

Case Study:
AusNet Services



WE KNOW WHAT'S AT STAKE.

AusNet Services, formally SP AusNet, is the largest diversified energy network business in Victoria, Australia. The company **owns and operates approximately AUD\$11 billion (USD\$8 billion) of electricity and gas transmission and distribution assets**. The company manages three key networks: electricity transmission via 15,000 high voltage towers; electricity distribution from the high voltage transmission grid to customers across eastern Victoria and gas distribution across central and western Victoria. AusNet Services also owns a solutions division that provides commercial services to manage energy, water and environmental needs.



The Challenge

In March 2004, the Occupational Health & Safety (Prevention of Falls) Regulations 2003 became effective, requiring AusNet Services to **cease sole reliance upon dual lanyards**, and to **consider other attachment methods for climbers during maintenance and other transmission tower operations**. AusNet Services decided to install permanent fall arrest systems on the majority of its towers. Initially, fixed fall arrest systems were considered in conjunction with ladders and rails. However, because many towers were non-standard, the company encountered installation, user problems and high costs, and alternatives were evaluated. An independent engineering consultant recommended MSA, and AusNet Services felt that MSA's Latchways cable systems had sufficient flexibility and asked for a field trial system to be provided.

These trials took place in October 2008 on towers at the South Morang Terminal Station training yard. The trial was very successful in that **the system was confirmed to meet line crew requirements** in negotiating bends and tight spots, providing ease of use similar to free-climbing, met Occupational Safety & Health requirements, was easy to install, had no long-term maintenance issues, and would be less costly than rail systems previously used. **MSA quality and solutions proved to be an excellent fit for AusNet Services' needs**. As a result, MSA was commissioned to provide systems for more than 15,000 towers as well as racks and terminal stations across Victoria.



The MSA Solution

MSA provided AusNet Services with not just products, but a **complete service package that provided comprehensive support for AusNet Services' ground installation team**. This package included everything from training the system installers to seconding an engineer to organize site visits for each tower, mapped locations and performed all necessary stress calculations for non-standard structures. **The solution itself consisted of MSA vertical systems using TowerLatch SP attachment devices, as well as horizontal systems.** Systems featured a cable attached at the top and bottom of each tower, or horizontally across racks. A free-running attachment device clips easily on to the cable. In event of a fall, the attachment device locks onto the cable; a Constant Force technology energy absorber that withstands force of a fall and absorbs generated energy.

One main advantage of this system type for AusNet Services is that it is **well suited for retrofitting**. A cable system offers flexibility to run around any shaped structure and fast installation, with a 50 m tower ready for safe climbing in 45 minutes. Other advantages include **trouble-free operation** and **typical 25–30 year lifespan**, thanks to high quality stainless steel components.



TowerLatch SP
attachment
device

Note: This Bulletin contains only a general description of the products shown. While uses and performance capabilities are described, under no circumstances shall the products be used by untrained or unqualified individuals and not until the product instructions including any warnings or cautions provided have been thoroughly read and understood. Only they contain the complete and detailed information concerning proper use and care of these products.



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Benefits to AusNet Services' Business

- **Peace of mind**—AusNet Services has done everything possible to reduce risk levels and protect its staff when working at heights.
- **Improved staff health**—Workers don't need to clip on and off the system or manually maneuver intermediate cable supports, lessening hand and wrist strain and reducing potential for Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI).
- **Time saving**—System is easy and fast to use.
- **Smooth, simple installation**—Comprehensive service includes support on the ground to make sure that the job ran smoothly.
- **Cost effective**—With long life expectancy, replacement is generally required at 25–30 years, far longer than comparable systems.
- **Simplified purchasing**—MSA's Latchways range is a single system that can be adapted for every shape of tower, rack and terminal station.

“MSA systems are without doubt the best. They are easier to use, higher quality, and simpler to install than any other. You might call them a work of art, made of stainless steel and engineered to the highest tolerances. What's more, MSA's attention to the customer is excellent. At every stage of the project they couldn't have been more helpful.”

Brian Tucker,
Senior Project Manager, Major Projects
– AusNet Services