



**REPORT**

# ElectraNet: Submission to Planning and Design Code

Submitted to:

**Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (on behalf of ElectraNet)**

Planning Reform Team

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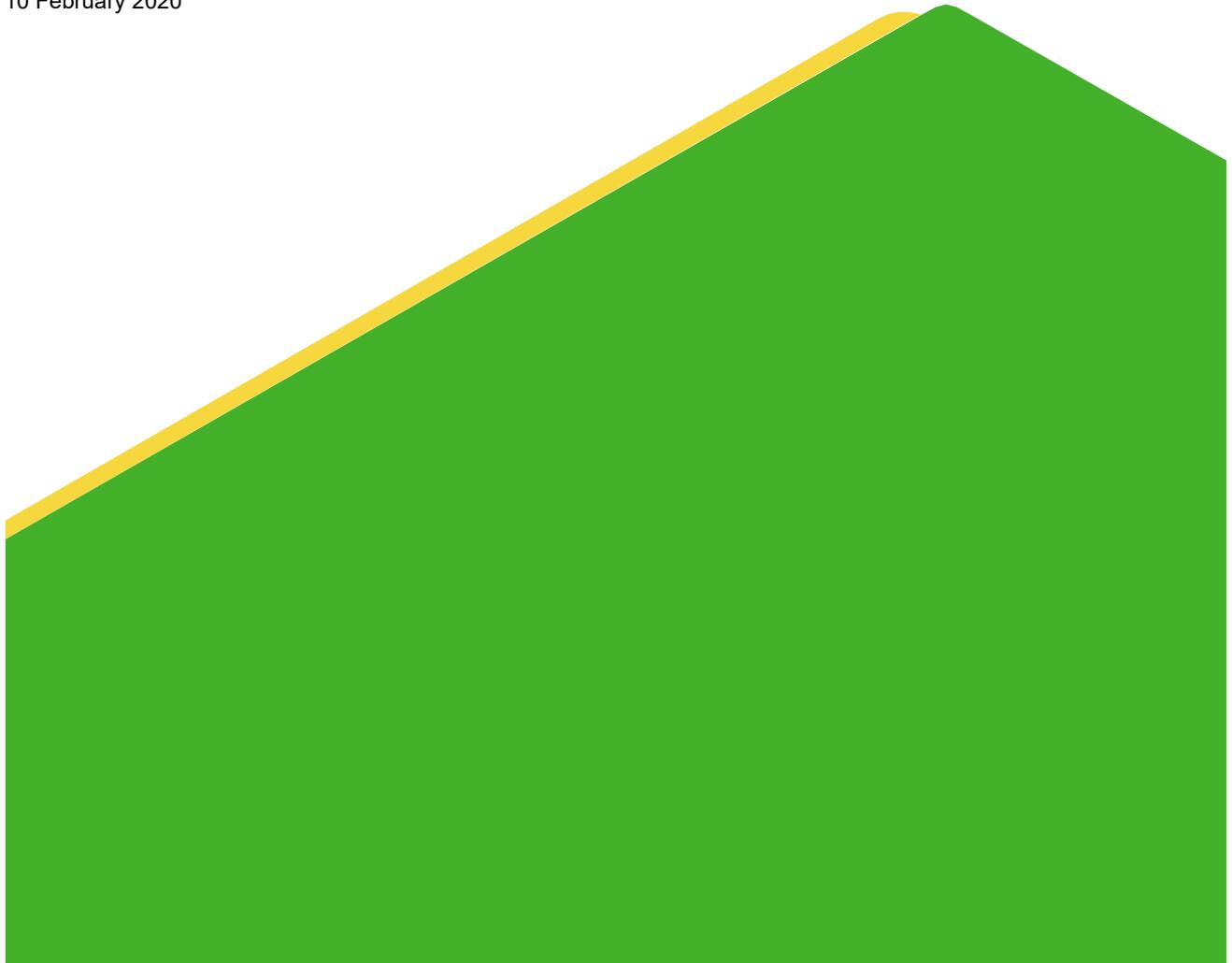
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10 February 2020



# Distribution List

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

ElectraNet has prepared the following submission to assist the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) in developing the final version of the Planning and Design Code (the Code) to support essential infrastructure development, in particular electricity transmission infrastructure in the form of high voltage power lines, structures (towers and poles) and substations. The submission considers ElectraNet's experiences of developing such infrastructure under the auspices of the *Development Act 1993* and *Development Regulations 2008* and, on the basis of this experience, makes a number of suggestions and recommendations for amendments to proposed policy provisions and assessment procedures contained in the Code. The submission also references the intent of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) in relation to the assessment of essential infrastructure.

