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Victorian partnership wins State Government bushfire safety grant

United Energy has partnered with Swinburne University of Technology, Swedish-based Amokabel and Bendigo-based company, Groundline Engineering in a Victorian Government-funded trial of a new covered conductor on the Mornington Peninsula.

The trial will see the replacement of overhead steel conductors with the new covered conductor in heavily vegetated areas.

United Energy's General Manager, Asset Management, Craig Savage says the partnership, which has been awarded a grant from the Powerline Bushfire Safety Program Research and Development Fund, has a number of benefits.

"When we were approached by Groundline to be a part of the trial, we were very interested in the safety aspects of the overhead covered conductor but the key benefit we immediately saw was how quickly it would allow us to replace Single Wire Earth Returns (SWERs)."

Widely used in Europe, the conductor introduced by Groundline eliminates the need for individual testing of its components which could speed up replacement programs by as much as two years.

Professor Emad Gad, Acting Dean, School of Engineering at Swinburne University of Technology says the conductors have shown great potential.

"We are excited that through this Victorian Government grant we will have the opportunity to offer a practical and cost effective solution for overhead covered conductors that will improve powerline bushfire safety.

"The collaboration between the university and our industry partners will provide the project with extensive expertise which will ensure successful outcomes."

Groundline's Ian Flatley says the Victorian Government's Covered Conductor Grant allows them to test the Swedish made conductor for Australian conditions.

"We are thrilled to partner UE, Swinburne and Amokabel to trial what we believe is the best covered conductor available from both a safety and a cost per metre aspect.

"Already used across Europe for a number of years, we are confident it will prove to be an excellent alternative to other types of more expensive conductors."

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