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Power & Electricity Transmission

Plan

Basslink Electric Line Clearance Management Plan

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1. Introduction

APA Group (APA) is the parent company of Basslink Pty Ltd (Basslink). APA owns, operates, and maintains the High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) electricity transmission interconnector that links the Victorian and Tasmanian electricity grids. The interconnector includes both land-based and subsea transmission assets and has a 40-year design life.

Regulation 9(3) of the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Interim Regulations 2025* (Interim Line Clearance Regulations) requires Basslink to, before 31 March 2026, prepare and submit to Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) for approval a management plan relating to compliance with the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance for the period from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2031.

This Electric Line Clearance Management Plan (Plan) sets out Basslink's framework for:

— managing vegetation near its transmission assets to maintain required clearances between vegetation and Basslink's supply network; and
— complying with all relevant legislation including the Interim Line Clearance Regulations (including Schedules 1 and 2 – the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance (the Code)) and relevant standards.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to:

— establish clear procedures for vegetation management on and in the vicinity of the Basslink supply network; and
— comply with applicable legislation, standards and codes of practice.

3. Scope

This Plan applies to the electrical assets that form part of the Basslink transmission supply network, which is owned and operated by APA.

This Plan applies to all personnel, employees and contractors carrying out activities on the Basslink supply network covered by this Plan.

4. Concordance table

Table 1 below outlines where the requirements of the Interim Line Clearance Regulations have been addressed in this document.

Table 1: Interim Line Clearance Regulations concordance table

Regulation reference	Requirement	Location in the Plan
4(a)	The name, address and telephone number of the responsible person;	Section 5
4(b)	The name, position, address and telephone number of the individual who was responsible for the preparation of the management plan;	Section 5
4(c)	The name, position, address and telephone number of the persons who are responsible for carrying out the management plan;	Section 5
4(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;	Section 5
4(e)	The objectives of the management plan;	Section 6
4(f)	The land to which the management plan applies (as indicated on a map);	Section 7

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4(g)	Any hazardous bushfire risk areas and low bushfire risk areas in the land referred to in paragraph (f) (as indicated on the map);	Section 8
4(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;	Section 9
4(i)	The means which the responsible person will use to identify a tree of a kind specified in paragraph (h)(i), (ii) or (iii);	Section 10
4(j)	The management procedures that the responsible person will adopt to ensure compliance with the Code, which— (i) must include details of the methods to be adopted for managing trees and maintaining a minimum clearance space as required by the Code; and (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; Note: Clause 21(2) of the Code requires a distribution company or an owner or operator of a railway or tramway supply network that is consulted by a Council to assist the Council by determining an additional distance.	Section 11
4(k)	The procedures to be adopted if it is not practicable to comply with the requirements of AS 4373 while cutting a tree in accordance with the Code; Note: Clause 10 of the Code requires a responsible person to cut trees, as far as practicable, in accordance with AS 4373.	Section 12
4(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;	Section 13
4(m)	The details of each approval for an alternative compliance mechanism that— (i) the responsible person holds; and (ii) is in effect;	Section 13
4(n)	A description of the measures that must be used to assess the performance of the responsible person under the management plan;	Section 14
4(o)	Details of the audit processes that must be used to determine the responsible person's compliance with the Code;	Section 15
4(p)	The qualifications and experience that the responsible person must require of the persons who are to carry out the inspection, cutting or removal of trees in accordance with the Code and the *Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019* Note: Regulation 616(2) of the *Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019* sets out specific requirements for qualified persons carrying out vegetation management work.	Section 17
4(q)	Notification and consultation procedures, including the form of the notice to be given in accordance with Division 3 of Part 2 of the Code;	Section 18

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4(r)	A procedure for the independent resolution of disputes relating to electric line clearance;	Section 19
4(s)	If Energy Safe Victoria has granted an exemption under regulation 11 relating to a requirement of the Code, details of the exemption or a copy of the exemption.	Section 20

5. Responsible officers and publication of the Plan

5.1. Responsible officers

The prescribed particulars under sections 9(4) (a) – (d) of the Interim Line Clearance Regulations are provided in the below table.

Table 2: Responsible officers and emergency contact details

Regulation reference	Prescribed particular	Basslink information
9(4)(a)	the name, address and telephone number of the responsible person	Terry Jobling - General Manager Power & Electricity Transmission Basslink Pty Ltd (ACN 090 996 231) Level 10, 121 Castlereagh St Sydney, NSW, 2000 (03) 8626 8400
9(4)(b)	the name, position, address and telephone number of the individual who was responsible for the preparation of the management plan	Gabriel Avens - Manager Asset Operations – HVDC 6738 Bridport Rd George Town, Tasmania, 7253 (03) 8416 2849
9(4)(c)	the name, position, address and telephone number of the persons who are responsible for carrying out the management plan	Paul Pendlebury - Senior Easement Maintenance Officer Loy Yang Converter Station 182 Hyland Highway Loy Yang, VIC, 3844 (03) 8416 2883 Daniel Ralph - Team Leader - Basslink Loy Yang Loy Yang Converter Station 182 Hyland Highway Loy Yang, VIC, 3844 (03) 8416 2846
9(4)(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	Easement hotline: 1800 008 767 (24-hour, 7-day) On-call staff member: Ph: (03) 9607 4741 (24 hour, 7-day)

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5.2. Publication of the approved Plan

In accordance with regulation 10(6) of the Interim Line Clearance Regulations, Basslink will ensure a copy of the approved Plan is published on the APA website.

