

# **Australian Char**

## **Bushfire Mitigation Plan 2026**

### **Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2023**

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### **1. Document Revision History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Release Date</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.0	November 2025	ESV	For 2025 Season
1.1	January 2026	Kaleb Johnson	Addressing ESV evaluation comments ESV-20251711-001300 dated November 2025
1.2	February 2026	Kaleb Johnson	ESV-20251711-001300 sub no 2
1.3	March 2026	Kaleb Johnson	Added URL

### **2. Document Approval**

<b>Name/Originator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
Kaleb Johnson - Operations Manager	Review for submission	January 2026
Kaleb Johnson	Review for submission	February 2026
Kaleb Johnson	Review for submission	March 2026

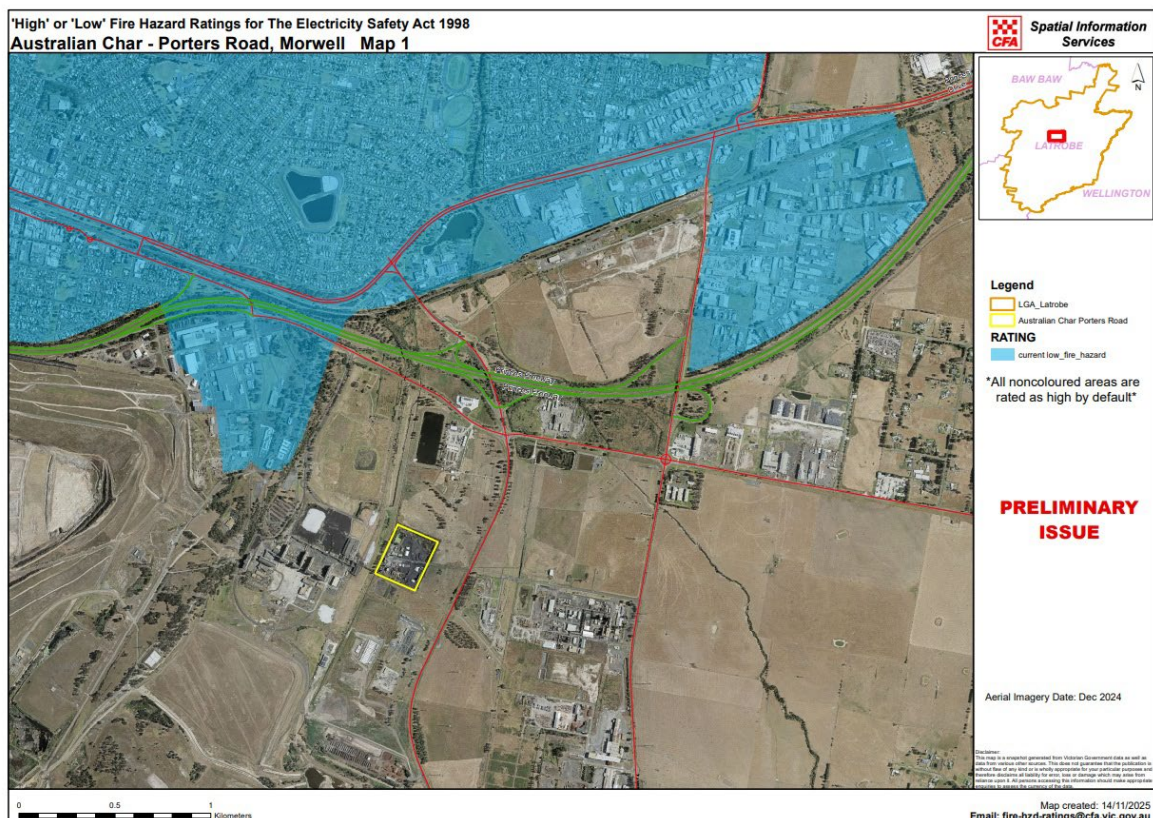
### 3. Introduction

This Bushfire Mitigation Plan (BMP) is submitted in accordance with section 83BA of the Electricity Safety Act 1998 and Regulation 6 of the Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2023. Australian Char Pty Ltd is a specified operator under Regulation 6 of the Regulations because it owns/operates at-risk electric lines in a hazardous bushfire risk area (HBRA) at Lot 2 Porters Road, Morwell, Victoria.

Australian Char does not currently hold any exemptions from the requirements of the Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2023.

A copy of the accepted Bushfire Mitigation Plan will be published on the Australian Char website at <https://heatbeads.com.au/bushfire-mitigation-plan-bmp/>

The plan is also available for inspection at the principal office: 3 Cojo Place, Dandenong VIC 3175 during ordinary business hours (Monday–Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm).



