

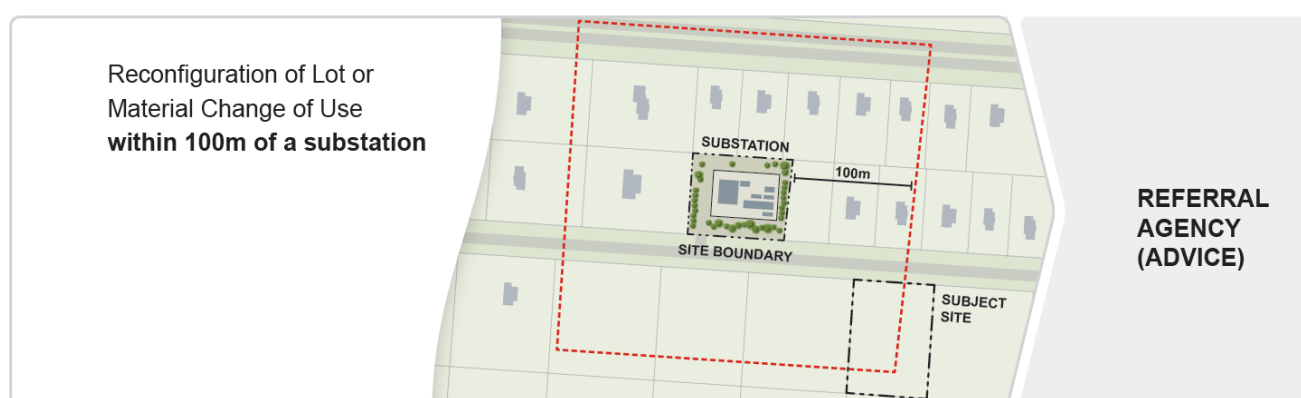
# Visual Amenity (views)

4 February 2019



Part of the Energy Queensland Group

As a Referral Agency under the [Planning Regulation 2017](#), we receive development applications that are within 100 metres of our substations. One of the key concerns with development of land within 100 metres of a substation is visual amenity, or the view.



With new development and changing land use, rural areas are frequently becoming higher density urban environments. While this can often be accommodated from a technical electricity supply perspective, developments must be planned so their visual amenity is not unnecessarily impacted by an existing or planned substation site or powerline corridor.

Over time, the amount of land required by our substations has decreased thanks to technology advancements that allow more compact designs. However, many of our older substations, especially in once rural areas, still occupy large open compounds.

We sometimes find that residents of new developments place the onus on us to rectify any visual amenity concerns with a substation or other infrastructure. This cost must ultimately be passed on to our customers. We recognise the genuine community concern over rising electricity prices, and expect developers to ensure any new developments are not impacted by change of land use-based conflicts.

Our Referral Agency status is designed to prevent these kinds of costs being incurred before a development is approved. By taking action early in the development phase, and working with applicants, we aim to ensure beneficial outcomes for all parties.

## Preventative design measures

Visual amenity is important to our communities. This is why we aim to integrate our infrastructure designs, as much as possible, into the surrounding areas. We also include landscaping in the design of our new substations to reduce any visual impacts on surrounding users.

However, existing substations can pose a visual impact for those in the surrounding areas, especially if the land use has changed dramatically. These measures should be considered by developers as opportunities to reduce these impacts.

## Screening

Developers should consider if a vegetation buffers and screening is beneficial to ensure a site's visual amenity. For community-based developments in particular fencing and landscaping along property boundaries could be used to screen substation from view. We recommend a five metre wide buffer (Figure 2). Care should be taken to ensure that the landscaping elements do not compromise the integrity or safety of the substation itself.

Some of our substations also have overhead powerlines feeding in and out of the site. At these sites, all planned and future vegetation and screening in the powerline vicinity must comply with the [Ergon Plant Smart guidelines](#) to ensure there is no safety risk. These guidelines also contain plenty of useful information on tree planting around powerlines.

## Orientation

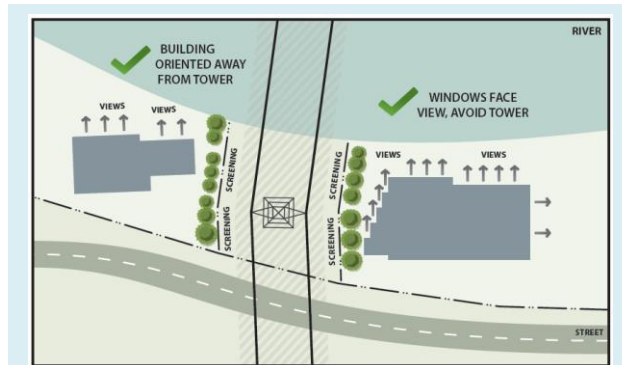
When a new development is proposed that is in direct line of sight to a substation, the orientation of the design is another important consideration. Visual amenity issues can be minimised by ensuring any rooms that benefit most from an external perspective are oriented away from the substation, or when windows and outdoor living areas don't directly face it.

And, for more information about working safely near powerlines, please see our [working safely near powerlines information](#)

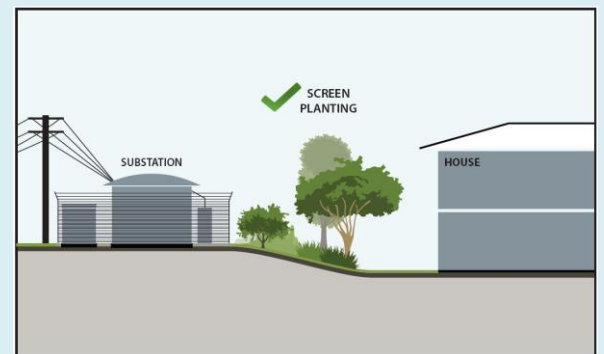
## Contact us

For more information about our Referral Agency, please visit our website or contact us at:

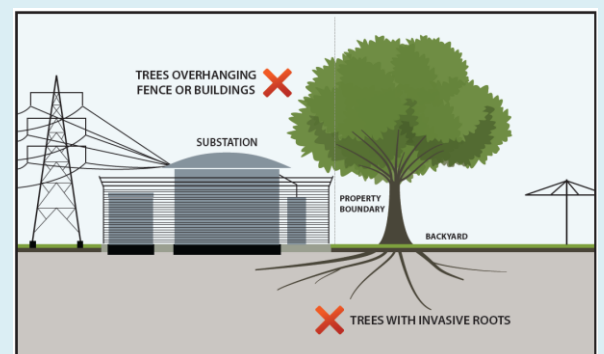
- [www.ergon.com.au/referralagency](http://www.ergon.com.au/referralagency)
- 13 74 66 (7am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday)
- [townplanning@ergon.com.au](mailto:townplanning@ergon.com.au)



**Figure 1: Where development is proposed adjoining a substation or powerlines, building orientation is a key consideration. Orienting habitable rooms away from the substation or powerlines will improve visual amenity.**



**Figure 2: Landscaping should be used along property boundaries adjoining substations or powerlines. This provides a buffer between the two and lessens the visual impact on any new development.**



**Figure 3: Trees must not overhang the substation compound and species with invasive roots must be avoided.**