Once approved, the Regulatory Compliance Manager will provide a copy of the Approved Plan to the APA Digital Communications team for upload to the APA website and confirm that publication has occurred. The approved Plan will be published no later than 1 July 2026 and will be publicly accessible at www.apa.com.au.

6. Plan objectives

Basslink is required to perform vegetation management to:

— control hazardous trees and re-growth on and adjacent to the easement;
— maintain safe and secure operation of the Basslink supply network; and
— ensure Basslink electrical infrastructure does not pose a fire hazard.

Appropriate measures are required to manage the trimming and removal of vegetation and disposal of cleared residue on and adjacent to the Basslink easement.

The objectives of this Plan are to:

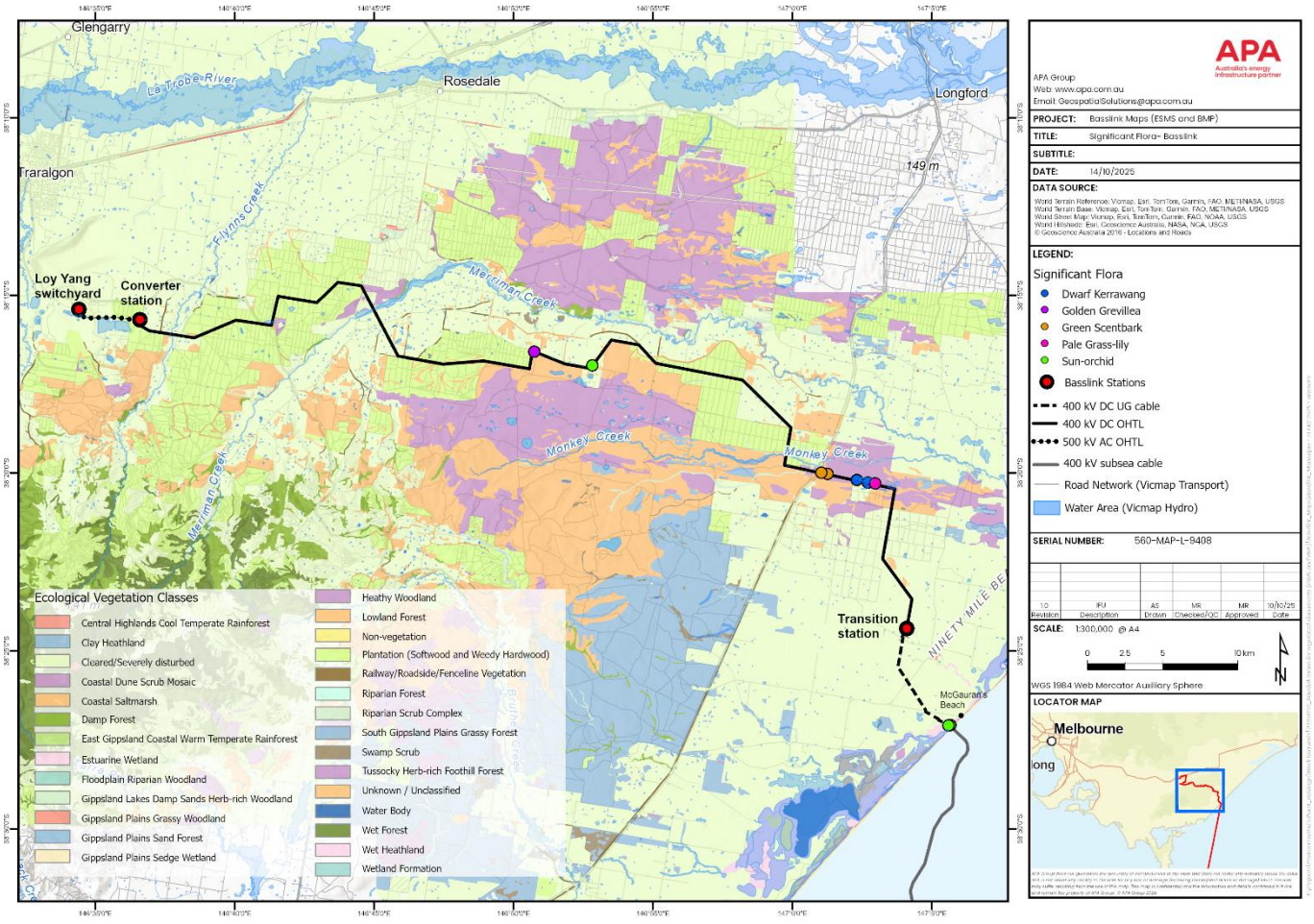
— mitigate the potential for Basslink infrastructure to cause a fire;
— protect Basslink infrastructure;
— provide a safe working environment;
— ensure public safety and community satisfaction;
— protect the ecological values of the native vegetation to be retained on the easement;
— provide a framework to ensure that safe clearances are maintained between vegetation and electric lines; and
— comply with all relevant legislation, standards and codes.

