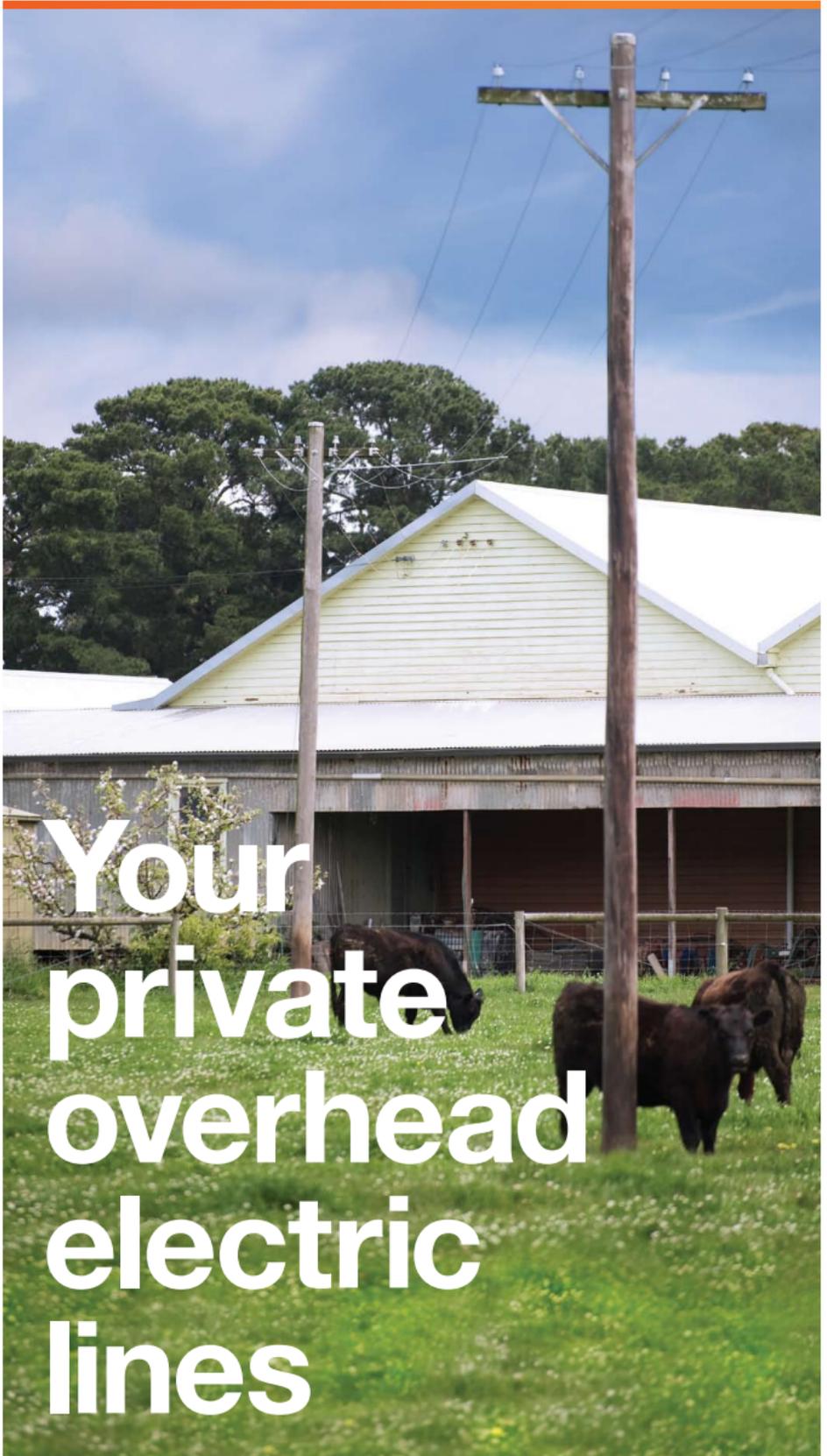




**UNITED ENERGY**

**Your safety and  
responsibility**



**Your  
private  
overhead  
electric  
lines**

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## About United Energy

United Energy (UE) is licensed by the Victorian Government to distribute electricity across Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs and the Mornington Peninsula. We serve some 630,000 customers and own and manage more than 210,000 poles along with about 13,000 kilometres of wires.

