

## RESPONSE TO PETITION

### TITLE OF PETITION – Evandale Heritage Triangle

*The undersigned Electors of Lyons draw to the attention of the House the need to remove the electricity power poles from Russell Street and High Street in the Historic Precinct of Evandale. Evandale has a NMC designated heritage triangle. Special planning rules are in place to protect the heritage value of the properties within the triangle. Unfortunately, the current above ground power distribution does not sit well with the heritage feel of the village. The newest areas of the village had underground power*

*Your petitioners therefore request the House to call on TasNetworks to install underground power cables in the Historic Precinct of Evandale Township.*

### GOVERNMENT POSITION:

The Tasmanian Government understands the desire to maintain heritage aspects of Evandale and the sentiment in relation to undergrounding power lines. We recognise the importance of Tasmanian heritage and are proud of the many areas within Tasmania that offer unique and special insights into the State's history.

The costs incurred by TasNetworks for planning, building, operating and maintaining the electricity network are recovered from Tasmanian electricity customers. The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) approves the maximum allowable revenue that TasNetworks is allowed to recover, ensuring that costs are only incurred for work that is prudent and efficient. This ensures that consumers pay no more than is necessary for safe and reliable electricity.

Across the National Electricity Market, overhead powerlines are the default option for distribution, due to the lower cost of installation and easier access for maintenance. Undergrounding transmission and distribution infrastructure can be up to ten times more expensive than above-ground infrastructure. However, undergrounding can be a more preferable option in some cases, such as areas that suffer repeated power outages due to overhead wire damage. In these cases, undergrounding infrastructure increases the reliability of electricity supply, resulting in improved customer outcomes and lowered costs over the long term. The value in undergrounding electricity infrastructure is assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that only prudent and efficient costs are recovered from customers.

The cost of the proposed works to underground electricity infrastructure in Evandale's main street has been estimated to be in the order of \$2 million. Unfortunately, there are no safety or reliability concerns to be addressed in this area; as such, there is not a reasonable case to put forward to the AER for undergrounding, despite Evandale's heritage value. As distribution providers are only allowed to recover costs that are deemed reasonable and efficient, TasNetworks is unable to install underground power cables in the Historic Precinct of Evandale Township as there is no reasonable case for undergrounding in this instance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Duigan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Nick Duigan MLC  
**Minister for Energy and Renewables**

Date: 14 March 2025