

# ASSET CLASS OVERVIEW

## SERVICES LINES

# Table of contents

<b>1. Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Compliance obligations	3
2.2 Asset population	3
2.3 Asset age profile	4
<b>3. Identified need</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Historical asset performance	5
<b>4. Forecast interventions</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Forecast volumes	8
4.2 Expenditure forecast	9

# 1. Overview

Our services lines are critical to our ability to maintain network reliability, as they connect our customers, from their residence or business to the electricity network.

Our service lines forecast interventions for the 2026–31 regulatory period are driven by defects and faults. These are forecast based on historical annual asset defect rates and forecast asset inspections.

Our 2026–31 forecast replacement volumes are largely aligned with our 2021–26 replacement volumes. This demonstrates the effectiveness of our service lines asset management practice to date.

A summary of our forecast expenditure for services lines for the 2026–31 regulatory period is set out in table 1.

**TABLE 1 SERVICE LINES: EXPENDITURE (\$M, 2026)**

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>FY27</b>	<b>FY28</b>	<b>FY29</b>	<b>FY30</b>	<b>FY31</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Service lines	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	20.9

## 2. Background

Service lines are network assets that connect a customer, from their residence or business to the electricity network. They can be overhead conductors or underground cables and supply all residential, industrial, and commercial customers.

Service lines interface with both the customers point of supply and the low voltage (LV) distribution network. Typically, LV fuses or switches are used to make the connection to the network. These can be located at a pole, service pit or directly to an individual distribution transformer (typically in rural areas).

This section provides an overview of our service lines asset class, including a summary of the population, types and age profile.

### 2.1 Compliance obligations

We operate under a combination of national and state legislation which establish our obligations and the regulatory framework under which we operate.

The National Electricity Rules sets out reliability and safety obligations and the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice include performance requirements. We must also manage our network assets in accordance with the Electricity Safety Act 1998, the Electricity Safety (Management) Regulations 2019, the Electricity Safety (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulations 2023 and the Victorian Environment Protection Act 2017.

These obligations can be summarised as follows:

- Electricity Safety Act 1998 – requires us to minimise safety risk 'as far as practicable' including bushfire danger
- Electricity Distribution Code of Practice – requires us to manage our assets in accordance with principles of good asset management and to minimise the risks associated with the failure or reduced performance of assets
- National Electricity Rules – requires us to forecast expenditure to maintain the quality, reliability and security of supply of our networks and maintain the safety of the distribution system
- Victorian Environment Protection Act (2017) – requires us to reduce the risk of harm from our activities to human health and the environment and from pollution or waste.

In short, we must maintain reliability, minimise safety risk 'as far as practicable' including bushfire danger arising from our network, and reduce the risk of harm to the environment.

### 2.2 Asset population

Our service line asset class includes overhead and underground service lines. Table 2 shows our service line population. As shown, the majority of service lines are overhead.

