

## File note - Meeting

**Date of meeting:** 16 November 2023  
**Location:** Microsoft Teams (online)  
**Parties:** Commerce Commission (TIDR (2024) team), Powerco  
**Subject:** TIDR (2024) – EDB/FSP meetings – AM6 Vegetation management reporting

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### Attendees:

Ali Scholes (Commerce Commission – Senior Analyst)  
Sean McCready (Commerce Commission – Principal Advisor, Engineer)  
Kaleb Boyce (Commerce Commission – Assistant Analyst)  
Richard Wanhill (Arb Innovations – Senior Operations Manager)  
Colin Winch (Powerco – Senior Vegetation Manager)  
Denise Hayes (Powerco – Quality Improvement Lead)

### Meeting discussion points:

- Workability of the proposed changes to vegetation-related opex reporting.
- Workability of the proposed changes to vegetation-related interruptions reporting.

### Workability of the proposed changes to vegetation-related opex reporting:

*The proposed changes are detailed in the TIDR (2024) [draft decision](#) (amendments to Schedule 6b(i)).*

#### *Vegetation management opex:*

1. Powerco does not currently capture vegetation management opex on in-zone/out-of-zone separately, but do record trimming costs separately from other vegetation management costs. A system change would be required to be able to report against the proposed requirements.
  - 1.1 Powerco uses lidar information to assess areas of the network which require maintenance trimming. From this information, they have knowledge of areas where there is vegetation that is in-zone (and areas where vegetation is out-of-zone only).
  - 1.2 Where the lidar information indicates a site where there may be vegetation in-zone requiring a maintenance trim, a liaison arborist goes on site to address the vegetation encroaching the growth-limit-zone.
    - 1.2.1 When attending a site for a maintenance trim, there will often be in-zone and out-of-zone vegetation in the same cutting area. Powerco generally trims back further than the notice zone (usually up to four

metres back from the conductor, with the consent of the tree owner). They generally try to take vegetation out at the ground level where possible, rather than trim.

- 1.3 While on site, the liaison arborist also meets with the landowner to carry out a site inspection to identify any other risk trees (out-of-zone trees, including fall zone trees). These “risk trees” are usually at least 20 meters away from the conductor and can be difficult to spot in dense vegetation. The number of risk trees is growing, and increasingly, the risk is not just about the health of the tree, but also about the potential for earth moving under rain, and erosion control (trees coming down due to slips).
- 1.4 When a risk tree is identified, the arborist reports this back to Powerco, who assesses each risk tree individually (does a cost vs risk analysis), before deciding whether to go ahead with a job. Powerco does not currently do many of these “risk tree” cuts/removals, and risk trees remaining are not currently recorded by Powerco.
- 1.5 Currently, the costs of these “risk tree” cuts/removals is not recorded separately from the regular maintenance trim work. Powerco plans start to record these costs separately.

*Service interruptions and emergencies (Vegetation-related):*

2. Powerco’s vegetation opex budget is already split out to defects (proactive work) and emergencies (reactive work).
3. Powerco is invoiced by their fault response contractor at an individual fault response job level. Since Powerco would know the cause of a fault (and whether it was caused by vegetation), they would be able to report the opex for “service interruptions and emergencies (vegetation-related)”.

**Workability of the proposed changes to vegetation-related interruptions reporting:**

*The proposed changes are detailed in the TIDR (2024) [draft decision](#) (amendments to Schedule 10(ii)).*

4. Powerco already record and report internally, interruptions caused by vegetation in-zone/out-of-zone, and by wind-borne debris.