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28 November

POWERCOR RELEASES NEW TREE PLANTING GUIDE TO PREVENT BUSHFIRE HAZARDS

Powercor has recently released the 2008 Tree Planting Guide, helping garden and rural property owners to reduce the risk of bushfires, blackouts and power surges.

The comprehensive guide provides detailed information about planting vegetation that will enhance Victorian gardens and avoid the need for trimming or removal of trees once they meet maturity.

The guide aims to educate customers about local indigenous plants that are suitable for growth near powerlines in their region. These regions include the Wimmera Mallee, Midlands, Wannon, Western Plains Riverina, Otway Plains, Grampians, Otway and Geelong regions as well as Melbourne's CBD and Western suburbs.

The guide aims to educate customers about local indigenous plants that are suitable for growth near powerlines.

Powercor Regional Asset Manager, Ian Gillingham, warns that if vegetation surrounding electricity is not properly managed it has the potential to start fires and cause significant damage to property.

"Plants growing too close to powerlines are a safety risk and can cause fires, blackouts and power surges.

"Trees or shrubs planted near overhead powerlines or underground power cables need to be chosen carefully to ensure plants thrive without coming into contact with electrical equipment," said Mr Gillingham.

Mr Gillingham said that Powercor invests millions of dollars in inspecting and maintaining powerlines to help keep Victoria bushfire safe.

"Our vegetation management programs aim to keep safe distances between trees and the powerlines we manage.

"We use some interesting and innovative technologies as part of this process - including helicopter surveys which involve the use of a laser measuring unit mounted on a helicopter to measure the distances between the ground, powerlines and surrounding vegetation," said Mr Gillingham.

Powercor further reminds customers to call the free 'Dial Before You Dig' service on 1100 or visit www.dialbeforeyoudig.com.au to avoid making contact with underground powerlines.

To receive a **free** copy of the 'Powercor Tree Planting Guide' please contact the Powercor customer contact centre on 13 22 06.

MEDIA RELEASE

Media inquiries: Powercor Australia's 24-Hour Media Service (03) 9683 4342.