(Figure 1- Map detailing Australian Char site in HBRA)

The site is located in the Latrobe City Council area, classified as HBRA under the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations.



(Figure 2 – Image detailing Australian Chars’ at-risk electric line)

#### 4. Terms and Definitions

The following terms used in this Bushfire Mitigation Plan (BMP) have the meanings specified below, drawn from the Electricity Safety Act 1998 (the Act) and the Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2023 (the Regulations). These definitions ensure compliance and clarity in applying bushfire mitigation requirements.

- **Accepted bushfire mitigation plan** means a bushfire mitigation plan accepted by Energy Safe Victoria under Subdivision 3 of Division 1A of Part 8 of the Act (including provisionally accepted plans or revised plans under sections 83BBA or 83BBB).
- **At-risk electric line** means an electric line (other than a private electric line) that is above the surface of land and in a hazardous bushfire risk area.
- **Bushfire mitigation plan** means a plan referred to in section 83BA(1), 83BBA(1), 83BBB(1) or 113A(1) or (1A) of the Act.
- **Electric line** means the whole or any part of a wire, cable or other thing used or to be used for the purpose of transmitting, distributing or supplying electricity, or any thing enclosing or supporting such a wire, cable or other thing (but does not include a wire, cable or other thing directly used in converting electrical energy into another form of energy).

- **Fire danger period** means a period declared under section 4 of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* to be a fire danger period.
- **Fire control authority**, in relation to an area of land, means Fire Rescue Victoria (if in the FRV fire district), the Secretary to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (if in a fire protected area under the *Forests Act 1958*), or the Country Fire Authority (if in the country area of Victoria).
- **Hazardous bushfire risk area** means an area to which a fire authority has assigned a fire hazard rating of "high" under section 80 of the Act (whether or not urban), or any non-urban area not assigned a "low" rating.
- **High voltage (HV)** means voltage exceeding 1,000 V AC or 1,500 V DC (as per the *Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019*).
- **Low voltage (LV)** means voltage not exceeding 1,000 V AC or 1,500 V DC (as per the *Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019*).
- **Maintenance**, in relation to an electric line, includes keeping the whole or any part of a tree clear of the line.
- **Specified bushfire risk period** means the period commencing 1 November and ending 31 March the following year.
- **Specified operator** means the operator of an at-risk electric line but does not include a major electricity company.
- **Total or partial fire ban day** means a day or partial day declared to be a day or partial day of total fire ban under section 40(1) of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*.
- **Tree** includes vegetation.

## 5. Compliance with Regulation 6 – Prescribed Particulars

Regulation 6	Requirement	Section in this Plan
(a)	Name, address, email, telephone of specified operator	6
(b)	Person responsible for preparation	6
(c)	Persons responsible for carrying out the plan	6
(d)	Emergency contact	6

<b>Regulation 6</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Section in this Plan</b>
(e)	Bushfire mitigation policy	7
(f)	Objectives of the plan	8
(g)	Description and single line diagram of at-risk lines	9
(h)	Preventative strategies and programs	10
(i)	Inspection plan	10.1
(j)	Competency of inspectors	10.2
(k)	Competency of other persons	10.2
(l)	Operation/maintenance plans – fire event, total fire ban, fire danger period	11
(m)	Investigations, analysis and methodology	12
(n)	Monitoring, auditing, deficiency rectification	13
(o)	Assistance to fire control authorities	14

## **6. Specified Operator and Contact Details**

### **Specified Operator**

Australian Char Pty Ltd  
 ABN 26 006 398 072  
 ACN 006 398 072  
 3 Cojo Place, Dandenong VIC 3175  
 Phone: +61 3 9706 6330  
 Email: [kalebj@auschar.com.au](mailto:kalebj@auschar.com.au)

### **Person responsible for preparation of the plan**

Kaleb Johnson – Operations Manager  
 Australian Char Pty Ltd  
 ABN 26 006 398 072  
 ACN 006 398 072  
 3 Cojo Place, Dandenong VIC 3175  
 Phone: +61 3 9706 6330  
 Phone: +61 411 730 551  
 Email: [kalebj@auschar.com.au](mailto:kalebj@auschar.com.au)

### **Persons responsible for carrying out the plan**

Kaleb Johnson – Operations Manager

Australian Char Pty Ltd

ABN 26 006 398 072

ACN 006 398 072

3 Cojo Place, Dandenong VIC 3175

Phone: +61 3 9706 6330

Phone: +61 411 730 551

Email: [kalebj@auschar.com.au](mailto:kalebj@auschar.com.au)