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7. Land to which this Management Plan applies

The land to which the Plan applies and the predominant ecological vegetation classes are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Map of Basslink and ecological vegetation classes

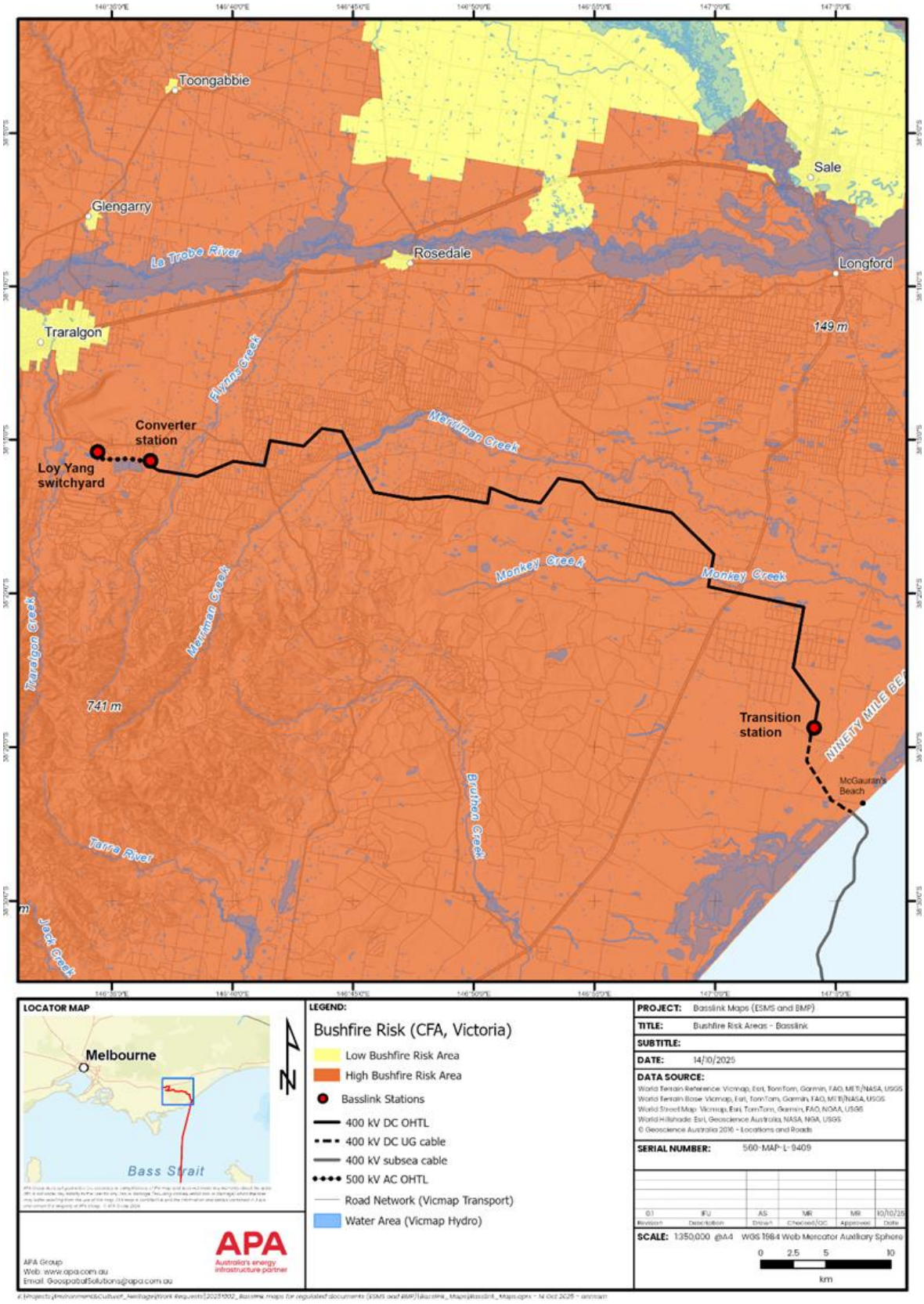


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8. Description of bushfire risk areas

The entire Victorian portion of the Basslink supply network is within a High Bushfire Risk Area (HBRA), as illustrated in Figure 2 below. This area is therefore a “hazardous bushfire risk area” for the purposes of the Interim Line Clearance Regulations.

Figure 2: Basslink bushfire risk area map



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9. Areas with trees of cultural or environmental significance

9.1. Register of trees of cultural or environmental significance

Basslink maintains a register of the following types of trees that are adjacent to the easement:

- trees that are indigenous to Victoria;
- trees that are listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance; and
- a tree of cultural or environmental significance.

The persons responsible for carrying out this Plan will coordinate a review of this register (Register of Trees) every 5 years. The management procedures for removing and managing trees of cultural or environmental significance are detailed in the Basslink Environmental Vegetation Management Procedure (EN.PR.013).

The location of trees of environmental significance is shown in Figure 1.

9.1.1. Processes for ensuring personnel are aware of the location of specified trees

To ensure personnel are aware of the location of trees recorded in the Register of Trees, Basslink implements the following measures:

- relevant maps, including constraints mapping showing trees of cultural or environmental significance, are made available to personnel prior to the commencement of works via approved systems (e.g., GIS platforms, work packs, or mobile devices);
- where required, locations are physically identified in the field through marking, signage, or inclusion in pre-work site briefings;
- environmental constraints, including the presence and location of these trees, are communicated to personnel through induction, pre-start briefings, and/or job-specific environmental controls documentation; and
- access to the Register of Trees and associated mapping is maintained and controlled to ensure personnel are using current and approved information.

