



Light  
Regional  
Council

## Undergrounding Services (Overhead Electricity and Telecommunication Cables) Policy

<b>Reference Number:</b>	Section 4 No. 10
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Strategy and Development
<b>Related Policy/Procedure:</b>	Public Lighting Policy
<b>Date of Adoption:</b>	22 November 2016
<b>Current Review Date:</b>	28 February 2023
<b>Minute Reference:</b>	OCM-2023/045
<b>Version Number:</b>	Amendment No. 3
<b>Applicable Legislation:</b>	Australian Standards Development Act 1993 (repealed) Development Regulations 2008 (repealed); Electricity Act 1996 Planning and Design Code Local Government Act 1999 Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act, 2016
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	February 2025
<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Biennially

### 1. Introduction

This policy articulates Council's position that no additional overhead electrical or telecommunication cables and associated infrastructure should be installed above ground in the public realm of its township, settlement, suburban or rural living environments, to enhance the visual appearance and public enjoyment of such spaces.

Further, this policy also expresses a preference for moving existing above-ground electrical and telecommunications cables and supporting infrastructure to be moved underground wherever possible, particularly where:

- improved visual and amenity outcomes and/ or value for money can be obtained; and/ or
- bushfire risk via interaction between power lines and vegetation may be minimised.

### 2. Definitions

**Distribution Network Service Provider** (DNSP) means an owner and/ or operator of overhead infrastructure services.

**Underground Services** means either:

- a) the installation of new electrical, telecommunications and street-lighting cables and supporting infrastructure underground; or
- b) the removal of existing DNSP overhead electricity and/ or private telecommunication cables including poles, cables, overhead transformers and switching equipment from public streets and/ or park lands (or parts thereof) and replacement with equivalent underground infrastructure.

### Policy Objectives

Through the undergrounding of infrastructure the Policy seeks to enhance:

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- the distinctive characters of the townships by removing detracting elements;
- the qualities of individual buildings – particularly the presence of exemplary heritage buildings;
- the characters and functions of streets and footpaths within the street and footpath hierarchy;
- the amenity of park lands;
- environmental sustainability through reduced tree trimming and improved energy efficiency of new, smart lighting provided as part of the undergrounding; and
- the unique character of the region.

### 3. Policy Statement

- 4.1 New residential developments within or adjacent to townships and settlements in the Council area are to feature Underground Services provided at the cost of the Developer.
- 4.2 Council may install Underground Services, in township, settlement or rural living areas over time on a priority basis and as funding may allow.
- 4.3 No additional or new overhead electrical and telecommunication cables including associated supporting stobie or other types of poles, overhead transformers, switching or other types of overhead pole-mounted DNSP or telecommunications equipment should be installed in the public realm within townships, settlements, suburban or rural living environments.
- 4.4 Existing above ground infrastructure to be undergrounded will be prioritised, based on:
- (a) a framework informed by an assessment of the benefits in terms of visual amenity, safety (including reduced bushfire risk) and economic benefit;
  - (b) an assessment of streets to determine which components of undergrounding offer the best value for money;
  - (c) maximising external funding contribution;
  - (d) coordination, where practical, with other major renewal or upgrade projects carried out by Council and/ or external organisations; and
  - (e) availability of funding.