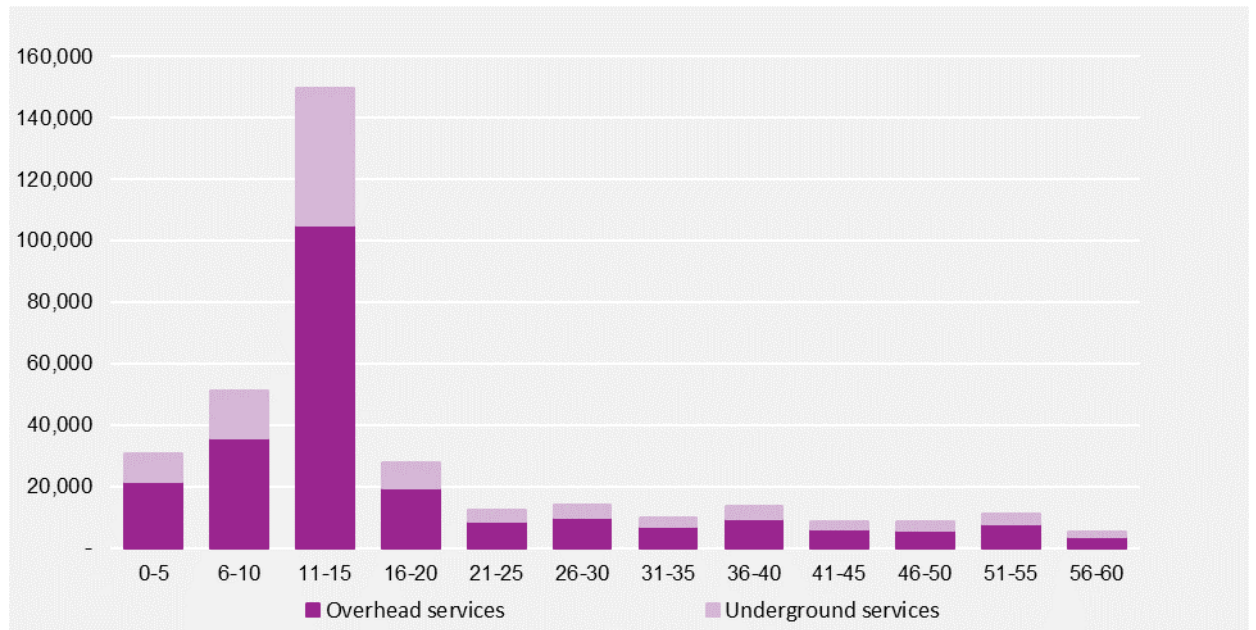
**TABLE 2 SERVICE LINE POPULATION**

RELAY TYPE	VOLUME
Overhead services	242,658
Underground services	103,255
<b>Total</b>	<b>345,913</b>

### 2.3 Asset age profile

Service life is the expected period of time after which the asset is unlikely to be fit for purpose, typically determined by safety, technology and/or obsolescence. Service lines have an expected service life of 40 years. The age profile of our service line population is shown in figure 1.

**FIGURE 1 SERVICE LINES: AGE PROFILE BY TYPE**



Note: The spike in the 11-15 age group is due to a previous risk-based replacement program of service lines

## 3. Identified need

The performance of our service lines may impact our network service level as failures may lead to a loss of supply for customers, pose safety risks to our personnel and the public, and potentially start a fire.

The identified need, therefore, is to manage our service line asset class to maintain reliability and minimise safety risks as far as practicable, consistent with our regulatory and legislative obligations.

This section outlines the historical performance of our service lines, which has informed how we how we assess and respond, if required, to this identified need.

### 3.1 Historical asset performance

Consistent with our regulatory requirements, we inspect our service lines on serviceable poles located in HBRA every 3 years and every 5 years for service lines in low bushfire risk area (LBRA). We also inspect service lines on limited life poles every year. These cyclic inspections provide snapshots in time of the service line condition and identify any defects.

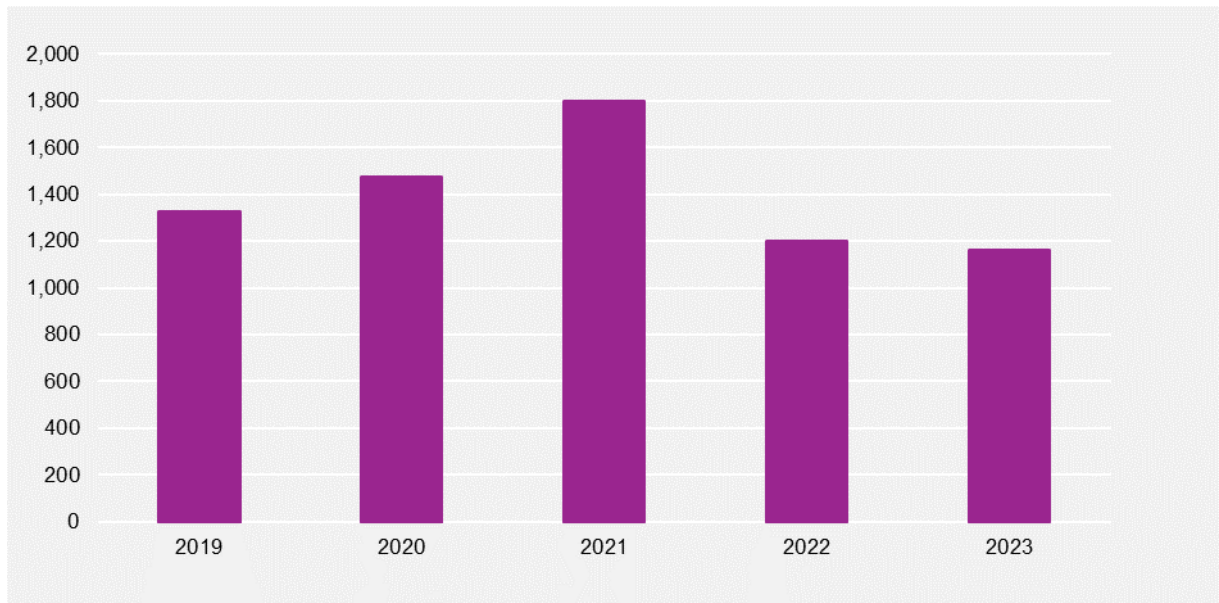
In assessing the need to intervene on our service line assets, we monitor certain asset performance indicators, including asset failures and high priority defects. These indicators inform our underlying asset management response—for example:

- increasing unassisted asset failures indicates a likely need to act immediately and review asset management practices (noting that robust inspection practices and governance over the application of these methods may drive low failure rates, but if the underlying condition of the relevant asset population is poor and/or deteriorating, high and/or increasing intervention volumes may still be prudent and efficient)
- increasing high-priority defects or deteriorating condition (relative to asset management thresholds) indicates a likely need to act soon to increase interventions over time, and/or undertake risk-based assessments.

#### 3.1.1 Historical failures

As shown in figure 2, our service line failures have been trending down since 2019, despite an increase in 2021. Nearly all the failures are nearly all due to overhead service lines. The five-year average of historical failures is 1,479 equating to an average annual failure rate of 2.14 per 1,000 service lines, which is a low failure rate.

**FIGURE 2 SERVICE LINES ASSET CLASS: FAILURES**



### 3.1.2 Historical defects

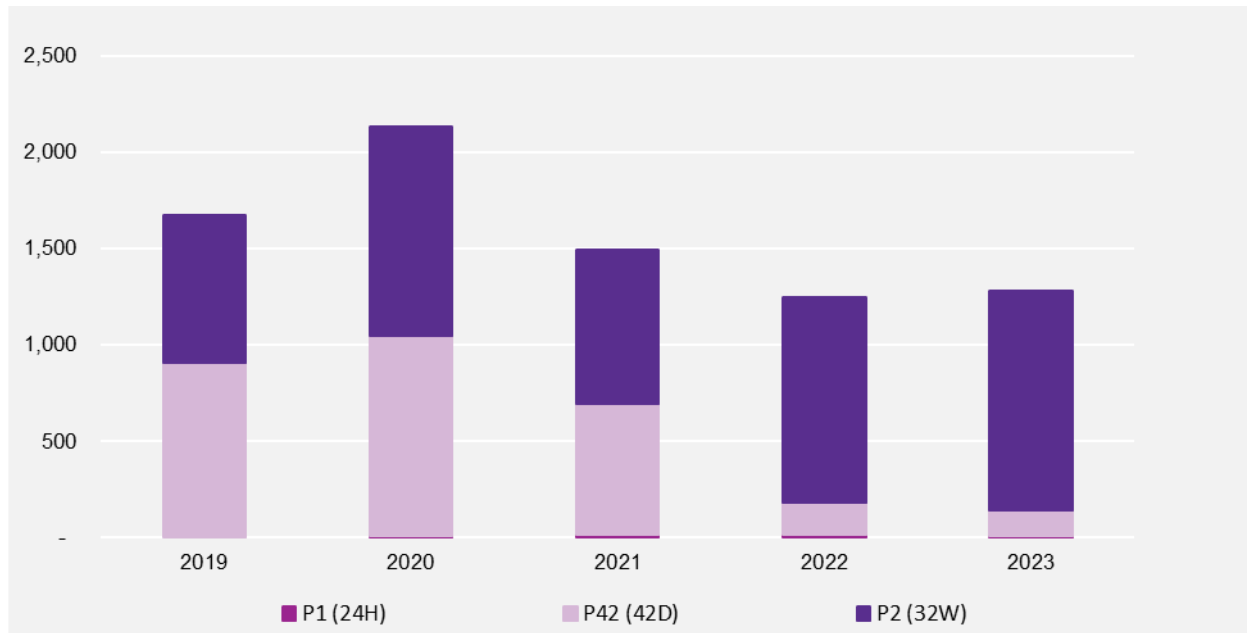
Our response to identified defects depends on the nature and severity of the defect, and may include more frequent re-inspections. High priority defects that result in intervention are shown in table 3.

**TABLE 3 RESPONSE TIMEFRAMES FOR HIGH PRIORITY DEFECTS**

PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME FOR INTERVENTION
P1	Make safe within 24 hours of identification (replacements or repairs can occur beyond the initial 24 hours)
P42	Addressed within 42 days of identification
P2	Addressed within 32 weeks of identification

As shown in figure 3, the number of high priority overhead service line defects are decreasing, due to decreasing P42 defects.