9.2. Procedure for managing habitat for threatened fauna

The Basslink Environmental Vegetation Management Procedure (EN.PR.013) also describes procedures for managing a tree of environmental significance that is a habitat for threatened fauna. Basslink will engage a suitably qualified native wildlife handler if any vegetation identified for removal has or has signs of any fauna living in or amongst the tree/shrub. Basslink will seek advice from the appropriate authorities on the breeding season for the species and the most appropriate translocation for the species. Basslink will take all appropriate measures to maintain the wellbeing of fauna within Basslink easements such as where works are carried out outside of the breeding season for identified threatened fauna.

Basslink also maintains and periodically reviews a register of threatened fauna within the area.

10. Methods to identify trees of cultural or environmental significance

Basslink uses a flora and fauna survey to identify:

- trees indigenous to Victoria;
- trees listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance; and
- trees of cultural or environmental significance.

Basslink ensures the survey is performed every 5 years to ensure that all relevant trees are identified and reflected in the Register of Trees described in section 9.1.

Basslink also performs a 5-yearly review of planning schemes listed on the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action's (DEECA) website that could have an impact on transmission line maintenance and compliance with line clearance obligations. All trees listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance are added to the Register of Trees.

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11. Management procedures for maintaining clearance space

This section outlines:

— minimum clearance spaces that Basslink maintains at all times;
— methods for managing trees and maintaining a minimum clearance space;
— method for determining a distance that allows for conductor sag and sway; and
— methods for determining different additional distances for different parts of an electric line span.

11.1. Minimum clearance spaces that Basslink maintains at all times

Schedule 1 to the Code sets out the minimum clearances surrounding a transmission line. Table 3 sets out the minimum clearances of Basslink infrastructure against those required by Schedule 2 to the Code.

Table 3: Minimum clearances of Basslink transmission line infrastructure

Nominal voltage and support type	Minimum ground clearance at maximum sag	Maximum height of vegetation[1]	Applicable vertical distance[3]	Minimum vertical clearance space[2]	Minimum horizontal clearance space[4]	Applicable horizontal distance[5]
220 kV double-circuit steel lattice tower	9.9 m	1.7 m	8.2 m	3.7 m	4.6 m	14.5 m
400 kV steel lattice tower						
Conductor (400 kV)	10.7 m	1.8 m	8.9 m	6.4 m	6.4 m	24.3-25.1 m[6]
Metallic return (24 kV)	10.7 m	1.8 m	8.9 m	3.0 m	3.0 m	18.5 m
400 kV folded-plate steel pole						
Conductor (400 kV)	10.7 m	1.8 m	8.9 m	6.4 m	6.4 m	27.3 m
Metallic return (24 kV)	10.7 m	1.8 m	8.9 m	3.0 m	3.0 m	16.3 m
500 kV single-circuit steel lattice tower	15.0 m	2.5 m	12.5 m	6.4 m	6.4 m	21.6 m

Notes:

1. Maximum height of vegetation retained on Basslink easement is one-sixth of minimum ground clearance. Exceptions are riparian vegetation where more vegetation is retained for biodiversity and conservation purposes and is permitted as the generally wet conditions pose a lower fire risk. The Victorian Design Report (Enesar, June 2005) and Tasmanian Design Report (Enesar, July 2003) detail where riparian vegetation has been retained and the maximum permissible height.
2. Source: The Code, regulation 30(3)(b), Table (column 3).
3. Applicable vertical distance from the nominal conductor centreline to the maximum height of vegetation on the easement.
4. Source: The Code, regulation 30(3)(b), Table (column 2).
5. Applicable horizontal distance from the nominal conductor centreline to the edge of the easement and vegetation.
6. Clearance varies depending on the type of insulator used. Higher pollution insulators require longer crossarms.

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11.2. Methods for inspecting trees

The Basslink Bushfire Mitigation Plan (HS.PL.001) describes the inspection activities used to implement vegetation management and preventative maintenance strategies. Basslink's vegetation inspection cycles are outlined in the table below.

Table 4: Easement and tower inspection cycles

Inspection number	Period of inspection	Inspection type
1	1 January to 30 June	Tower and easement inspection
2	1 July to 31 December	Tower and easement inspection
3	Between August and September	Annual easement inspection

Easement inspections are undertaken either on foot or from a vehicle. The inspection method selected is determined by access conditions along the easement. The scope of inspection remains the same regardless of whether inspections are undertaken on foot or from a vehicle.

Easement inspections consist of:

— inspecting for vegetation regrowth (including weed infestation and fast-growing saplings);
— identifying trees adjacent to the easement that may encroach the minimum clearance space.

Vegetation inspections assess vegetation in relation to the defined transmission line clearance space, which includes both vertical and horizontal clearances and allowances for conductor sag and sway under operating conditions. Vegetation encroaching on, or with the potential to encroach on, the clearance space is prioritised for action in accordance with Basslink's vegetation and defect management framework. Detailed clearance distances and diagrams are found in the Basslink Maintenance of Clearance Space between Transmission Lines, Towers and Vegetation procedure (HS.PR.003 – Reference document).

The Annual vegetation inspection undertaken between August and September is conducted to identify and prioritise vegetation management activities required to be completed prior to the declaration of the Fire Danger Period. The annual vegetation will be undertaken by an immediate Basslink team member and a qualified Arborist (see section 16.4 for qualification specifics). The inspection involves traversing the entire supply network.

The outcomes of this inspection include:

— identification of vegetation encroaching on, or with the potential to encroach on the managed vegetation zone;
— identification and assessment of trees that may present a risk to the supply network in accordance with process described in section 13.4;
— assignment of vegetation clearance and priority codes in accordance with Basslink's defect and vegetation management framework; and
— confirmation of vegetation management actions required to be completed prior to, or during, the Fire Danger Period.

