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12th December 2014

Mr Sebastian Roberts
General Manager, Network Regulation
Australian Energy Regulator
GPO Box 520
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RE: SA Power Networks Revenue Proposal Submission for the 2015-2020 Regulatory Control Period

We are writing on behalf of the Reference Group for Vegetation Management near powerlines in South Australia in support of SA Power Networks revenue proposal submission for the 2015-2020 regulatory control period that was lodged with the AER on 31 October 2014, in relation to the vegetation management program and initiatives.

Tree trimming around powerlines has been an ongoing concern for Councils and the community across South Australia. SA Power Networks has been consulting with stakeholders over the last 12 months to understand their expectations in relation to vegetation management near powerlines and their vision for taking the next steps.

The Reference Group for Vegetation Management near Powerlines was established to provide expert arboriculture and horticultural input into the development of SA Power Networks' long-term vegetation management strategy and associated initiatives. The group is represented by TREENET, the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, Arboriculture Australia, Trees for Life, the South Australia Tree Advisory Board and Local Government, as well as expert individuals and a community/ landholder representative.

The Reference Group provided input into the Discussion Paper, *Directions for Vegetation Management*, which outlines SA Power Networks' long-term plan for vegetation management near powerlines. The group supports the implementation of the initiatives outlined within this paper and funding being secured through the AER to implement these initiatives.

Funding for vegetation management initiatives, including tree removal and replacement, a move from a three to a two year cycle and advanced tree trimming techniques, significant modifications to communication strategies and public education, would improve how vegetation near powerlines is managed, improve the visual outcome and enable collaborative approaches and partnerships to be developed with key stakeholders.

We look forward to your favourable consideration of SA Power Networks' proposal for vegetation management which reflects community and Council expectations for managing vegetation near powerlines.

If you have any further queries please contact me directly on 8313 7078 or 0448 599 955 or glenn@treenet.org

Yours sincerely,

Glenn Williams
Director, TREENET

(on behalf of the Reference Group for Vegetation Management near Powerlines)