



MF16/3786

The Committee
Hunters Hill Trust
members@huntershilltrust.org.au

Dear Committee Members

Tree Trimming by Ausgrid in Hunters Hill

Thank you for your email of 8 September 2016, to the Hon Anthony Roberts MP, Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, concerning the pruning of trees by Ausgrid in the Hunters Hill area. The Minister has asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

Ausgrid has a legal obligation to keep the public and its staff safe, and maintain a reliable power supply. This includes maintaining the minimum required safety clearances between its electricity infrastructure and nearby vegetation, in accordance with the *Electricity Supply Act 1995* and ISSC3 Guideline for Managing Vegetation near Powerlines (ISSC3).

Vegetation is pruned to meet required safety clearances and allow for annual regrowth. This helps prevent vegetation from growing back into clearance zones before the trees are trimmed again. Once the clearance plus regrowth allowance is determined for each branch, it is then trimmed at the nearest collar (or growth point). This is a requirement under Australian Standard 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees (AS4373) as it protects trees from infection or disease and reduces the development of weakly attached growth after trimming trees midbranch.

On 7 September 2016, representatives of Ausgrid, the authorised vegetation removal contractor and Hunters Hill Council, inspected the tree shown in the photographs sent with your email. The inspection found the limbs which were removed were located approximately 100mm from the bare low voltage network. A minimum safety clearance of one metre is required around this section of the network.

Prior to removal, both Ausgrid and its authorised vegetation removal contractor inspected the limbs. Given their close proximity to the network, both parties determined that the limbs could not safely remain attached to the tree.

Hunters Hill Council was notified of the intention to remove these limbs by Ausgrid's authorised vegetation management contractor on multiple occasions and did not provide a response.

Ausgrid recently established a dedicated community engagement program for tree trimming to help improve the way it delivers these services. As you are aware, a community stakeholder working group is helping to review its guidelines, develop a service charter and advise on notification processes. The group has representatives of industry, community groups and more than 20 local councils, including Hunters Hill Council.

Should you have any further queries, you are welcome to contact Ausgrid's Vegetation & Inspection Manager, Kevin Hamblin on (02) 4399 8172.

Thank you for bringing this matter to the attention on the NSW Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Claudia Huertas
Group Director
Operations and Programs