We are proud to be your local electricity distributor.

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## **Powerlines on your property are your responsibility**

It is your responsibility to maintain the private overhead powerlines and the associated poles and other electrical equipment at your property. As part of this maintenance, we recommend you regularly inspect your private overhead powerlines, ensuring they are well maintained and clear of trees and branches. This maintenance will reduce the possibility of power supply failures, electrocution or fires.

We strongly recommend you inspect your private overhead powerlines at least every six months.

## **Which are your powerlines and which are United Energy's?**

Please refer to the diagrams on pages 2–5 to gain a clear understanding of the different types of powerlines.

It is important to note that all high voltage lines are owned and managed by UE, even if they cross your property. For both your personal safety, and the safety of the network, please do not attempt any maintenance of high voltage lines.

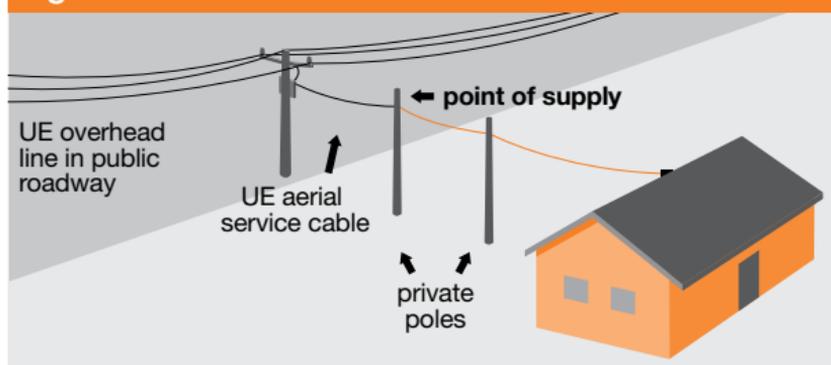
If you are not sure whether your lines are private powerlines or high voltage lines, please contact UE's customer service desk on 1300 131 689.

## **Why you should keep private powerlines well maintained**

The most obvious reason is to ensure a safe supply of power to your property. If injury or property damage occurs due to a lack of maintenance, you could be held liable, resulting in possible litigation.

# Which situation applies to you?

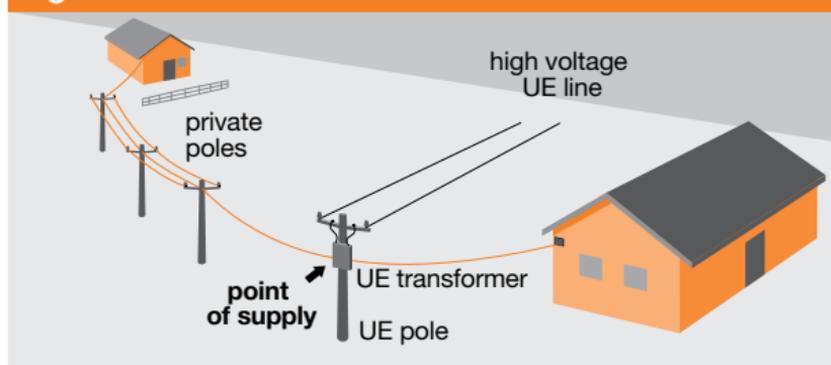
Figure 1



In Figure 1, the UE overhead line is in a public roadway. Where an overhead line is carried on to the land by private poles, the point of supply is the first private pole.

- **From the point of supply:** vegetation clearance and maintenance are your responsibility.
- **UE's aerial service cable:** maintenance and vegetation clearance on the public roadway is UE's or the local municipality's responsibility. The tree trimming on your property under the aerial service cable is your responsibility.

