

Local electrical power company recognised for raising its standards

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How do you measure up?

South East Power Lines is a successful & progressive locally based electrical power company with its Head office situated in Ulladulla on the South Coast of NSW. Its operations serve the broad geographical area of South East NSW including Wollongong to Bega and surrounding regions.

The company is an Accredited Level 1 & 2 Service provider of underground and overhead power works and provides solutions through a range of design and construction services to its clients.

The company's management system is quality certified to ISO 9001:2000.

Its client base of both private and public sectors continues to grow as the company enjoys an increased demand for its comprehensive power services that include subdivisions, high and low voltage reticulation, final connection of building work and building lines and substations from 240 Volt to 66kV for non-urban and urban development, together with street lighting and substations; relocation of underground and overhead assets for development work.

This increased demand has seen the company commence operations in new locations including Batemans Bay - Bega and surrounding regions to the south so as to properly service the electrical demands of clients.

Its two Directors' saw the need to invest in the company's future in 2003, especially in the light of safety incidents and work practices that highlighted opportunities for improvement.

Progressively the company increased resources for the establishment and implementation of an integrated management system designed to be simple and assist the company to both plan and perform the works in a consistent manner that meet all specified requirements.

In March 2005 the company engaged Federal Construction Management, an experienced construction industry specialist consultancy to assist them establish and implement their management system.

South East Power Lines undertakes projects of high voltage power line work that involves major high risk activities in the Construction industry (including the main causes of fatalities in work at height and con-

tact with electricity). Clearly the strict OHS regulations of the power industry needs to be fully complied with and South East Power Lines' main focus is on the safety of its workers and others who may be affected by their works.

The company quickly introduced a process (which it continues to refine) that provides a greater involvement and communication with its workforce resulting in a happier and more efficient organisation.

In particular, project planning and monitoring are areas the company has directly benefited from. Worker input has led to other operational improvements including increased productivity. The company is focused and proactive in its approach with reliable and accurate information available. It now makes timely, informed decisions resulting in a more efficient use of resources that are allocated to projects.

Subcontractor management is another area where the company has strengthened with all subcontractors carefully assessed and monitored so to ensure works are performed in a safe and reliable manner.

The company as part of implementing its management system has developed an intensive training program so the necessary skills are identified and then provided to the workers. In so doing, the responsibilities and requirements for performing a given task are clearly conveyed and understood at all levels of the organisation. Accordingly, the company continues to comply with their obligations under safety, quality and environmental standards that apply to the performance of their works.

An independent, third party certification audit performed by South East Power Lines in November 2005 confirmed their compliance to both regulatory and client specified requirements which was a significant milestone achievement for the company.



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The team from South East Power Lines replacing old wooden power poles with new concrete poles to conform with current regulations in a rural subdivision

Chris Welsh & Jeff Gallagher, the company's directors and Operations Managers, are delighted with the company's improvements and the exciting opportunities their business now has before it as a direct result from the dedication of its staff towards meeting the company's management system.

Chris stated "The culture and business has certainly changed. We are clearly a different and safer organisation. Setting and realising our goal of becoming a certified quality assured company to ISO 9001:2000 together with improving the safety of our operations, has opened up new markets

and importantly allowed us to provide a safer and better standard of service to our clients."

Graham Coyle of Federal Construction Management was particularly pleased with the outcome and having assisted the South East Power Lines achieve its goals and said "As a result of your efforts the company is well positioned to continue to improve its operations and further develop exciting opportunities now available through focus on customer satisfaction and performing its services at a standard that will create a benchmark for the rest of the industry".

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