Inspection findings, tree assessments and required actions are recorded and progressed in accordance with Basslink's vegetation management and defect management processes.

11.3. Methods for managing trees and maintaining a minimum clearance space

Basslink manages vegetation on and adjacent to its easement in accordance with:

— the Interim Line Clearance Regulations including:
  - clause 3 of the Code, which requires Basslink to keep the minimum clearance space clear of trees.
  - clause 8(1) of the Code, which requires Basslink to manage trees below the transmission line to mitigate, as far as practicable (AFAP), the fire risks associated with the fuel load below the transmission line.
  - clause 8(2) of the Code, which requires Basslink to manage trees adjacent to the transmission line to avoid, AFAP, a tree entering the minimum clearance space for that line if the tree falls.

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- clause 10 of the Code, which requires trees to be cut, AFAP, in accordance with *AS 4373-2007 Pruning of amenity trees* (AS 4373)
- clause 11 of the Code, which places restrictions on the cutting and removal of specified trees; and
- clause 30 of the Code, which specifies the minimum clearance space of a transmission line

— the Basslink Operations Environmental Management Plan (EN.PL.001); and
— Basslink procedure Maintenance of Clearance Space between Transmission Lines, Towers and Vegetation (HS.PR.003).

The process for determining what pruning is required and how pruning is to be undertaken is described in the Basslink Environmental Vegetation Management Procedure (EN.PR.013). As specified in the Basslink Environmental Vegetation Management Procedure (EN.PR.013), Basslink will:

— maintain all re-growth vegetation identified as exceeding the Basslink Operations Environmental Management Plan (EN.PL.001) requirements on its easement to ground level; and
— clear vegetation to keep fuel load levels to less than 20 tonnes per hectare.

The following will be taken into account:

— performing visual inspection;
— local environmental conditions;
— local weather conditions; and
— vegetation regrowth given the local conditions.

Basslink manages vegetation in accordance with the vegetation priority codes outlined in the table below.

Table 5: Basslink vegetation priority codes

Priority code	Response time	Description
PT1	To be cleared as soon as possible (within **24 hours**)	Vegetation which is measured to be inside the minimum clearance space. Trees where failure of the tree is likely to occur at any moment.
PT30	To be cleared within a 30-day period (or to be monitored, risk assessed or re-assessed within **30 days**)	• Vegetation that is within the managed vegetation zone and has a height of greater than 3 metres. • Trees identified as being potentially unsound (as assessed by a suitably qualified arborist). Note: PT30 vegetation that is observed during the fire danger period shall be removed as soon as practicable.
PT90	to be cleared within a 90-day period (or to be monitored, risk assessed or re-assessed within **90 days**)	• Vegetation growing within the managed vegetation zone that may exceed 3 metres during the fire danger period, or • Vegetation that may grow into the managed vegetation zone during the fire danger period and has a height greater than 3 metres. Note: PT90 vegetation that is observed during the fire danger period shall be removed as soon as practicable.
PT180	To be cleared within a 180-day period (or to be monitored, risk assessed or re-assessed within **180 days**)	• Vegetation within the managed vegetation zone that is higher than specified within the Vegetation Management Plan, or • Vegetation adjacent to the easement which will require clearing / treating prior to the following fire danger period to ensure that the managed vegetation zone remains clear throughout that period.

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PT365	To be cleared / treated within a 365-day period (or to be monitored, risk assessed or re-assessed within **365 days**)	• Areas of the easement that require slashing or weed control at some time in the future, or
		• Any vegetation that will require treatment at some time to ensure that:
		  ○ Fuel loads are kept low to reduce the risk of line damage or operational incidents due to a fire on the easement,
		  ○ Inappropriate species (e.g., pines, wattles, weeds) are progressively removed or treated.

PT900	To be monitored through cyclic periods (or to be monitored, risk assessed or re-assessed within **900 days**)	• Significant areas of the easement that contain native vegetation or riparian zones that require specific methods of management as outlined in the Basslink Operations Environmental Management Plan (EN.PL.001) to ensure that:
		  ○ The clearance space remains clear.
		  ○ All vegetation that could threaten the security of the line other than by intruding into the clearance space, e.g., dense scrub or high fuel loads.
		  ○ Adequacy of clearances is readily observable in the course of a patrol, inspection, or audit.

11.3.1. Methods for managing tree clearance around transmission lines

With respect to managing tree clearance around transmission lines, Basslink will:

— Manage trees both below and adjacent to the transmission line in accordance with the principles illustrated in Figures 6 and 7 of the Code (as required by clause 8 of the Code).
— Manage trees to maintain the required vegetation clearances from transmission lines in accordance with the maximum conductor sag and sway allowances described in section 11.4.
— Manage trees below and adjacent to the transmission line to ensure they do not enter the applicable minimum clearance space.

Further information on Basslink's methods for managing trees below and adjacent to the transmission line is detailed below.

11.3.1.1. Trees below the transmission line

Basslink will manage trees below the transmission line in accordance with the maximum vegetation heights specified in the 'Maximum height of vegetation' column in Table 3 to mitigate, AFAP, the fire risks associated with fuel load accumulation. Basslink will manage regrowth using the most appropriate and safe method having regard to site conditions, vegetation type and operational requirements, including manual clearing with chainsaws or clearing saws fitted with appropriate cutting blades (e.g. chisel-tooth blades), or mechanised vegetation clearing.