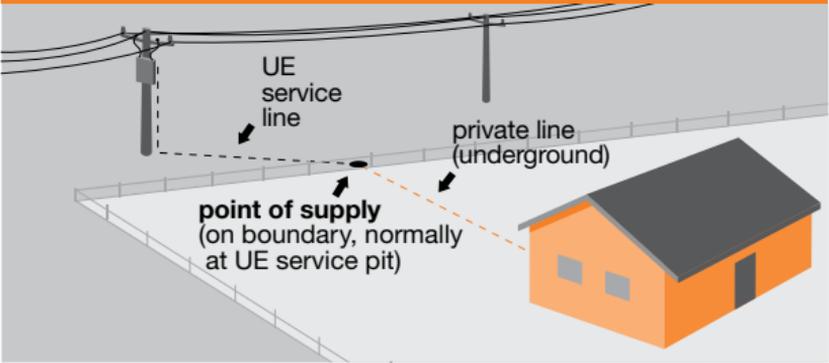
Figure 2



In Figure 2, UE's overhead line is on private land (UE's lines may have a transformer fitted near your building). The point of supply is where your lines are connected to a UE pole.

- **From the point of supply:** vegetation clearance and maintenance are your responsibility.
- **High voltage UE lines (attached above to the UE transformer):** vegetation clearance and maintenance are UE's responsibility.

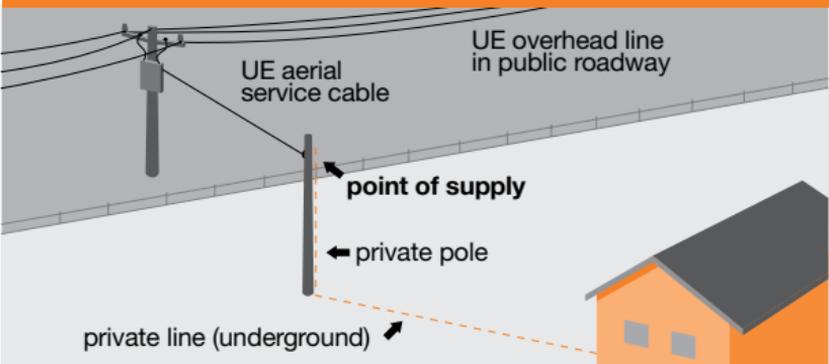
**Figure 3**



In Figure 3, the underground cable from UE overhead lines is in a public roadway. The point of supply is where the cable crosses your property boundary.

- **From your property boundary:** maintenance is your responsibility.
- **From the roadway to your property boundary:** maintenance is UE's responsibility.

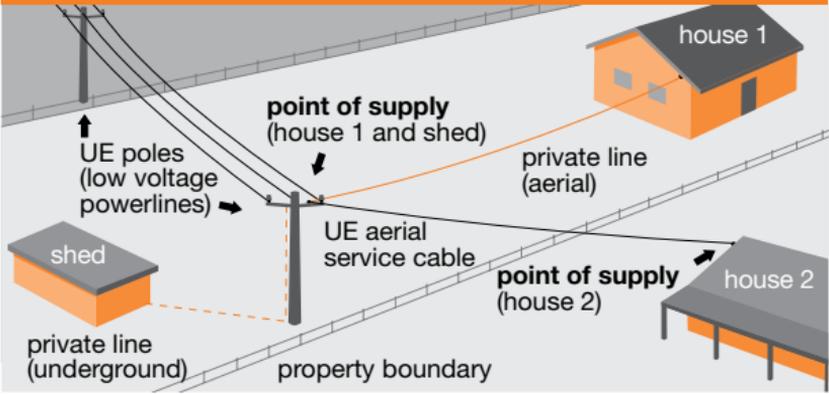
**Figure 4**



In Figure 4, the UE overhead line is in a public roadway. The aerial service cable is carried to a pole on private land. It then changes to an underground cable. The point of supply is where the overhead line is connected to the private pole.

- **From the point of supply:** maintenance is your responsibility.
- **From the roadway to the first pole:** maintenance and tree trimming in the public roadway is UE's or the local municipality's responsibility, however, vegetation clearance on your property under the aerial service cable is your responsibility.