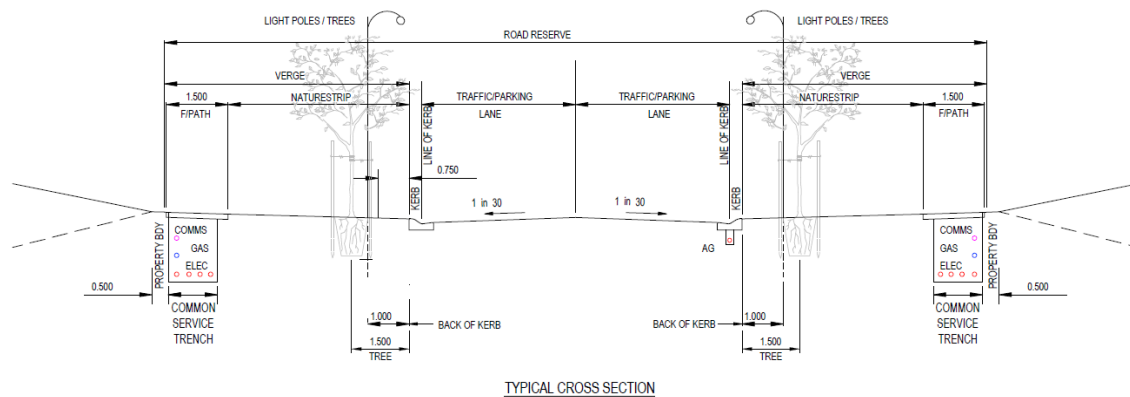
- 4.5 A range of Underground Services implementation programs may be developed, including those that provide opportunity for external funding contribution from the Power Line Environment Committee (PLEC), the community, residents, business owners and developers. Implementation programs will consider the following alternative funding options and schemes, which may be utilised individually or in combination:
- (a) LRC only funded projects

*Projects for which there is no external funding available and therefore fully funded by the Council.*
  - (b) LRC and PLEC joint funded projects

*PLEC provides funding to Council to assist with the undergrounding of infrastructure, particularly where significant community benefit derives from such undergrounding works. The development and endorsement of an Implementation Program will enable forward planning to occur between Council and PLEC to ensure a rolling program of jointly funded projects over time.*
  - (c) Residential/Business Scheme (with approved LRC contribution)

*The Residential/Business Scheme provides opportunities for groups of residents, private owners or business owners (or a single resident/private owner/business owner) to provide private funding to assist with the undergrounding of overhead infrastructure in certain streets (or sections of streets) for the benefit of the residents/property owners/business owners. This will usually result in the acceleration of these works in an adopted program and may therefore warrant Council contribution.*
  - (d) Developer Scheme (with approved LRC contribution)

*The Developer Scheme provides opportunities for developers wishing to contribute to the cost for undergrounding existing overhead infrastructure in streets or parks/reserves adjacent to their developments. Such works will improve the presentation of their developments and may increase property values, but may also improve development potential by, for example, removing building set-back requirements caused by overhead infrastructure.*
- 4.6 Cost reduction initiatives will be investigated to reduce implementation timeframes, including contestability of DNSP Works (with DNSP/Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA)/State Government).
- 4.7 For future proofing, Council seeks a minimum of 4 in-ground conduits for electrical and other infrastructure (in addition to one conduit each for telecommunications and gas as applicable) as per the current standard drawing in the *Infrastructure Guidelines (SA) – Standards and Requirements for the Design and Construction of Infrastructure Assets in South Australia* – ‘Typical Road Section Layout’ – Drawing No. SD 505 (as adopted by Council - example overleaf):



#### 4. Legislative Requirements and Corporate Policy Content

In adopting this policy it is recognised that there are specific legislative requirements to be met as well as other corporate goals.

Relevant legislation and statutory documents include:

- Australian Standards;
- Development Act 1993;
- Development Regulations 2008;
- Electricity Act 1996;
- Light Regional Council Development Plan/Planning and Design Code;
- Local Government Act, 1999;
- Planning, Infrastructure and Development Act, 2016;
- Telecommunications Act 1997.

This policy is to be implemented in conjunction with the Council's Strategic Plan, Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and other relevant Policies and Strategies including:

- Public Lighting Policy;
- Infrastructure Guidelines (SA) – Standards and Requirements for the Design and Construction of Infrastructure Assets in South Australia (as adopted by Council);
- Community Land Management Plans.

#### Policy History:

1. Policy adopted 22 November 2016, refer Council Minute 13.3.2, Page 2016/455.
2. Amendment No. 1 adopted by Council on 26 February 2019, refer Council Minute STR9.3.8/2019 page 2019/58.
3. Amendment No. 2 adopted by Council on 23 February 2021, Minute Reference STR9.3.2/2021, Page Reference 2021/41

4. *Amendment No. 3 adopted by Council on 28 February 2023, Minute Reference (OCM-2023/045),  
Page Reference (15).*