The submission is divided into two main sections. Section 1 presents general comments and concerns with the proposed assessment process for essential infrastructure in the context of the PDI Act and draft Code provisions. Section 2 provides more detailed comments on specific provisions and 'rules of interpretation' in the Code that may impact on the assessment process for essential electricity transmission infrastructure.

## 2.0 GENERAL COMMENTS

While Part 8 of the PDI Act is dedicated to the assessment of essential infrastructure, which is defined in the Act to encapsulate the electricity transmission network, the draft Planning and Design Code is generally silent about essential infrastructure development. This situation raises the following issues:

- The draft Code policies do not reflect the provisions in Part 8 of the PDI Act that would enable the efficient, streamlined assessment of essential infrastructure. This policy gap creates unreasonable levels of uncertainty for infrastructure proponents about assessment pathways and assessment requirements, increasing the ensuing costs of infrastructure development (see Section 1.2 below).
- Following from this, the relatively high cost of power to businesses and households in South Australia has been the source of significant community debate with many examples of business failure being attributed to the high cost of electricity. More concerning is the propensity amongst older South Australians, often on low incomes, to save on heating and cooling costs in winter and summer months with often serious implications on their health and wellbeing.
- Reducing the uncertainty of developing essential infrastructure through application of the provisions contained in Part 8 of the PDI Act may help reduce wholesale and retail energy costs, but this cannot be achieved without complementary policy settings in the Code that:
  - accord priority to the development of essential infrastructure;
  - clearly articulate the assessment pathways and requirements for essential infrastructure; and
  - recognise the diversity of essential infrastructure provision so that minor developments, such as small substation extensions on an existing substation property and fence replacements, do not require planning assessment and so avoid the imposition of hefty, and arguably unnecessary application fees.

The following sections explore these issues in greater detail.

### 2.1 Assessment of Essential Infrastructure

Part 8 of the PDI Act deals specifically with the assessment of essential infrastructure, offering two distinct and quite different pathways.

#### 2.1.1 Assessment Pathway – Section 129

The first pathway is described in Section 129 of the PDI Act which provides for the creation of *infrastructure reserves* to accommodate essential infrastructure and the adoption of *standard infrastructure designs*. If a proposed infrastructure development is to be undertaken within an infrastructure reserve, a planning consent *may* not be required. If a proposed infrastructure development is consistent with a standard infrastructure design and is to be undertaken within an infrastructure reserve where that design is recognised as being permitted, it *may* be assessed and approved by an accredited professional (rather than the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP)) as a relevant authority.

It should be noted that the planning systems in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria provide for Ministerial declaration (or similar) for critical or state significant infrastructure which follows a special assessment/approval process. Part 8 of the PDI Act has been written to allow for a similar process in South Australia, but the process remains shrouded in uncertainty owing to the use of language (specifically the word 'may') and lack of reference to how *infrastructure reserves* and *standard infrastructure designs* are to be enacted.

Aside from this uncertainty, the pathway described in Section 129 potentially offers significant advantages for ElectraNet and electricity consumers more generally. ElectraNet has developed a Design Manual for all of its

transmission infrastructure which has formed the design basis for substations, high voltage transmission lines and structures that have been assessed and approved by SCAP (and its predecessor the Development Assessment Commission) in the past. It follows that if the designs within the Manual were to be accepted as being consistent with standard infrastructure designs and the infrastructure was to be developed on land identified as an infrastructure reserve, ElectraNet developments could be assessed and approved by an accredited professional. Such an outcome would not only result in a more efficient assessment process, it would also lead to reduced planning and design costs for ElectraNet and cheaper and more affordable electricity for consumers.

### 2.1.2 Assessment Pathway – Section 130

The second ‘alternative’ assessment pathway described in Section 130 of the PDI Act essentially replicates the Crown Development assessment process proposed in Section 131 of the Act. The Crown Development assessment pathway has been used by ElectraNet for most of its transmission network developments in the past, including minor extensions and upgrades of substation infrastructure which have incurred significant costs through increased application fees, compliance requirements (including for landscaped buffers which constitute a serious security risk for ElectraNet operations) and consultancy fees.