11.3.1.2. Trees adjacent to the transmission line

Basslink monitors trees outside the easement during routine vegetation inspections and records details of them in the worklog. This includes the approximate tree height, the distance from the conductor, and whether the tree has any visible signs of weakness (e.g. if the tree appears to be dead, dying, damaged or structurally unsound).

Trees that have the potential to enter the minimum clearance space if they fall are assessed having regard to tree height, distance from the transmission line, tree condition, species characteristics, growth rate and local environmental conditions.

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Where Basslink identifies a tree that may enter the minimum clearance space if it falls, the tree will be managed AFAP through ongoing monitoring, pruning, removal, or referral to a suitably qualified arborist for further assessment.

11.3.2. Methods for managing specified trees

A specified tree (as defined in clause 11 of the Code) identified as one of the following will have constraints imposed on the cutting or removal of the tree:

— trees that are indigenous to Victoria;
— trees listed trees listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance; and
— trees of cultural or environmental significance.

In accordance with section 11 of the Code, Basslink will, as far as is practicable, not cut a specified tree more than is necessary to either—

(a) ensure compliance with Division 1 of the Code; or

(b) make an unsafe situation safe.

Basslink will not remove, under Division 1 of the Code, a specified tree unless—

(a) it is necessary to remove the tree to either—

(i) ensure compliance with Division 1 of the Code; or

(ii) make an unsafe situation safe; or

(b) a suitably qualified arborist has—

(i) inspected the tree; and

(ii) advised Basslink that cutting the tree in accordance with (a) would make the tree unhealthy or unviable.

11.4. Method for determining a distance that allows for conductor sag and sway

Siemens, the Original Equipment Manufacturer of the Basslink supply network, created drawings during the design phase of the Basslink supply network lifecycle that include additional distances for each span that allow for conductor sag and sway (Siemens library EC5.1841 to EC5.1844). Basslink maintains vegetation clearances in accordance with the vegetation clearance distances specified in the Siemens drawings, which allow for worst-case conditions across each span. Vegetation within riparian zones is managed under separate requirements (as discussed below).

The relevant minimum clearance spaces are detailed in the Basslink Operations Environmental Management Plan (EN.PL.001). Basslink will ensure these minimum clearance distances are communicated to personnel performing vegetation cutting or removal by:

— providing the applicable minimum clearance distances to the relevant personnel during the work scoping process; and
— Including the minimum clearance distances in the induction materials and work pack issued to personnel prior to the commencement of works.

11.5. Methods for determining different additional distances for different parts of an electric line span

Basslink maintains riparian vegetation in accordance with the requirements of the Basslink Operations Environmental Management Plan (EN.PL.001). Basslink retains more vegetation in riparian zones for the following reasons:

— for biodiversity and conservation purposes; and
— the generally wet conditions pose a lower fire risk.

Basslink may allow riparian vegetation to exceed a height of 1.8 m while ensuring that it will not enter the minimum clearance space.

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12. Procedures in relation to compliance with AS 4373

Where it is not practicable to comply with AS 4373, the vegetation management worker will determine the most appropriate methods and recommends the appropriate equipment taking into consideration customer satisfaction, safety of people, and the environmental/visual impact. The determination is recorded in the worklog, which is where data is recorded on the vegetation management activity.

13. Alternative compliance mechanisms

Basslink does not hold approval for alternative compliance mechanisms under clause 31 of the Code. If Basslink is required to apply to ESV for approval of an alternative compliance mechanism, Basslink will consult an arborist prior to submitting an application for an alternative compliance mechanism.

14. Measures used to assess performance under the Plan

14.1. Key performance indicators

Basslink uses a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor its performance under the Plan and compliance with the Line Clearance Regulations. These KPIs are described in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Basslink KPIs under the Plan

KPI type	Description	Target	Period
Leading	Percentage of actions to address non-compliances identified by ESV and internal audits completed on time	100%	Monthly
Lagging	Percentage of Basslink staff and contractor training and authorisations under the Plan that are compliant	100%	Monthly
Lagging	Fire starts caused by Basslink's supply network (including by Basslink assets or vegetation within the minimum clearance space)	0	Monthly
Lagging	Bushfire Mitigation Index (BMI): Percentage of vegetation and asset inspection and maintenance tasks completed on time within a 6-month period (Period 1: 1st January – 30th June, Period 2: 1st July – 31st-December).	100%	Monthly

15. Audit processes used to determine compliance with Code

This section outlines details of the audit processes that Basslink uses to determine its compliance with the Code, including auditing implementation of the Plan and compliance with Basslink's workplace health and safety requirements.

15.1. Processes for auditing compliance with the Code

15.1.1. Auditor qualifications and experience

Audits of compliance with the Code will be performed by:

— personnel who are independent of the activity being audited;
— personnel with recognised auditing qualifications; and
— personnel with auditing experience.

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15.1.2. Audit method

Audits of compliance with the Code will:

— be performed using methodologies consistent with the requirements of *AS/NZS ISO 19011:2019 Guidelines for auditing management systems*; and
— use evaluation methods including desktop reviews of records, field inspections and observations, contractor and staff interviews and testing as appropriate (i.e. depending on the audit scope, objectives and criteria).

15.1.3. Audit frequency

Audits of Basslink's compliance with the Code will be performed every two years.

