

File note - Meeting

Date of meeting: 24 November 2023
Location: Microsoft Teams (online)
Parties: Commerce Commission (TIDR (2024) team), Northpower
Subject: TIDR (2024) – EDB/FSP meetings – AM6 Vegetation management reporting

Attendees:

Ali Scholes (Commerce Commission – Senior Analyst)
Sean McCready (Commerce Commission – Principal Advisor, Engineer)
Kaleb Boyce (Commerce Commission – Assistant Analyst)
Tawa De Goey (Northpower – Network Vegetation Manager)
Warren Blackman (Northpower Contracting – Operations Performance Manager, Northland)

Meeting discussion points:

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

Workability of the proposed changes to vegetation management opex reporting:

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

Vegetation management opex:

1. Northpower categorises vegetation management ‘jobs’ to land parcels (per property title).
 - 1.1 An overall assessment (group assessment) is carried out for each job. There would usually be multiple tree assessments carried out on one property. These assessments would record whether trees are in-zone or out-of-zone.
 - 1.2 Northpower uses Fulcrum (asset management system for vegetation management) to capture information like GIS data and in-zone/out-of-zone work for the land parcel, including vegetation within the growth limit zone, outside of the growth limit zone, and whether a tree is a fall zone risk.
 - 1.3 The group assessment forms the work order for the vegetation management job sent to the contractor. The work order itself would not detail whether individual trees are in-zone or out-of-zone, but the instructions provided to the field crew attending to the work would include this detail.

- 1.4 Northpower does a lot of vegetation management of out-of-zone vegetation. Out-of-zone work is done mostly on farm and bush blocks (less in urban areas), and most of Northpower's network is in rural areas.
2. Large system/process changes would be required to get the cost breakdown to in-zone/out-of-zone work onto contractor invoices.

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)).

3. Northpower does not currently capture whether vegetation-caused interruptions are from in-zone or out-of-zone vegetation. They will sometimes do a manual report after a weather event (which would involve reviewing fault reports to work out if vegetation was in-zone/out-of-zone).
4. Northpower is currently looking into updating internal reporting on interruptions to capture interruptions caused by in-zone/out-of-zone vegetation.
5. It was noted that Northpower does sometimes experience interruptions caused by out-of-zone vegetation which are not during a weather event.
6. Northpower's current process for recording interruption causes involves field staff (who are assessing the fault) filling out an electronic form. To enable reporting of in-zone/out-of-zone vegetation, the electronic form would need to be updated (expanded for the new categories), and field staff (including line mechanics who sometimes attend to faults) would require training on assessing for the new categories.