**HV contractors engaged are appropriately trained and competent in HV work.**

### **Emergency contact**

24/7 emergency site contact:

National Operations Manager, OPTEC

ABN 78 060 274 624

2 Church St

Morwell, Victoria 3840

Phone: 0419 246 091

Email: [finance@optec.com.au](mailto:finance@optec.com.au)

Secondary: Kaleb Johnson – Operations Manager

Australian Char Pty Ltd

ABN 26 006 398 072

ACN 006 398 072

3 Cojo Place, Dandenong VIC 3175

Phone: +61 3 9706 6330

Phone: +61 411 730 551

Email: [kalebj@auschar.com.au](mailto:kalebj@auschar.com.au)

In an emergency requiring isolation of the HV supply, contact AusNet Services (distribution network operator) on 13 17 99 (24-hour faults).

## **7. Bushfire Mitigation Policy**

Australian Char Pty Ltd is committed to minimising, as far as practicable, the risk of fire ignition from its at-risk electric lines. We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring all future modification works will be compliant with relevant AusNet standards
- Implementing inspection, testing, and maintenance programs

- Engaging only trained, competent and appropriately licenced (as applicable to the work) contractors for HV work
- Continuously reviewing and improving this BMP considering incidents, audits and regulatory changes
- Planned decommissioning or replacement of aerial HV assets with underground LV (target completion 2027)

## 8. **Objectives of the Plan**

- Identify, mitigate, and eliminate, where practicable, all foreseeable ignition sources from the 22 kV aerial HV system.
- Ensure 100% of at-risk lines are inspected
- Respond rapidly and safely to any fire or potential ignition event.
- Achieve zero bushfire ignitions attributable to Australian Char HV assets.
- Comply fully with the Electricity Safety Act 1998, Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2023 and the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations.

## 9. **Description of Land and At-Risk Electric Lines**

The BMP applies to Lot 2 Porters Road, Morwell, Victoria (Title particulars: Volume 10892 Folio 456). The site is in a **hazardous bushfire risk area** with grassland and light forest fuels.

### **At-risk assets (22 kV aerial system):**

1. AusNet concrete pole (point of supply with air-break switch) – outside Australian Char ownership but interface point.
2. Australian Char concrete pole No. 1– air-break switch + HV drop-out fuses + pad-mounted oil-filled transformer (bundled).
3. Wooden pole No. 2. (proposed for removal)
4. Concrete pole No. 3 – air-break switch. (proposed for removal)
5. Concrete poles No. 4–6 (proposed for removal) – air-break switches + drop-out fuses + two pad-mounted oil-filled transformers.
6. Aerial bare conductors throughout.

**Total length:** ~450 m aerial conductors.

**Map:** Appendix A – Site HV layout diagram (attached). GPS reference point: - 38.2195, 146.4072.



1. AusNet concrete pole (point of supply with air-break switch) Pole # 2616767 – outside Australian Char ownership but interface point.

The HV installation at Australian Char Morwell consist of a 22 kV aerial HV system running from the Ausnet pole #2616767 situated just inside Australian Chars property.

The AusNet feeder to AusNet pole 2616767 (point of supply) is protected by an upstream auto-recloser set to 3 reclose attempts before lockout.



2. Australian Char concrete pole No. 1 #2616768 – air-break switch + HV drop-out fuses + pad-mounted oil-filled transformer (bundled).

Aerial conductors run to pole 1 (2616768) of the HV installation. This is a concrete pole with an air break switch and HV powder filled drop out fuses mounted on it. The HV powder filled drop out fuses provide the short circuit protection for the oil filled pad mounted transformer. These fuses are connected to a three core XLPE cable that runs down the pole to the pad mounted transformer located at the base of the concrete pole. The pad mounted oil filled transformer is contained in a concrete bund.



3. Wooden pole No. 2. #2616769 (Proposed for removal)

The aerial conductors then continue to pole 2 (2616769). This pole is a wooden pole.



4. Concrete pole No. 3. #2616340 – air-break switch. (Proposed for removal)

Aerial conductors continue to pole 3 (2616340) which is concrete and has an air break switch and HV powder filled drop out fuses mounted on it.

The air break switch on Pole 3 has been opened and earthed, cutting supply to the remaining assets.