A further issue with Section 130 and Crown Development assessment pathways under the PDI Act is the provision allowing the Minister to direct that an EIS be prepared in relation to a proposed infrastructure development. In this instance, a proposal would become subject to the same statutory procedures to that of an impact assessed development (i.e. major project) which would significantly increase assessment timeframes and development costs, both of which would disadvantage electricity consumers. In addition, there is no guidance in the PDI Act or the Code about the timing of the Minister’s decision to require an EIS. Conceivably, this could occur fairly late in the assessment process, extending assessment timeframes and associated costs unreasonably.

For these reasons, ElectraNet would advocate for its development projects to be assessed under Section 129 of the Act, and ideally, for all transmission line and substation designs that are part of the Design Manual to be recognised as ‘accepted development’<sup>1</sup> within designated infrastructure reserves.

### 2.1.3 Schedule 13 Exemptions

Schedule 13 of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017* defines State agency developments that are exempt from approval. It is noted that provisions within this Schedule have incorporated the provisions in Schedule 14A of the *Development Regulations 2008* which exempt certain forms of electricity infrastructure development from requiring approval.

ElectraNet fully supports these exemptions, particularly as these allow for security fences up to 3.2 metres in height around substations and the construction or alteration of a building within an existing electricity substation footprint to be exempt from approval.

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<sup>1</sup> Accepted development does not require planning consent if it meets specific accepted development classification criteria.

## 2.2 Overlays Within the Code

Section 66 of the PDI Act calls for the Planning and Design Code to include overlays to “*address specified or defined issues that may apply in any zone or subzone (or a part of any zone or subzone), or across zones or subzones, depending on circumstances*”.

The Code does not include an overlay for essential electricity transmission infrastructure, despite such infrastructure being necessary to the development and operation of most forms of development within zones and subzones across the State.

It is important to recognise that critical transmission infrastructure projects often span periods in excess of 10 years from concept development through to commissioning. For such projects, there is a need to ensure that development rights to land (discrete sites and corridors) can be secured at an early stage to enable the most efficient development of the transmission network at the least long-run cost to consumers. For ElectraNet, the preference would be to establish an overlay for electricity transmission infrastructure that would identify land where such infrastructure is to be developed in the future, allowing for development rights to be secured for that land.

The *Strategic Infrastructure Gas Pipelines Overlay* provides a potential model for an overlay accommodating ElectraNet’s high voltage transmission network (including transmission lines and substations). Pursuant to Section 129 (1) of the PDI Act, an overlay of the transmission network could conceivably define an *infrastructure reserve* for assessment purposes. If an infrastructure reserve was to be applied to transmission network infrastructure, Section 129 (1)(3)(a) of the Act indicates that planning consent *may* not be required. However, no guidance is provided on the criteria to be used to determine that such an outcome would apply, increasing the level of uncertainty associated with developing essential electricity transmission infrastructure.

### 2.2.1 Infrastructure reserves

In identifying land suitable for an infrastructure reserve, ElectraNet strongly recommends that such reserves are applied over the existing transmission network (in its entirety) with ability to extend reserves to reflect the South Australian Annual Transmission Planning Report (refer <https://www.electranet.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SA-Transmission-Annual-Planning-Report-2018.pdf>) as prepared by ElectraNet.

The Transmission Annual Planning Report provides a 10-year outlook on the current capacity and emerging limitations of the South Australian electricity transmission network. Through joint planning with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and SA Power Networks (South Australia’s Distribution Network Service Provider) the report includes demand projections and information on completed, committed and potential transmission network developments. This report shows potential long-term transmission system developments crucial to development within South Australia as illustrated in Figure 1 (below).

Strategic consideration should also be given to applying a wider *infrastructure reserve* than that of the existing powerline easement to enable for future rebuilding of assets parallel to existing lines, recognising that in many cases power supply through the existing transmission line must remain until new assets are built and commissioned.

This situation would represent the most cost effective and coordinated planning approach to essential infrastructure provision.