**FIGURE 3 OVERHEAD SERVICE LINES: HIGH-PRIORITY DEFECTS**



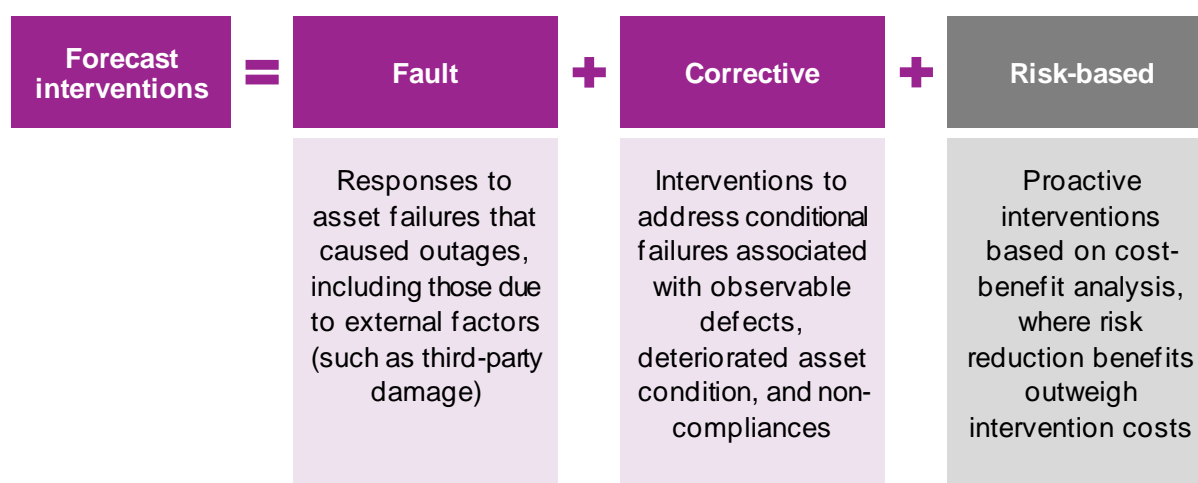


## 4. Forecast interventions

Our current asset management approach for service lines includes cyclic inspections and interventions, where required, to meet service levels consistent with our compliance obligations and stakeholder expectations. Typically, replacement of end-of-life service lines is the only credible intervention response as refurbishment or repairs are not viable, and additional inspection and maintenance will not address the underlying asset condition.

The derivation of our forecast interventions for the 2026–31 regulatory period, for our high-volume assets such as service lines, is based on two broad categories—faults and corrective forecasts. We are not forecasting any risk-based replacements. This approach is summarised in figure 4.

**FIGURE 4 FORECAST CATEGORIES**



### 4.1 Forecast volumes

For the 2026–31 regulatory period, a summary of our forecast volumes for overhead conductor is shown in table 4. In total, our forecast intervention volumes are aligned with those completed in the 2021–26 regulatory period.

**TABLE 4 SERVICE LINES: VOLUMES**

VOLUMES	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	TOTAL
Service lines	4,409	4,409	4,409	4,409	4,409	22,045

#### 4.1.1 Fault forecasts

Faults in service lines occur somewhat randomly across our distribution network. Accordingly, our fault-based service line intervention forecast is based on a simple average over the previous five-year period.

#### 4.1.2 Corrective forecasts

Our corrective replacement forecast only includes defect driven volumes. We are not proposing any compliance driven forecasts. We have used historical averages as there is no clear linear trend in our historical defect find rates.

### 4.1.3 Top-down portfolio review

From a top-down perspective, our forecast replacement volumes aligned with our 2021–26 replacement volumes. Our service line replacement forecast ensures no double up with our crossarm replacement program as the defect find rate used excluded the defective service lines replaced as part of the crossarm replacement program.

As a further top-down consideration, our annual forecast replacement rate equates to 1.3 per cent of our total service line population. This implies that, on average, our service lines will need to last approximately 78 years before we replace them. While we do not replace service lines on age, this suggests our forecast volumes are reasonable.

## 4.2 Expenditure forecast

Table 5 summarises this expenditure forecast for the 2026–31 regulatory period.

**TABLE 5 SERVICE LINES: EXPENDITURE (\$M, 2026)**

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>FY27</b>	<b>FY28</b>	<b>FY29</b>	<b>FY30</b>	<b>FY31</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
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