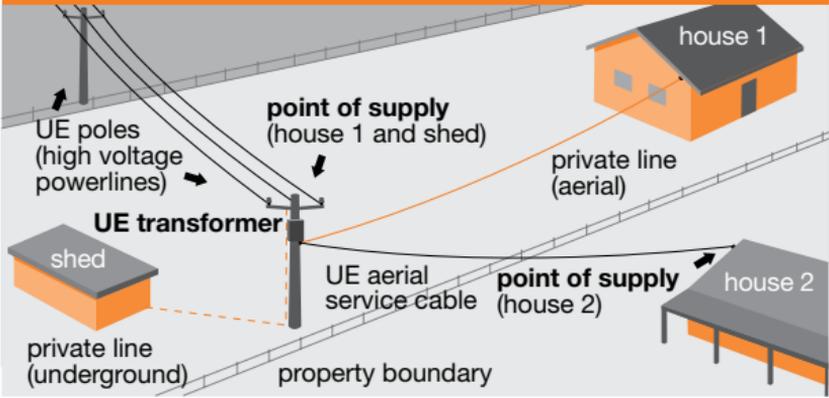
Figure 5



In Figure 5, the UE aerial service cable is on private land. The point of supply for the first house (and shed) is where the private lines are connected to the UE pole. However, the second house is situated across a property boundary, therefore a UE aerial service cable is connected straight to the second house. The point of supply is where the UE aerial service cable is connected to the second house.

- **From the UE pole to the first house and to the shed:** maintenance and vegetation clearance are your responsibility.
- **From the roadway to the second house:** maintenance is UE's responsibility and vegetation clearance is UE's responsibility up to the property boundary only.

Figure 6



In Figure 5 (left), the UE powerline is a low voltage line and in Figure 6 (above), the UE powerline is a high voltage line with a transformer fitted.

The same rules apply:

- **From the UE pole to the first house and to the shed:** maintenance and vegetation clearance are your responsibility.
- **From the roadway to the second house:** maintenance is UE's responsibility and vegetation clearance is UE's responsibility up to the property boundary only.

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# How to look after your powerlines

## 1. Inspecting your private overhead powerlines

UE strongly recommends you inspect your private overhead powerlines at least every six months. You can use binoculars or a telescope to inspect cable insulation (the covering) from the ground. If you are not comfortable inspecting the lines yourself, a list of Registered Electrical Contractors is available on the Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) website: [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)

**WARNING: Under no circumstances should you climb a pole or approach the powerlines yourself. Contact with live wires can be deadly, and tree branches touching lines may also be live. Repairs should always be carried out by a Registered Electrical Contractor.**

## 2. Keep trees clear of powerlines

For trees near powerlines, advice should be sought from UE's customer service desk on 1300 131 689 before you attempt to remove or trim them.

Private overhead powerlines can be damaged by contact with trees and overhead limbs. Falling branches may cause the lines to clash or fall to the ground, causing a significant safety risk.

In general, the minimum clearance space for vegetation required for private overhead powerlines is:

<b>Insulated wires</b>	1 metre
<b>Bare wires</b>	2 metres

The exact minimum clearance space required for vegetation is in the current Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010. These can be viewed online at [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)

Energy Safe Victoria may also be consulted for advice in relation to line maintenance on (03) 9203 9700 or online at [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)

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## **Council permits**

If tree pruning is necessary and your property is in an area where a council planning permit is required before you cut a tree, you will need to comply with these council regulations, unless UE serves written notice that urgent tree pruning is required.

## **UE inspections**

Electrical assets (including poles and overhead powerlines) on your property may be inspected by UE at any time. If a dangerous situation is discovered, UE can disconnect electricity supply without prior notice to ensure electrical safety. UE's inspection will not reduce the need for you to inspect and arrange necessary repairs and maintenance.

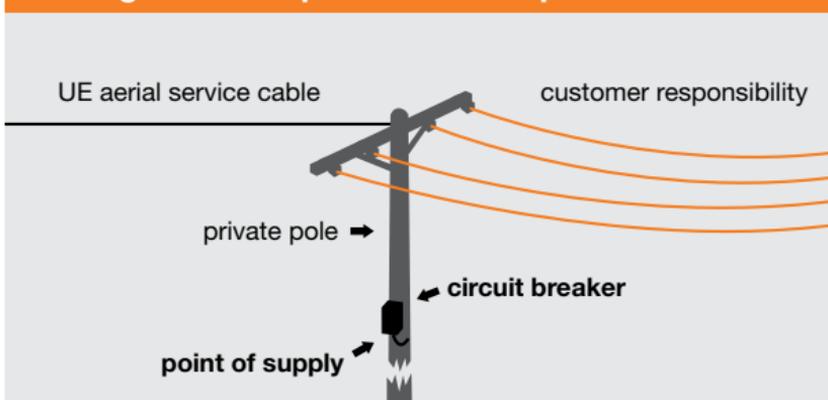
## **Total Fire Ban**

UE will inspect your private overhead powerline for major defects every three years. If your private overhead powerline is found to be defective, you will be advised to carry out necessary repairs. If the defects have not been repaired, your electricity supply will be disconnected on days of Total Fire Ban without warning. Electricity supply will not be reconnected until the severe fire weather abates or at the end of the Total Fire Ban day.