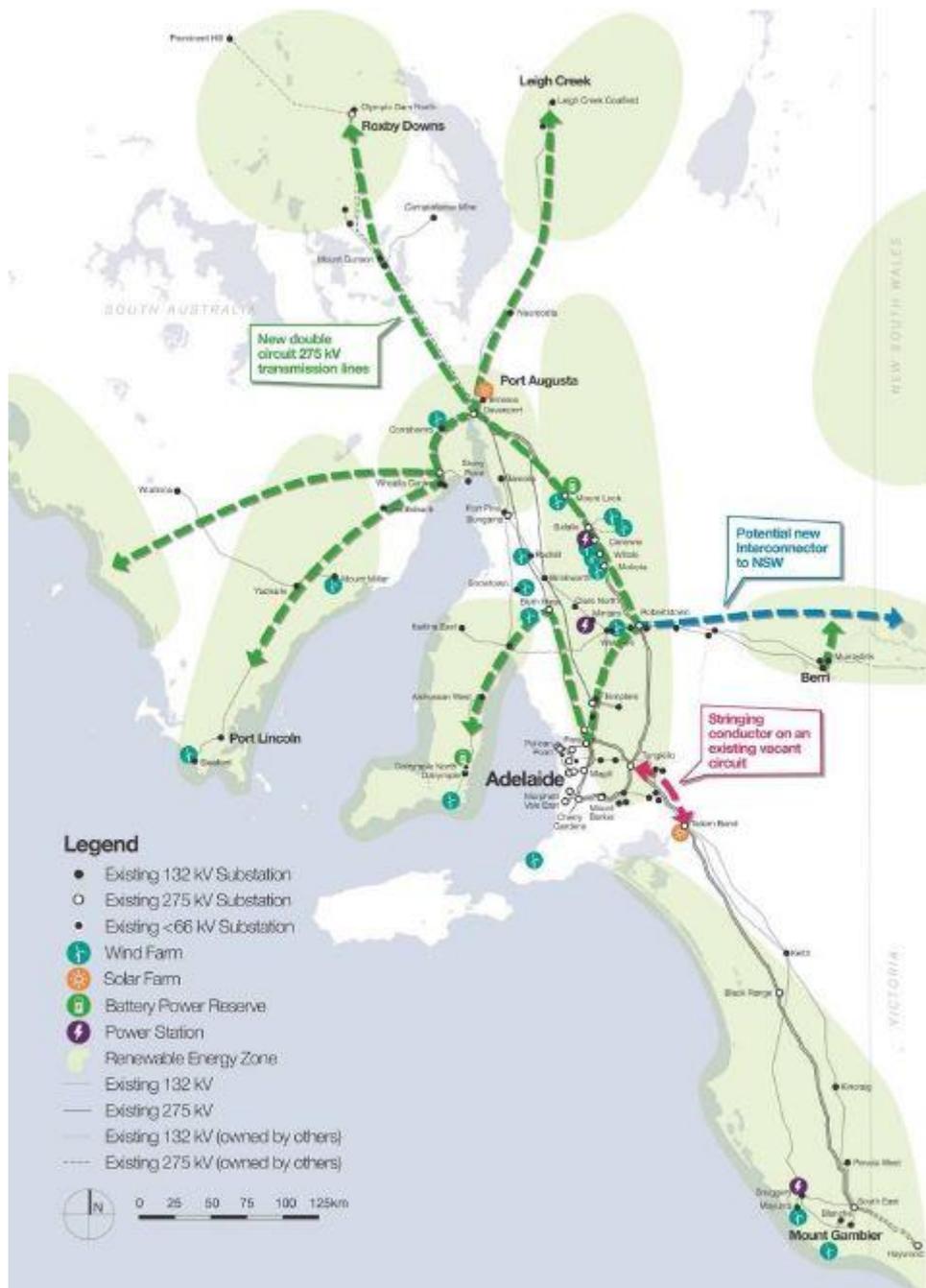


Figure 1: Extract from the South Australian Transmission Planning Report 2018

ElectraNet would be prepared to support DPTI in identifying and mapping land in which future transmission network developments would take place. In order to optimise the benefits associated with this exercise, ElectraNet would require a greater level of certainty and clarity in the legislation and the Code of:

- whether the land identified would constitute an *infrastructure reserve* pursuant to Section 129 (1) of the PDI Act;
- whether the design of transmission network infrastructure contained in ElectraNet’s Asset Design Manual would be recognised as *standard infrastructure designs* pursuant to Section 129 (2) of the PDI Act;
- the level of assessment (if any) that would be required; and
- who would be the relevant authority.

