

## 10.2 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 988 – UNDERGROUNDING OF POWERLINES – TALLAROOK ST, SEYMOUR

**Author:** Andrew Dodd - Manager Operations and Parks

**File No:** EM/05/010

**Attachments:** Nil

### 1. Purpose

To provide a response to Council relating to Notice of Motion 988 – Undergrounding of Powerlines – Tallarook Street, Seymour.

### 2. Background

At the Council meeting held on 17 August 2020, a Notice of Motion 988 was moved, relating to undergrounding of powerlines along Tallarook Street Seymour.

The motion requested that;

*‘Council officers prepare a report on any funding options available to underground the powerlines, or to move the powerlines, or to otherwise provide a solution to avoid the regular disfiguring pruning of the trees in Tallarook Street, Seymour’*

### 3. Key Matters

Large Plane Trees create an avenue stretching approximately 700 meters along both sides of Tallarook Street in Seymour, encroaching on powerlines on the Southern Side. Council has a legislative obligation to prune and keep clear vegetation encroaching powerlines along this stretch of road.

These powerlines are a combination of Low and High voltage cables and are Ausnet owned assets. Relocation/undergrounding works would involve boring of cables along approximately 700m of Tallarook Street, as well as the relocation of a number of electrical sub-stations. These works would also involve electrical re-connection works on private land. All works would come at a considerable cost. New street lighting currently attached to the existing power poles would also be required.

A component of these power assets contains High Voltage (66kV) which cannot be undergrounded, meaning that despite the works at least one line would remain above ground.

Boring under such significant trees would also impact the structural root systems, posing a further risk that the trees may not survive the process.

Areal bundling was also a consideration when assessments took place. Bundling would only be able to occur for the low voltage wires and some high voltage, but again the 66kV lines would need to be stand alone. This would mean there would still be an issue with clearance and whilst these requirements

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 988 – UNDERGROUNDING OF POWERLINES – TALLAROOK ST, SEYMOUR (CONT.)

would be reduced slightly, the benefits would be outweighed by the cost of bundling this span of wires, estimated between \$700,000 - \$1,000,000.

**Recommendation**

**THAT** Council not pursue options to underground powerlines at this location and continue current practices of tree management along Tallarook Street, Seymour.

---

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 988 – UNDERGROUNDING OF POWERLINES – TALLAROOK ST,  
SEYMOUR (CONT.)

#### **4. Financial, Resource and Asset Management Implications**

It currently costs Council approximately \$15,000 annually to prune the trees along Tallarook Street, Seymour. With recent regulation changes to the Electrical Line Clearance Regulations, vegetation clearance zones have dropped around this category of assets from 1m to 500mm. This means that pruning of these trees will be less rigorous, and costs could potentially decrease over the next few years dependent on growth rates of the trees.

The relocation of overhead electrical cables is estimated to cost \$1.7-2.2M. In the past, State Government funding has been available for powerline relocation works to enhance township amenity, however these funding programs are now reducing and solely focused on powerline relocation in high risk bushfire areas. With this in mind, other grant opportunities would need to be explored, along with the potential for Council to fund these works. At the time of writing this report no grants exist to fund these works.

Aerial bundling is estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$15,000 - \$20,000 per span of wires (between posts).

#### **5. Consultation**

Not applicable.

#### **6. Sustainability Implications (Social and Environmental)**

Not applicable.

#### **7. Policy and Legislative Implications**

The Electricity Safety (Electrical Line Clearance – ELC) Regulations 2020 (ESR), dictate tree management practices and vegetation control around electric power lines.

Councils Line Clearance Management Plan, is the document developed by Council, prescribing how Council will manage trees and vegetation around power lines, in accordance with the ESR.

The recommendation is consistent with existing policy and legislative implications.

#### **8. Alignment to Council Plan**

A strategic objective of the Council Plan 2017-2021 (4.3) is to:

*Establish and maintain high quality roads, footpaths, parks, recreation facilities, streetscapes, bike paths and public open spaces.*

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION 988 – UNDERGROUNDING OF POWERLINES – TALLAROOK ST, SEYMOUR (CONT.)

### 9. Conflict of Interest

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

### 10. Risk Implications

There are no significant risk implications that arise from the recommendations outlined in this report other than those already been managed below.

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
Compliance with The Electricity Safety (Electrical Line Clearance – ELC) Regulations 2020	High	Compliance to Councils Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan	Yes