15.1.4. Recording, monitoring and closure of audit actions

Audit findings will be provided to the Manager Asset Operations – HVDC for review and entered into an APA - approved governance, risk and compliance system. The Manager Asset Operations – HVDC will assign actions to address any non-compliances or opportunities for improvement to relevant Basslink staff, with assigned target completion dates, and track them through to completion via the APA-approved governance, risk and compliance system.

15.2. Processes for auditing compliance with Basslink's workplace health and safety requirements

Basslink will perform field-based audits of workers performing vegetation management works (including tree cutting and slashing activities) on a risk-informed and activity-based basis, reflecting the limited and intermittent nature of Basslink's vegetation management program.

Where vegetation management work crews are active, Basslink will audit a minimum proportion of fieldwork, being:

— at least 20 per cent of fieldwork per calendar year; and
— inclusive of pre-start checks, site setup, and work practices, to verify compliance with the Code and workplace health and safety requirements.

Audit frequency and sample size may be increased based on risk factors, including contractor performance, complexity of works, and proximity to assets.

16. Urgent cutting or removal and record keeping

16.1. Requirements and process for urgent cutting or removal

Under regulation 18 of Schedule 1 to the Code, Basslink may perform urgent cutting or removal of a tree within the boundary of a private property which Basslink neither occupies nor owns:

— where security of supply is under immediate threat; or
— where there is a likelihood of danger to the general public, property or Basslink personnel; or
— in emergency situations.

In these situations, Basslink will notify the owner or occupier of the private property in writing of the works as soon as practicable either before or after the cutting or removal.

16.2. Record keeping

If urgent cutting or removal is performed, Basslink will record the following in a file note on SharePoint and X-Info Connect[1]:

[1] X-Info Connect is APA's stakeholder management software.

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— where the urgent cutting or removal took place;
— the date it was identified, and date completed;
— why the urgent cutting or removal was required; and
— the date of the last inspection.

The records of all urgent cutting and removal will be kept for a minimum of 5 years in line with regulation 19(4) of the Line Clearance Regulations.

17. Qualifications and experience

This section specifies the qualifications and experience that Basslink requires of the persons who are to carry out the inspection, cutting or removal of trees in accordance with the Code and the *Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019*. Basslink requires all persons who carry out these activities to maintain their training through completion of refresher training in accordance with applicable regulatory and APA requirements.

17.1. Requirements for Basslink personnel

Basslink will provide training to the persons responsible for carrying out this Plan, including activities such as cutting and removing vegetation. The persons responsible for carrying out the Plan must, at a minimum, complete the following training courses, or equivalent training courses:

— UETDRMP001 Apply access authority procedures to work on or near electrical apparatus
— chainsaw operations including:
  • FWPCOT2254 Maintain chainsaws
  • FWPCOT2259 Cut materials with a hand-held chainsaw
— AHCCHM307 Prepare and apply chemicals to control pest, weeds and diseases;
— 11318NAT Basic Wildfire Awareness; and

In addition, Basslink personnel are required to do an induction and demonstrate competence in the requirements of the Basslink Operations Environmental Management Plan (EN.PL.001).

17.2. Requirements for contractors

Any contractor engaged by Basslink to perform vegetation management work may be required to satisfy the following requirements depending on the level of supervision provided by Basslink and the task to be undertaken:

— sound occupational health and safety management plan; and
— induction and demonstration of competence in the requirements of the Basslink Operations Environmental Management Plan (EN.PL.001).

In line with regulation 616(3) of the *Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019*, contractors performing vegetation management work shall have completed:

— UET20321Certificate II in ESI - Powerline Vegetation Control; and
— hold current refresher training (if required).

Additionally, contractors performing specific vegetation management roles are required to the hold the Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) elective qualifications listed in Table 7, or equivalent qualifications.

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Table 7: Contractor qualification requirements

Qualification	EWP Operator	EWP Safety Observer	Tree Climber	Climber Safety Observer
UETDRVC007 - Control vegetation using pruning techniques	✓	✓	✓	✓
UETDRVC004 - Control vegetation in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus from an elevated work platform	✓	✓	-	-
No. 24 - Boom-type elevating work platform operation licence (code: WP)	✓	✓	-	-
UETDRVC006 - Control vegetation in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus from within the tree	-	-	✓	✓
UETDRVC010 - Perform rescue from within a tree in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus	-	-	✓	✓

17.2.1. Contractor training and competency verification

Basslink staff will check the currency and completeness of contractor training and accreditation records prior to contractors performing work on the Basslink supply network.

If any of the above criteria are not able to be produced prior to work being undertaken on any Basslink site, the contractor will not be allowed to work until proof is provided to a Basslink representative.

18. Consultation and notice

Basslink seeks to maintain positive relationships with owners and occupiers of private land adjacent to Basslink's supply network. Before Basslink intends to perform any vegetation cutting or removal work on private land, in accordance with Division 3 of Part 2 of the Code, Basslink will provide a written notice to the owner or occupier of the private land that includes the following details:

- Basslink's contact details, including the contact details for all enquiries regarding vegetation and the intended cutting or removal;
- details of the intended cutting or removal;
- when Basslink intends to commence the cutting or removal, which will be at least 14 days but not more than 21 days ahead;
- advice that Basslink has procedures for resolving disputes and details on how to obtain access to the procedures
- details of the consultation procedure that Basslink will follow;
- details of whether the tree to be cut or removed is:
  - a tree of cultural or environmental significance; or
  - listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance; and
- if the tree is intended to be cut, a diagram that shows:
  - the tree and where the electric line is in relation to the tree; and
  - where the tree will be cut.