## 2.3 Cultural Heritage

ElectraNet prides itself on treating cultural heritage seriously and, in the course of developing the State's electricity transmission network, has continued to work closely with Traditional Owners to ensure that sites/areas of cultural heritage significance are properly protected and not impacted by its activities. This has often required changes to the design of network corridors, resulting in additional costs which ElectraNet has been willing to bear precisely because it prioritises its cultural heritage responsibilities and its relationship with Traditional Owners across South Australia.

Accordingly, ElectraNet is somewhat disappointed with the lack of planning policy pertaining to cultural heritage in the Code and is concerned about the potential implications of this policy silence on South Australia's cultural heritage assets. It is also worth noting that the lack of attention afforded cultural heritage in the draft Code appears in marked contrast to the importance attached to the ongoing protection of Local and State Heritage Places and State Heritage Areas through the application of Overlays in the Code.

## 3.0 SPECIFIC CODE PROVISIONS

The following sections discuss specific elements of the draft Code that may impact on the development of essential transmission network infrastructure.

### 3.1 Rules of Interpretation

The Rules of Interpretation that preface the draft Code provide instruction on how the Code is to be applied in the assessment of development. These rules clearly indicate that there is a hierarchy of policy provisions within the Code and, where there is an inconsistency between policies, that “....*the provisions of an Overlay will prevail over all other policies applying in the particular case*”.

ElectraNet acknowledges and is not concerned with the elevation of overlay provisions over subzone and zones provisions per se. However, ElectraNet remains concerned that there is no guidance provided on how to address inconsistencies or conflicts between overlay provisions applying to a development proposal. Given that there are 58 individual overlays covering a diverse range of policy issues in the draft Code, the potential uncertainty created by inconsistencies in overlay provisions in the assessment of development is problematic, particularly if such inconsistencies were to lead to extended assessment timeframes for essential transmission infrastructure.

### 3.2 Overlays

Table 1 (below) illustrates a range of issues with particular overlay provisions in the draft Code, most notably the potential inconsistency of essential transmission infrastructure development with policy provisions that are to apply over substantial areas of the State.

A further constraint for ElectraNet is that overlay policy frequently limits the level of excavation and filling which can occur on land, with these limits generally exceeded when constructing high voltage transmission lines and supporting structures.

**Table 1: Overlay Provisions - Issues for Transmission Infrastructure**

Overlay	Overlay Provision	Issues
Character Area	PO 1.1: The form of new buildings and structures that are visible from the public realm consistent with the valued streetscape characteristics of the character area. PO 1.2: Development is consistent with the prevailing building and wall heights in the character area.	Transmission infrastructure (including substations) is rarely consistent with streetscape character or prevailing building and wall heights. Such infrastructure may be required in character areas.
Character Preservation District	PO 1.2: Renewable energy facilities and ancillary development, waste treatment and management facilities and high voltage electricity lines are not supported. PO 2.1: Development occurring at the edge of townships is sympathetic to the rural landscape and reinforces a clear transition between townships and rural landscape through measures including: (a) being of low scale; (c) visual separation from the rural area through landscaping and road reserves. PO 2.2: Development contributes to and maintains the historic identity and character of townships through appropriate: (a) form; (b) scale; (c) siting; (d) design; and (e) landscaping. PO 3.2: Buildings and structures do not interrupt views of the skyline through measures including being sited below ridge lines. PO 3.4: Large buildings and structures sited and oriented to minimise their visual bulk, particularly if close to roads or in open settings where there are no other buildings or mature trees in close proximity.	High voltage transmission lines are explicitly discouraged in these districts despite the need for residences, businesses and service providers to have access to electricity. Development of transmission network infrastructure is not always sympathetic to rural or township character and is necessarily of a larger scale with significant visual impact. Such infrastructure cannot always be sited so as not to interrupt views of the skyline.  Access to a reliable source of electricity is required in character preservation districts.
Design	PO 1.1: Medium to high rise buildings and state significant development demonstrate high quality design.	Design of transmission infrastructure is necessarily related to engineering requirements rather than design quality per se.
Hazards (Bushfire x 6)	There are 6 overlays covering bushfire risk. Provisions seek to ensure that development (including workers' accommodation) is located away from areas posing an unacceptable bushfire risk, including vegetated areas.	ElectraNet accepts the need for these overlay provisions but is concerned with requirements for substantial asset protection zones of up to 100m wide for temporary workers' accommodation.  Experience of recent bushfire behaviour in the Adelaide Hills and Kangaroo Island shows that non-vegetated areas burn as quickly and violently as vegetated areas, making the requirement for non-vegetated asset protection zones unnecessary.

