



24.06.19

Paul Fearon
Director of Energy Safe
Energy Safe Victoria Consultation Response
PO Box 262
Collins Street West
VIC 8007

To Mr Fearon,

Response to Energy Safe Victoria's Draft Report: The Condition of Power Poles in South West Victoria Technical Investigation Report

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Energy Safe Victoria's (ESV) Draft report: The Condition of Power Poles in South West Victoria Technical Investigation Report.

At Powercor, we are focused on operating and maintaining a safe network for our customers.

We are confident in the network to deliver safe and reliable power to the south west region and have a robust inspection and maintenance program in place to minimise risks to the community. This program includes annually inspecting about one in three of the 571,800 wood, concrete and steel poles across our network, in line with Victoria's regulatory standards.

We acknowledge the community's concerns following last year's devastating fires in Victoria's south west region. Powercor has been engaging with the local community and we conducted the additional program of pole inspections in response to their concerns. These additional inspections confirmed the high structural integrity of our infrastructure, and this was acknowledged in your report, which stated: "*Powercor's power pole inspection and maintenance process is fit for purpose and there is no immediate systemic risk of pole failures in the South West.*"

Powercor has also further strengthened how we inspect and replace poles on our network in response to community feedback.

Our inspection methodology has been updated with new measures for pole serviceability, increased inspection frequency and clarifications to the use of signage on poles.

Under the new measures:

- We have replaced the 'Limited Life' category to 'Serviceable – Added Controls' reflecting that the poles are still strong but will be inspected more frequently;
- Those rated 'Serviceable - Added Controls' will be inspected annually in preparation for the summer season; and
- Poles will be classed as unserviceable when their safety factor has dropped to 1.40. Previously, they would be replaced if their safety factor reduced to 1.25. (The higher the safety factor, the stronger the pole.) This conservative approach will add an additional 5mm - or 15 per cent - of sound wood to poles.

These changes mean the number of unserviceable poles expected to be replaced each year will now increase from 1,200 to approximately 2,200.

Powercor looks forward to working with ESV during this review process to ensure our industry is continuing to delivering safe and reliable power to Victorians.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Neave', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steven Neave
General Manager, Electricity Networks