5. Pole 4. #2616770 (Proposed for removal)

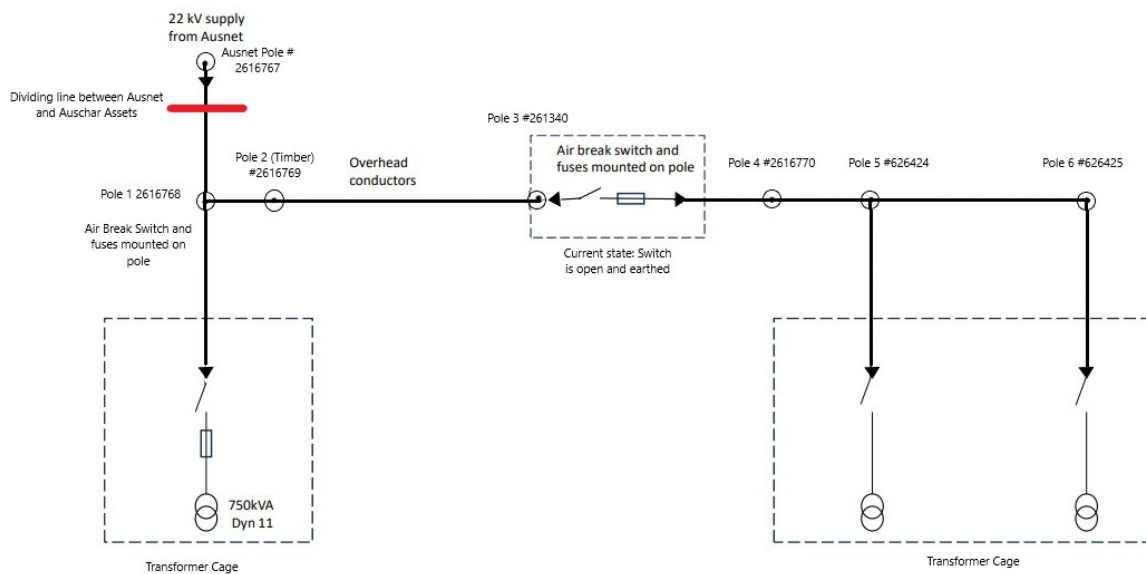
The aerial conductors then continue onto pole 4 (2616770) which is concrete.



6. Concrete pole No. 5 #626424 and pole No. 6 #626425 (proposed for removal) – air-break switches + drop-out fuses + two pad-mounted oil-filled transformers.

Poles 5 (626424) and pole 6 (626425) are concrete. These poles have air break switches mounted to them and each pole is connected to separate pad-mounted oil-filled transformers by bare cables.

### Australian Char Porters Rd Morwell HV Single Line Diagram



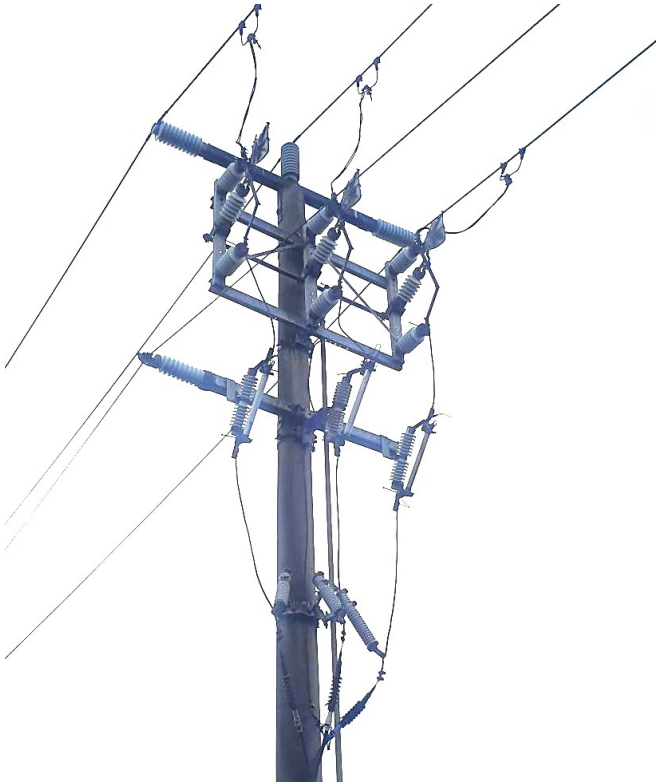
#### **Future State – Stage 1 (Target completion early 2026)**

Removal of aerial conductors, air-break switches and associated drop-out fuses from Australian Char Pole 1 (2616768) to Pole 6 (266425), including decommissioning of the two pad-mounted transformers supplied from Poles 4–6.