Overlay	Overlay Provision	Issues
Historic Area	PO 1.1: The form of new buildings and structures that are visible from the public realm are consistent with the prevailing historic attributes and characteristics of the historic area. PO 1.2: Development is consistent with the prevailing building and wall heights in the historic area. PO 1.5: Materials are either consistent with or complement those within the historic area.	Transmission infrastructure (including substations) is rarely consistent with historic attributes, prevailing building and wall heights or materials in historic areas.  Transmission infrastructure may be required in historic areas.
Local Heritage Place State Heritage Place State Heritage Area	Provisions require development to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain the heritage values of Places and Areas</li> <li>• be consistent with prevailing building and ceiling heights</li> <li>• have materials and colours consistent with heritage values.</li> </ul>	Transmission infrastructure is often required to be located close to heritage places/areas yet rarely complement the values, building/ceiling heights or materials in these places/areas. Transmission infrastructure may need to be located in close proximity to heritage places/areas.
Native Vegetation State Significant Native Vegetation	Provisions require the protection, retention and restoration of native vegetation with development to avoid vegetated areas and minimise clearance of native vegetation.	Transmission infrastructure, particularly powerlines, often require clearance of native vegetation. Clearance is normally negotiated with the Native Vegetation Council with an appropriate SEB provided. The proposed overlay provisions appear more onerous than current requirements and could lead to significantly higher costs of vegetation clearance for essential transmission infrastructure. These costs would necessarily be passed onto consumers.
River Murray Flood Plain	PO 3.1: Buildings and structures are sited and designed to be unobtrusive when viewed from the River Murray and nearby public roads. Associated performance feature states that buildings and structures should have associated electricity and telecommunications lines installed underground.	Transmission infrastructure (particularly transmission lines and supporting structures) generally has high visual impact with transmission lines unable to be installed underground.
Significant Landscape Protection	PO 2.1: Development carefully designed and sited to: (d) be visually unobtrusive and blend in with the surrounding area; and (e) be located below ridge lines. PO 2.2: Buildings and structures limited to those that: (a) – (g) – these 7 provisions make no reference to essential infrastructure.	Even when carefully designed and sited, electricity transmission infrastructure is often visually obtrusive and sometimes needs to be located on ridge lines rather than below them.

Overlay	Overlay Provision	Issues
	PO 4.1: Excavation and filling of land limited to that associated with: (a) minimising the visual impact of buildings or structures; (b) construction of water storage facilities.	In relation to PO 2.2, suggest adding a provision that states: (h) are required to support the development and maintenance of essential electricity infrastructure. In relation to PO 4.1, suggest adding a provision that states: (c) development of essential infrastructure.
Sloping Land	PO 1.4: Development avoids the alteration and obstruction of natural drainage lines. PO 3.4: Driveways and access tracks are sited and designed to integrate with the natural topography. PO 4.1: Earthworks located outside townships and urban areas is limited and only undertaken to reduce the visual impact of buildings and structures and where it preserves the natural form of the land and vegetation.	The construction of transmission infrastructure may sometimes temporarily obstruct natural drainage lines which are generally restored on completion of works. Access tracks are usually sited to be unobtrusive, although this is not always practicable. Earthworks associated with transmission infrastructure are undertaken to develop the infrastructure and not to reduce visual impacts associated with that infrastructure.

It is acknowledged that many of the overlay provisions that are of concern to ElectraNet are reasonable given broader planning objectives to protect character areas, historic areas, local and state heritage places, significant landscapes, native vegetation and the River Murray. However, essential transmission infrastructure often needs to be developed in or across such areas, and the uncertainty created by non-compliance with important overlay provisions is not conducive to the cost-effective development of such infrastructure.

### 3.3 Zone Policies

The kind of development anticipated in most zones fails to include provision for essential infrastructure, despite the need for such infrastructure to enable development.

