltage	HBRA	The space extending away from the line in all directions	For the first & last sixths of the span: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1500 mm

Clause	Line type	Area type	Minimum clearance space	Applicable distance (AD)
	(other than 66 000 V)		perpendicular to its axis for the applicable distance and additional distance that allows for conductor sag and sway (Figures 1 & 5 of the Code). The space above these spaces must also remain clear.	For the middle 2/3rds of the span (Graph 5 of the Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the span is ≤ 45 m: 1500 mm • if the span is > 45 m & ≤ 500 m: $(1500 + (\text{span distance} - 45) \times (500 \div 303))$ • if the span is > 500 m: 2250 mm
29	Uninsulated 66 000 V	HBRA	The space extending away from the line in all directions perpendicular to its axis for the applicable distance and an additional distance that allows for conductor sag and sway (Figures 1 & 5 of the Code). The space above these spaces must also remain clear.	For the first & last sixths of the span: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2250 mm For the middle 2/3rds of the span (Graph 6 of the Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the span is ≤ 45 m: 2250mm • if the span is > 45 m & ≤ 350 m: $(2250 + (\text{span distance} - 45) \times (750 \div 305))$ • if the span is > 350 m: 3000 mm

Schedule 1 – Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance

Clauses 4–7: Exceptions to minimum clearance space

Part 2, Division 1, Clauses 4–7 of the Code, allow for exceptions to the Code as per the conditions in Table 2.

Table 2. Conditions for exceptions to minimum clearance for different branch types around different line types.

Clause	Applicable area	Line type	Tree part	Condition for exception
4*	All areas	Insulated, low voltage	Structural branches around lines	The branch is > 130 mm wide at the point it enters the minimum clearance space; AND the branch is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 150 mm from the line if the span distance is ≤ 40 m OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 300 mm from the line if the span is > 40 m; AND In the last 14 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a suitably qualified arborist (Regulation 9(4)(p)) has inspected the tree and advised that it has no visible defects that could cause the branch to fail and contact the electric line, and

Clause	Applicable area	Line type	Tree part	Condition for exception
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has completed a risk assessment of the branch and implemented mitigation measures for any identified risks.
5	All areas	Insulated, low voltage	Small branches around lines	<p>The branch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is less than 10 mm wide at the point at which it enters the minimum clearance space; <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has been removed from the minimum clearance space within the past 12 months.
6*	LBRA	Uninsulated, low voltage	Small branches under lines	<p>The branch is less than 10 mm wide at the minimum clearance space entry point and is no more than 500 mm inside the minimum clearance space;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>the branch originates at a point below the height of the electric line;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>if the branch is within the minimum clearance space around the middle two-thirds of the span, the span is fitted with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 conductor spreader if the span is ≤ 45 m <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 conductor spreaders if the span is > 45 m. <p>*Spreader not required if the branch comes within the minimum clearance space around the first or last sixth of the span.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>In the last 14 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a suitably qualified arborist (Regulation 9(4)(p)) has inspected the tree, and Council has completed a risk assessment of the branch and implemented mitigation measures for any identified risks.
7*	LBRA	Uninsulated, low voltage	Structural branches around lines	<p>if the branch is within the minimum clearance space around the middle two-thirds of the span, the span is fitted with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 conductor spreader if the span is ≤ 45 m <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 conductor spreaders if the span is > 45 m. <p>*Spreader not required if the branch comes within the minimum clearance space around the first or last sixth of the span.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>the branch is > 130 mm wide at the point it enters the minimum clearance space</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The branch is no more than 500 mm inside the minimum clearance space</p> <p>AND</p>

Clause	Applicable area	Line type	Tree part	Condition for exception
				<p>In the last 14 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a suitably qualified arborist (Regulation 9(4)(p)) has inspected the tree and advised that it has no visible defects that could cause the branch to fail and contact the electric line, and • Council has completed a risk assessment of the branch and implemented mitigation measures for any identified risks.

* If Council leaves a branch within the minimum clearance space for an electric line under Clauses 4, 6, and 7, it will retain records in its asset management and GIS systems for at least five years on:

- Each inspection.
- All advice referred to regarding the branch identified as having no structural defects.
- Each risk assessment on any risks posed by the branch.
- The mitigation measures to effectively mitigate any identified risks posed by the branch.

All trees on the Exception register will be re-assessed annually.

Appendix 2: Safety audit proforma

Site Visit / Audit Checks

6. Risk Assessment: Has a Take 5 Risk Assessment been completed and signed off by all personnel working on site?

Yes

No

N/A

Other

7. Safe Work Method Statement available for work tasks and signed by staff.

Yes

No

N/A

Other

8. Personal Protective Equipment - PPE correct for task?
As a minimum: Hi Vis Vests or Hi Vis Long Sleeved shirts, long pants, safety boots, safety glasses.

Yes

No

N/A

Other

9. Noise Management - Appropriate hearing protection worn?

Yes

No

N/A

Other

10. First Aid Kit & Fire Extinguisher Available and in date?

Yes

No

N/A

Other

11. Emergency Contact information available and up to date?

Yes

No

N/A

Other

Figure 5 Screenshot of safety audit

Table 4 - Fields requested in audit

SITE VISIT AUDIT CHECKLIST

ID

Start time

Completion time

Email

Name

Name2

Location

Unit

Brief Description of Works

Personnel on site (Including Contractors)

Risk Assessment: Has a Take 5 Risk Assessment been completed and signed off by all personnel working on site?

Safe Work Method Statement available for work tasks and signed by staff.

Personal Protective Equipment - PPE correct for task?

As a minimum: Hi Vis Vests or Hi Vis Long Sleeved shirts, long pants, safety boots, safety glasses.

Noise Management - Appropriate hearing protection worn?

First Aid Kit & Fire Extinguisher Available and in date?

Emergency Contact information available and up to date?

Appropriate Licenses & Competencies for work tasks?

Red/White Construction ticket in date?

Traffic Management Plan available?

Traffic Management Plan appropriate for work task?

Does the site require permission from Dept of Transport e.g. working on Vic Roads?

Traffic Controller ticket in date?

High Risk License if applicable?

Hazardous substances - Use, Storage, Spill Kit Available? Current Safety Data Sheet available for all substances on site?

Are decanted chemicals correctly labelled?

Is liquefied petroleum gas being used on site?

Adequate signage, barricades, bollards, traffic cones in place to stop unauthorised access?

Vehicles/Plant & Equipment - Have the pre-start checklists been completed for vehicles and plant?

Electrical Tools Test & Tag -All tools tested within last 12 months?

Excavation Risks - Trenches and/or manholes shored, covered/barricaded?

Underground Services - Dial Before You Dig? Clearance for No Go Zones?

Overhead Services - No Go Zones adhered to?

Are spotters used when working near to overhead power lines?

Housekeeping - Site, vehicles etc.

Environments - Are controls in place to manage environmental issues on site:

- Flora & Fauna

- Dust

- Noise

- Waste Disposal

- Water Run-off

- Environmental Pollution

Quality - Are works being completed as per specifications/Australian Standards

**How is the customer/client notified of commencement/completion of works? Please Specify
Any other relevant information?**