

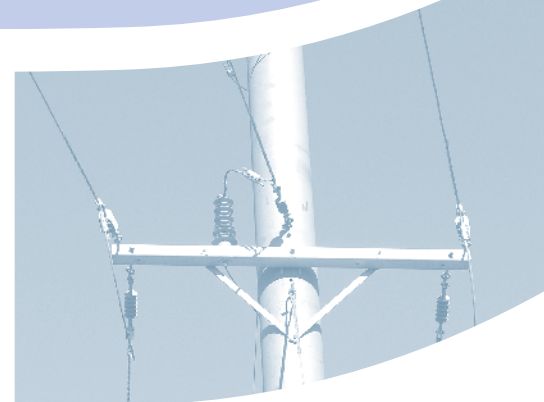


Contractor beats terrain challenges with SURELINE®

NSW contracting firm McMahon's Power Lines can vouch for the tough terrain credentials of SURELINE® power poles since using them for the first time.

The company, which specialises in overhead power line construction and maintenance, has a long history and was one of the first independent contractors accredited to work in Integral Energy's authorised area.

It has carried out projects as far afield from its Kurrajong base as Cobar, Yass and Kandos and will soon have accreditation for all electrical authorities in NSW.





Loading SURELINE® poles for peg dropping across private property



Above: The 14 metre SURELINE® poles were installed over a hilly 1.6 kilometre track in ground conditions which included rock and shale.

Managing director Michael McMahon said the company's first experience with SURELINE® poles was on a power line construction project for a cattle property west of Lithgow.

The project was to take an 11,000 volt line from Integral Energy's existing network and deliver it to a termination point and transformer at a new stock manager's residence on the property near Mt. Lambie.

The selected 1.6 kilometre power line route crossed very steep terrain in a paddock with only partial track access.

Due to the location's exposure to bushfire hazard, the specification was for fireproof poles and SURELINE® steel poles have proved their performance in bushfire tests conducted by the CSIRO.

In addition to the fireproof requirements, McMahon's Power Lines needed to ensure poles were available to undertake the project quickly. A site inspection also raised other concerns about transport and handling problems and this combination of issues resulted in Integral Energy agreeing to the use of SURELINE® power poles.

"The 14 metre SURELINE® steel poles weighed approximately a quarter as much as the only other suitable alternative material for a bushfire risk area," Michael McMahon said. "Standing them on some of the steep hills was a far safer operation than it would have been with the alternative.

"BlueScope Steel delivered the poles to site and we unloaded them in a paddock. Because of their light weight our truck could carry four poles at a time to peg drop them and that made a big difference in the number of trips required for us to position them along the line."

Michael McMahon said the light weight of the SURELINE® poles was a huge advantage at this installation. "It allowed us to use a smaller crane mounted on a four wheel drive truck and that made access easier in the difficult terrain," he said.

“The 14 metre SURELINE® steel poles weighed approximately a quarter as much as the only other suitable alternative material for a bushfire risk area.”

*Michael McMahon, Managing Director,
McMahon Power Lines Pty Ltd*



“Heavier poles would have taken longer, and would have been harder and more costly to install, because sometimes in terrain like that, when you need larger trucks, you have to get a dozer to cut a track for them.

“The project was very straightforward. The SURELINE® poles arrived pre-drilled exactly as ordered, but there wouldn’t have been any difficulty if they had needed to be drilled on site.”

Michael McMahon said the engineered design of the SURELINE® poles was also an advantage because of the varying ground conditions on the job.

“In some areas we struck rock and there was also a lot of shale, but even there the regular shape of the SURELINE® poles gives you an advantage.

Above: The lightweight SURELINE® poles arrive pre-drilled, but can also be easily drilled on site.

"I wouldn't have to hold many SURELINE® poles because BlueScope Steel can deliver them on short lead times."

*Michael McMahon, Managing Director,
McMahon Power Lines Pty Ltd*



"Because of their known dimensions you can bore a smaller diameter hole than you would need with alternatives. In good conditions that doesn't make a difference, but in rock that makes a huge difference – and that can save a lot of time and cost.

"The constant diameter of the poles in our chosen specification also means that you don't need to carry a variety of king bolts. You know exactly how wide the poles will be, whereas with tapered poles you need varying sizes if you are putting different attachments at various heights."

McMahon's Power Lines' speedy and efficient completion of the project was in part a result of a preliminary meeting with BlueScope Steel's SURELINE® Supply Chain Manager, Mark Simpson.

Specifications and delivery were discussed and arrangements made for visits to site to provide instruction on handling and dressing the poles.

"That meeting was very handy, because we went through all the issues in advance and both parties knew what to expect," Michael McMahon said. "Mark Simpson's visits to the site just ensured that the installations went smoothly.

"We would definitely use SURELINE® poles in other jobs. We carry stocks of other pole types, but from what I've seen of the supply chain I wouldn't have to hold many SURELINE® poles because BlueScope Steel can deliver them on short lead times.



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