## Circuit breakers

When a Registered Electrical Contractor carries out maintenance on your private electric powerlines, a circuit breaker must be fitted at your point of supply. A circuit breaker is a switch installed at the start of your private electric powerline to switch off power whenever necessary. The circuit breaker will 'trip' (switch off automatically) under the same conditions as a fuse would blow.

### Existing overhead private electric powerlines



A circuit breaker cannot be relied on for any greater electrical protection than a fuse. Should a circuit breaker 'trip' repeatedly, you should contact a Registered Electrical Contractor to investigate.

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## **Underground powerlines are a better choice**

Should your private overhead powerlines be in a hazardous bushfire risk area (HBRA) and need substantial repair, you may be directed by Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) to replace them with an underground cable, in accordance with the Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009, available from the ESV website: [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)

An underground cable is far safer than an overhead powerline. It substantially reduces the risk of starting a bushfire, and minimises the danger of electrocution through contact with tractors and other farm equipment. Underground cables are also more reliable, and are not damaged by storms or weather. Overhead powerlines continually need maintenance, whereas underground cables require very little maintenance and no vegetation clearance.

For further information on underground powerlines, please contact your Registered Electrical Contractor or UE's customer service desk on 1300 131 689.

# Safety tips for your private overhead powerlines

If you answer YES to any of the following questions, your private overhead powerlines may need urgent attention.

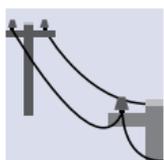
Tick the box to check where the dangers might be on your property.

## 1. If any section of your private overhead powerlines has more than one bare wire:



Is there any vegetation within 2 metres of any bare wire?

YES  NO



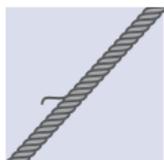
Is any wire hanging much lower than other wires in the same section?

YES  NO



Has anyone seen the wires clash together in high winds?

YES  NO



Are there any broken strands of wire?

YES  NO



Are any crossarms split, loose or not square to the pole?

YES  NO



Spacers are fitted to keep bare wires separated. Are they missing or loose?

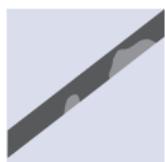
YES  NO

## 2. If any section of your private overhead powerlines has only one insulated line:



Is there any vegetation within 1 metre of the insulated cable?

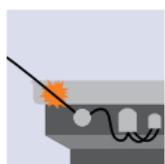
YES  NO



Are there any gaps, cracks or pieces missing from the insulation (covering) of the cable?

YES  NO

## 3. For both types of private overhead powerlines:



Are any insulated wires rubbing on metal edges of attachments, such as fascia, gutters or downpipes?

YES  NO



Are poles rotting at or just below ground level? (Dig carefully down to approximately 300 millimetres all around the pole to check, but beware of any underground wiring to the pole.)

YES  NO



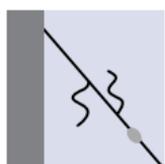
Are any poles leaning excessively?

YES  NO



Are any brackets pulling away from the poles or buildings? Are any other fittings crooked or loose?

YES  NO



Are any stay (guy) wires loose or broken?

YES  NO



Are any wires not securely fastened to insulators?

YES  NO

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## Legal responsibility

Electricity customers have always been responsible by law for their private powerlines, either overhead or underground. The *Electricity Safety Act (1998) (Vic)* (section 3) clearly defines:

- Private electric lines
- Point of supply (the point where your responsibility begins).

The *Electricity Safety Act (1998) (Vic)* confirms your responsibility for maintenance of your private overhead powerlines, including the need to keep vegetation clear.