If required, a Basslink representative will meet the owner or occupier of the private land on their property to further discuss the works.

If the work is not completed within the notification period, the landowner or occupier will be consulted regarding the rescheduling of the work and, if required, a new notice will be issued.

Consultation and notice requirements are specified in the Basslink Environmental Land Access Management Plan (EN.PR.010).

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19. Dispute resolution

The Basslink Environmental Complaints Management Procedure (EN.PR.004) specifies Basslink's process for managing environmental complaints regarding the Basslink supply network, including complaints arising from this Plan or general electric line clearance requirements.

The Basslink Environmental Complaints Management Procedure applies to complaints from:

- owners and occupiers of land adjacent to Basslink's supply network
- third-party asset owners, being a person or entity who owns or has rights to assets on or adjacent to the Basslink supply network and whose asset may or may not be protected by an easement, lease, licence or other registered instrument.
- members of the public.

Complaints can be lodged via ongrid@apa.com.au. A staff member will record the complaint in a complaints register in accordance with the APA Privacy Policy and allocate responsibility for resolving the complaint to an appropriate member of staff.

Should a complaint escalate into a dispute, Basslink will seek external assistance as appropriate to resolve the issue. If Basslink is unable to resolve a complaint, a complaint may be referred to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV). Basslink is listed as a scheme member. Complaints can be lodged with EWOV on 1800 500 509.

20. Exemptions held by Basslink

Basslink does not hold any exemptions from ESV under regulation 11 of the Interim Line Clearance Regulations relating to a requirement of Schedule 2 of the Line Clearance Regulations.

21. Reference documents

Table 8: Reference documents

Document number	Document name
AS 4373	AS 4373-2007 Pruning of amenity trees
HS.MS.002	Basslink Electrical Safety Management Scheme
EN.PR.004	Environmental Complaints Management Procedure
EN.PR.010	Basslink Environmental Land Access Plan
EN.PR.013	Basslink Environmental Vegetation Management Procedure
EN.PL.001	Basslink Operations Environmental Management Plan
HS.PR.003	Maintenance of Clearance Space between Transmission Lines, Towers and Vegetation

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22. Definitions

Definitions are included in the table below.

Table 9: Definitions

Term	Definition
Sag	Sag, in relation to a conductor, means the vertical displacement of the conductor below the point at which the conductor is attached to the supporting structure and includes any additional displacement caused by hot weather or high load current.
Specified tree	A tree that is: (a) indigenous to Victoria; or (b) listed in a planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance; or (c) a tree of cultural or environmental significance;
Suitably qualified arborist	An arborist who has— (a) as a minimum, the qualification of National Certificate III in Arboriculture including the "Perform a ground-based tree defect evaluation" unit of competency, or an equivalent qualification; and (b) at least 3 years of field experience in assessing trees;
Sway	Sway, in relation to a conductor, means the horizontal displacement of the conductor caused by wind.
Worklog	Document used by persons performing vegetation inspections to identify assets and record information on completed inspections including details of required vegetation pruning and removal work.

23. Revision history

Revision history					
Rev	**Date**	**Changes made to revision**	**Originator**	**Checker**	**Approver**
1	28/03/2018	- Initial Issue	M. Shilliday	N/A	M. Eccles
2	21/06/2018	- Updated for ESV comments	M. Shilliday	N/A	M. Eccles
3	29/03/2019	- Reviewed and updated for ESV Comments	Paul Pendlebury	N/A	M. Eccles
4	17/03/2020	- Updated 'Training, Qualifications and Experience' section to require contractor to hold 'Certificate II in ESI Powerline Vegetation Control' refresher training	Raphael Ozsvath	N/A	Joska Ferencz
5	29/03/2021	- Updated period of the Plan from 1 year to 5 years (2021-26 Plan) - Updated references to legislation - Updated 'Training, Qualifications and Experience' section to include Certificate II in ESI Powerline Vegetation Control electives	Mark Bostedt	N/A	Joska Ferencz
6	N/A	- Administrative error resulting in revision number not being used	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	24/08/2023	- Moved document into APA template following APA's acquisition of Basslink.	Mark Bostedt	Paul Pendlebury	Shane Matthews

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8	30/03/2026	-	5-yearly review (2026-31 Plan) - Moved document into new template and re-named to 'Electric Line Clearance Management Plan' - Updated references to legislation and made material changes throughout including adding concordance table, updating maps, performance measurement and audit requirements.	Gabriel Avens	Zahra Jabiri	Terry Jobling
8.1	9/06/2026	-	Addressed feedback in ESV's instruction to amend the Plan dated 21 May 2026.	Gabriel Avens	Zahra Jabiri	Terry Jobling
8.2	28/07/2026	-	Addressed feedback in ESV's instruction to amend the Plan dated 7 July 2026.	Gabriel Avens	Martin Riley Zahra Jabiri	Terry Jobling
8.3	04/08/2026	-	Section 17.2 (Requirements for contractors) – added requirement for Tree Climber to hold the qualification UETDRVC010 Perform rescue from within a tree in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus.	Gabriel Avens	Martin Riley Zahra Jabiri	Terry Jobling
8.4	07/08/2026	-	Section 17.2 (Requirements for contractors) - added requirement for Climber Safety Observer to hold the qualification UETDRVC010 Perform rescue from within a tree in the vicinity of live electrical apparatus.	Gabriel Avens	Martin Riley Zahra Jabiri	Terry Jobling