#### 3.3.1 Accepted Development

Interestingly, 'building work on railway land' is listed in the Code as 'accepted development' in a significant number of zones with the associated 'accepted development classification criteria' requiring three simple conditions to be met: (i) that building work is associated with a railway; (ii) that it is situated on railway land; and (iii) that it is required for the conduct or maintenance of railway activities.

ElectraNet believes that a similar provision for critical transmission infrastructure could be developed and applied to zones in which such infrastructure exists. A provision of this sort would be particularly beneficial for low-impact substation extensions by removing the requirement for planning consent and associated application costs.

#### 3.3.2 Infrastructure Zone

Electricity substations are envisaged in the Infrastructure Zone which encompasses several disparate areas across the State that accommodate existing infrastructure developments. However, it is quite rare for new substations to be located in infrastructure zones. Instead, substations are located in a multitude of different zones, emphasising the need for standardised provisions in all zones to allow for the development of essential transmission infrastructure. These provisions could include a requirement for appropriate separation of this infrastructure from sensitive receptors and incompatible land uses (which ElectraNet effectively implement through their site selection process) in order to manage impacts.

Of particular concern to ElectraNet are the policies governing fencing in the Infrastructure Zone which require:

- Security fencing to be located behind landscaping to enhance the appearance of development; and
- Fencing over 2.1 metres in height to be designed to complement the appearance of land and buildings and not form a dominant visual feature from adjacent areas, roads and thoroughfares.

Both of these performance outcomes present problems for substation developments where fences of up to 3.2 metres in height are a standard requirement to not only protect the infrastructure, but also to protect people from potentially injuring or killing themselves. Establishing landscaping around substations for amenity reasons similarly conflicts with the need to properly secure these facilities and prevent unauthorised people from accessing them.

As discussed above, ElectraNet supports provisions within Schedule 13 of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations to allow for security fences up to 3.2 metres in height around substations to be exempt from approval and agrees that these provisions should take precedence over the Infrastructure Zone provisions.

#### 3.3.3 Master-planned Suburban Neighbourhood Zone

Although access to electricity and the provision of electricity infrastructure is necessary to the development of any master-planned suburban neighbourhood, there is no reference to accommodating such infrastructure in this Zone.

## 3.4 General Policies

There are three general policy modules in the draft Code that are of relevance to ElectraNet activities.

### 3.4.1 Clearance from Overhead Powerlines

The provisions in this module seek to protect human health and safety through ensuring appropriate separation of buildings (and their occupiers) from overhead powerlines.

*ElectraNet supports these provisions.*

### 3.4.2 Infrastructure and Renewable Energy Facilities

Provisions in this module generally support the provision of transmission network infrastructure although there are several policy settings which raise particular concerns for ElectraNet developments as discussed in the following sections.

#### 3.4.2.1 Visual Amenity

Performance Outcome (PO) 2.1 asks for the visual impact of above ground infrastructure and facilities to be minimised but explicitly excludes wind farms from this requirement.

Given that the visual impact of high voltage transmission lines and associated structures is largely unavoidable, ElectraNet respectfully requests that these developments are also explicitly excluded from this provision.

PO 2.2 seeks to incorporate vegetated buffers around substations and other facilities to reduce their visual impacts on adjacent land. As noted, establishing vegetated buffers around substations conflicts with the need to properly secure these facilities and prevent unauthorised people from accessing them. For ElectraNet, landscaped buffers around substations constitute a serious security and fire risk with the preference being to carefully site these developments away from sensitive receivers.

*ElectraNet respectfully requests that substation developments be excluded from this provision.*

#### 3.4.2.2 Hazard Management

PO 4.2 calls for energy storage and transmission facilities to be separated from dwellings, tourist accommodation and frequently visited public places to reduce risks to public safety from fire or equipment malfunction. While ElectraNet generally designs its facilities to achieve appropriate separation from sensitive receivers, it is not always possible to do so, especially when designing large scale, high voltage transmission corridor development.

*ElectraNet respectfully requests that PO 4.2 be amended as follows:*

*Facilities for energy generating, power storage and transmission separated as much as practicable from dwellings, tourist accommodation and frequently visited public places (such as viewing platforms / lookouts) to reduce risks to public safety from fire or equipment malfunction.*

### 3.4.3 Workers' Accommodation and Settlements

Development of transmission network infrastructure occasionally requires the establishment of temporary workers' camps, particularly in remote locations. ElectraNet supports provisions in this module that seek to minimise the environmental and social impacts associated with this form of short-term accommodation.