The span from AusNet pole (2616767) to Australian Char Pole 1 (2616768) will be restrung as a tensioned line. The existing air-break switch on Pole 1 will be replaced with a pole-mounted gas disconnect switch.

#### **Future State – Stage 2 (Target completion 2027)**

Conversion to LV supply and complete removal of remaining 22 kV aerial assets.



**Pole No 1. #2616768**



**Pad Mounted Transformer at Pole 1**

## 10. Preventative Strategies and Programs

### 10.1 Inspection Plan

Priority Defect Rating and Completion Timeframes		
Priority	Description	Completion Timeframe
P1	Imminent ignition risk	Immediate / 24 hours
P2	High risk – likely to cause ignition	Within 7 days
P3	Medium risk	Next scheduled outage / 30 days

Asset	Inspection/Test	Frequency	Standard/Method
Hardware such as: Aerial conductors, surge arrestors, ties, insulators	Visual + defect report	Every 2 years	Competent Asset Inspector
Power poles	Full pole inspection sound, excavate and drill (timber poles only)	Every 3 years	Competent Asset Inspector
Air-break switches & drop-out fuses	Service, contact resistance, insulation resistance	Every 2 years	Competent overhead line worker
Pad-mounted transformers	Insulation resistance, visual, bund integrity	Every 2 years	Competent overhead line worker
Transformer oil	DGA, dielectric, acidity, water, colour	Annually	NATA lab
Vegetation	Line clearance inspection	Monthly + pre-summer cut	Qualified arborist

All inspections completed before 1 October each year where practicable.

Australian Char is currently developing its Electric Line Clearance Management Plan in accordance with the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations.

## **10.2 Competency**

Australian Char uses the Contractor Competency Matrix Template (Appendix C) to verify that Asset Inspectors have satisfactorily completed an Energy Safe Victoria approved training course (or equivalent superseded course) and is competent to carry out such inspection.

- Qualified asset inspectors: (aerial conductors, hardware, insulators, surge arrestors, ties, air-break switches, drop-out fuses etc) Hold a minimum UET20621 Certificate II in ESI – Asset Inspection or equivalent.

The Contractor Competency Matrix Template (Appendix C) is also used to verify that all other personnel carrying out work under this BMP are suitably trained and competent to undertake the work.

- HV line workers: HV contractors engaged are appropriately trained and competent in HV work.
- Vegetation controllers: Minimum Certificate II in ESI – Vegetation Control or equivalent.
- Auditor: Subject Matter Expert or completed nationally recognised auditor training.
- Records maintained in site training register; verified before each job via contractor pre-qualification checklist.

## **11. Operation and Maintenance Plans**

### **11.1 In the event of a fire**

- Immediate isolation via on-site air-break switch (if safe).
- Call 000, notify AusNet (13 17 99), ESV Notifiable Incident line.
- Site emergency contact attends; fire extinguishers and water available.
- Post-incident: preserve scene, root-cause analysis.

### **11.2 On a Total Fire Ban day**

- No HV switching or hot work.
- Essential visual patrols only (no climbing).
- No Hot work permitted.

### **11.3 During Fire Danger Period**

- “During the Fire Danger Period and on days of Partial or Total Fire Ban, Australian Char will obtain a Fire Authority issued permit where hot work is unavoidable (<https://firepermits.vic.gov.au/>).
- All preventative maintenance completed prior to 1 October.
- Enhanced daily patrols on Extreme/Catastrophic days.
- Auto-reclose disabled on drop-out fuses if technically feasible (coordinated with AusNet).

## **12. Investigations, Analysis and Methodology**

- All incidents investigated using ICAM methodology within 7 days from the incident occurring.
- Recent incident (20 October 2025): Fuse expulsion caused sparks → small grass fire. Root cause: power surge. Corrective actions: (1) Install rock and weed spray under fuses; (2) Accelerate removal of aerial assets; (3) Annual surge-arrester testing added.
- Annual risk review to update controls.

## **13. Monitoring, Auditing and Continuous Improvement**

- Monthly review by Operations Manager (checklist in Appendix B).
- Annual internal audit by external safety consultant.
- Deficiencies logged in site hazard register; corrective actions tracked to closure.
- Plan reviewed annually or after any notifiable incident.
- Inspection effectiveness audited via random field verification.
- Any material changes require resubmission to ESV

## **14. Assistance to Fire Control Authorities**

Australian Char will:

- Provide immediate safe access and isolation advice.
- Supply HV layout diagrams and GPS coordinates.

- Invite FRV/CFA to annual site familiarisation tour.
- Share investigation reports when requested.
- 24/7 contact: Optec 0419 246 091.