You should also refer to the Victorian Electricity Supply Industry (VESI) Services and Installation Rules for construction and maintenance of private overhead powerlines. These are available at [www.victoriansir.org.au](http://www.victoriansir.org.au)

In accordance with the relevant regulations, all electrical wiring work associated with the erection and maintenance of private overhead powerlines should be carried out by a Registered Electrical Contractor. The Contractor must provide you with a copy of a Certificate of Electrical Safety if any repairs or alterations are made to your private overhead powerlines.

You can also consult Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) for advice or clarification of your responsibilities on (03) 9203 9700 or online at [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)

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## Contact us

### Customer Service Desk

Monday to Friday 8am–6pm

**1300 131 689**

### Emergency/Faults 24 hours

**132 099**

### Telephone Interpreting Service

**131 450**

### Postal Address

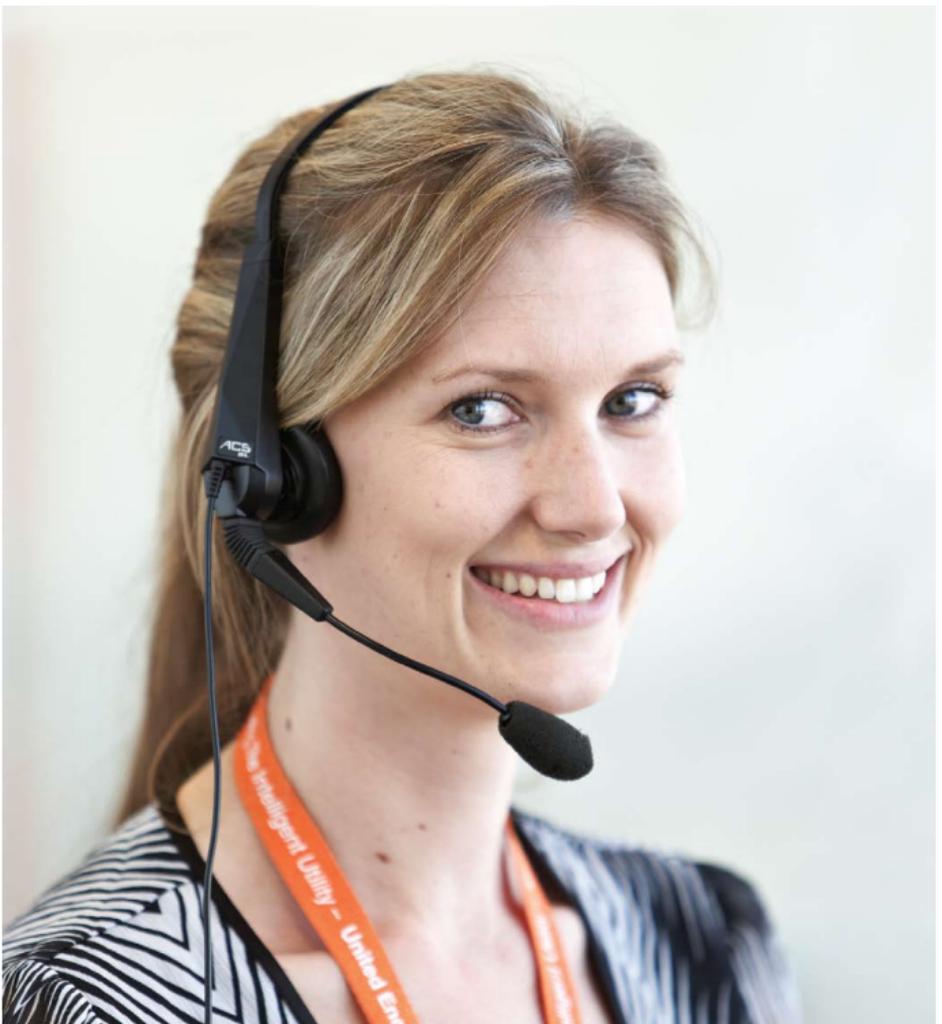
**PO Box 449**

**Mt Waverley VIC 3149**

### Email Address

**[customerrelations@ue.com.au](mailto:customerrelations@ue.com.au)**

Are your private overhead electric lines (powerlines) safe? Their maintenance is your responsibility.



**[www.ue.com.au](http://www.ue.com.au)**

Your National Meter Identifier (NMI) is a unique meter number that identifies your metering installation in the National Electricity Market (you can obtain this from your electricity bill). You should record this NMI here for easy reference.

**NMI:**