However, the parking requirements for Workers' Accommodation specified in Table 1 of the *Transport, Access and Parking* module call for the provision of 0.5 spaces per bed plus 0.25 spaces per bed for visitors. This requirement is considered to be excessive given that most workers within these camps do not use their own vehicles and do not have visitors.

As an example, ElectraNet will be establishing two temporary workers' camps as part of the Eyre Peninsula Reinforcement project (involving the development of higher voltage transmission lines servicing the Eyre Peninsula). Each camp will accommodate up to 80 workers. Under the proposed Code, this would require a total of 60 car parking spaces to be provided on each camp site which would significantly (and unnecessarily) expand the footprint of these sites and potentially lead to excessive and extremely costly clearance of native vegetation that is specifically discouraged in the Code.

*ElectraNet respectfully requests that the parking requirements for temporary workers' accommodation be revised in order to minimise vegetation clearance and disturbance of the land more generally.*

### 3.5 Designated Areas

Part 5 of the draft Code establishes 'designated areas' which are intended to identify zones, subzones, overlays or other areas for particular purposes. As argued in Section 2.2 above, there would be significant merit in designating an overlay area specifically for the development of critical electricity transmission infrastructure. Such an approach would support the South Australian economy by enabling ElectraNet to more efficiently undertake a range of tasks (e.g. secure necessary easements and land holdings) at an early stage of the planning process.

### 3.6 Definitions

There are two definitions of land uses in the Code relevant to the development and assessment of transmission network infrastructure. These are for 'electricity substation' and 'workers' accommodation'. While the definition for substations is supported, the definition for workers' accommodation does not adequately encompass ElectraNet operations.

The definition currently reads as follows:

Workers' accommodation means premises used to accommodate workers on a temporary basis while they carry out employment:

- a) on the same site as the workers' accommodation;
- b) in mining or petroleum extraction;
- c) in seasonally intensive rural activities such as fruit picking, pruning, animal shearing, meat processing or similar; or
- d) in road and/or railway construction.

Point (a) of this definition fails to account for transmission corridor development where temporary accommodation facilities are usually located centrally along the corridor which may be some distance away from individual work sites. In this regard, ElectraNet developments are more akin to the road and railway construction.

*ElectraNet respectfully requests that 'electricity transmission construction' be added to this definition.*

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, ElectraNet supports both the intent demonstrated in Section 129 of the PDI Act to prioritise the development of essential infrastructure, and the transfer of provisions exempting certain electricity infrastructure developments from approval within Schedule 14A of the Development Regulations to Schedule 13 of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations.

However, ElectraNet remains concerned with the following elements of the Code:

- 1) That the intent of Section 129 of the PDI Act is not reflected in Code policy, creating unreasonable levels of uncertainty for the future development of critical electricity transmission infrastructure across the State.
- 2) That there is insufficient clarity on how *infrastructure reserves* and *standard infrastructure designs* are to be assessed and adopted under the Code. While ElectraNet is keen to work with DPTI to identify and map a potential transmission line overlay for Code purposes (in a similar fashion to that illustrated in Figure 1 above) it would need reassurance that such an exercise would enable a simpler and more efficient assessment pathway for future transmission infrastructure development.
- 3) That some overlay, zone, subzone and general policy provisions in the draft Code are not conducive to or recognise the specific requirements of essential transmission infrastructure development.

ElectraNet believes that most of these concerns could be addressed if Section 129 of the PDI Act were able to be used for ElectraNet developments via:

- Creation of an overlay for essential transmission infrastructure that would effectively define an *infrastructure reserve*; and
- Determination by the State Planning Commission that ElectraNet's standard designs be adopted as *standard infrastructure designs* that when developed within an infrastructure reserve would be exempt from approval.

A final measure facilitating more efficient transmission infrastructure development would be for SCAP to have the ability to authorise 'conceptual approval' for such development. Such a measure is currently in operation in other jurisdictions and provides significant benefits to infrastructure providers and ultimately the community by enabling future development sites/corridors to be secured early (and therefore more economically) in the planning process.

## Signature Page

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