South Australian
HERITAGE COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

REGISTER ENTRY

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

NAME: Tribute to James Cyril Stobie **PLACE NO.:** 26588

ADDRESS: Kaurna Country
500 Grand Junction Road, Angle Park 5010
CT 6170/399, D72468 A207
Hundred of Yatala

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie demonstrates the expansion of South Australia's electricity industry during the first half of the twentieth century. Erected in 1960 to commemorate Stobie and his invention, the tribute incorporates a 1924 Stobie pole removed from the Freeling to Templers line, the first line erected by the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo) during its expansion into country South Australia. This pole demonstrates a high degree of creative accomplishment through its innovative combination of steel and concrete. Had it not been for this design, the wholesale electrification of South Australia would have been delayed. Along with its commemorative plaque, the Tribute to James Cyril Stobie bears a special association with its namesake.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (under section 16 of the Heritage Places Act 1993)

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history

The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie demonstrates the pattern of provision of services and utilities in South Australia, particularly electricity and the expansion of the network outside of the metropolitan area. In the early 1920s, the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo), the largest electricity supplier in South Australia, devised plans to expand the supply of electricity into the country districts of South Australia. Lacking suitable timber supplies to erect the necessary utility poles to expand the network, in 1924 James Cyril Stobie (Cyril) an AESCo employee, designed a new composite pole made from steel and concrete.

While the first Stobie poles were erected on South Terrace in Adelaide, the 1924 pole that largely forms the Tribute is one of the original Stobie poles planted as a part of the initial expansion of the network into the country on the Freeling to Templar line. It was the Stobie pole that enabled this expansion of electricity across South Australia and without it, the wholesale electrification of the State would have been delayed, impacting on the provision of what has become an essential service and the economic development of the State.

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics

The 1924 Freeling to Templers pole incorporated into the Tribute to James Cyril Stobie demonstrates a high degree of creative accomplishment. It is also an outstanding example of the creative adaptation of available materials in the early twentieth century to achieve an engineered response for a uniquely South Australian problem, namely the lack of durable and economical timber for traditional pole construction. Stobie's innovative design for a utility pole brought together two well-established materials, namely steel and concrete, combining them in an original way.

It was Stobie's understanding that utility poles are not symmetrically loaded across the vertical axis, as well as his awareness of the static and dynamic loading on the poles and directionality of the forces in play, that led to the design of the composite pole in 1924. Essentially, the pole needs to be very strong in one direction only. Stobie realised he could reduce the weight of the steel needed across the pole, with greater use of material at points exposed to higher forces, notably where the pole meets the ground. This resulted in the use of two steel I-beams, the iconic shape, and concrete fill and steel ties to assist with, respectively, compression and tensile forces. Stobie refined the design slightly in 1926 and the pole remains the dominant design for utility poles deployed in South Australia. As the only pole built to Stobie's initial 1924 design known

to exist, the 1924 pole demonstrates how Stobie's creative solution was first applied and the ways in which it formed the basis for all subsequent poles.

Stobie's accomplishment has been recognised by Andrew Russack, a former manager for ETSA Utilities and expert on Stobie poles who asserted 'Stobie's contribution [the design of the pole] to South Australian prosperity cannot be overestimated'. His contribution is also recognised in the naming of Stobie Place in the Canberra suburb of Monash and the fact that Stobie poles continue to be used widely throughout South Australia, nothing other than the undergrounding of services competing with the Stobie pole.

(g) it has special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance

The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie is associated with engineer James Cyril Stobie, whose innovative utility pole design enabled the expansion of electricity across South Australia. Stobie (b. 1895 – d. 1953) was trained as a mechanical and electrical engineer at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries. He was employed by the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo) in 1916. After having been embraced and mentored by Frederick Wheadon, AESCO's chief executive, Stobie was appointed as the company's chief draughtsperson in 1923.

While working for AESCo, in 1924 Stobie designed the first version of the utility pole which has come to be known as the 'Stobie pole', now a household name. Stobie's design sought to overcome some of the specific challenges AESCo faced in its plan to expand its electricity supply across South Australia. Thousands of utility poles were required to carry power lines connecting country districts to the Osborne Power Station. Timber previously used for utility poles was scarce in South Australia, had to be imported from primarily New South Wales and had a limited service-life due to dry rot and termites.

Stobie's solution was a composite pole made out of metal (iron or steel) and concrete, which were both economical and durable. In 1926, he redesigned the pole, which formed the basis for all subsequent Stobie poles. The poles were first erected in large numbers throughout the country districts, and by the end of the 1930s it was the only kind of pole manufactured and installed by AESCo and by the 1960s it was used all over South Australia. A century later, there are now around 650,000 of them dispersed across the state.

First unveiled in 1960, the Tribute to James Cyril Stobie was built to recognise Stobie's contribution to South Australia's electricity industry. Originally designed by Brian Lewis, the monument features a plaque and a 1924 utility pole removed from the Freeling to Templers line, making it one of the first to be erected by AESCo in South Australia. Together, these elements represent what is indisputably Stobie's most iconic, ubiquitous and sometimes contentious contribution to South Australia. It is therefore

the most appropriate place to recognise the contribution of James Cyril Stobie to South Australia.

SITE PLAN

Tribute to James Cyril Stobie **PLACE NO.: 26588**

500 Grand Junction Road, Angle Park

Tribute to James Cyril Stobie, 500 Grand Junction Road, Angle Park, CT 6170/399, D72468 A207, Hundred of Yatala.

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- The 1924 Stobie pole,
- The commemorative plaque.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- The concrete bases,
- The angle of the 1924 pole,
- The physical location of the monument at the manufacturing plant,
- The remainder of the manufacturing plant.

N ↑

LEGEND

Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

Physical Description

This place commemorates James Cyril Stobie and the invention of the 'Stobie pole'. It comprises a plaque and a Stobie pole. The tribute is located at SA Power Network's manufacturing plant at Angle Park, where Stobie poles have been constructed since 1956.

The commemorative plaque is made of steel and is elevated by a concrete mount. The plaque reads:

A TRIBUTE TO JAMES CYRIL STOBIE M.E.
DESIGNER OF THE STOBIE POLE
THIS POLE, MANUFACTURED IN
1924 AND ERECTED IN THE
TEMPLERS-FREELING 33KV LINE
WAS REMOVED IN 1959 AND
INCORPORATED IN THIS TRIBUTE
IN 1960.

The Stobie pole is from 1924 and is made to Stobie's original design. It comprises a cement concrete core enclosed by two steel I-beams that are secured together by tie bolts. The pole is about 10 metres high and about 50cm at the base, which tapers to about 15cm at the top. There are seven oval-shaped cutouts in the concrete between the base and middle of the pole, three of which are fully open and four partially so. The pole is hoisted from the ground by a concrete mount and rests on an angle.

Elements of Significance:

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- The concrete bases,
- The angle of the 1924 pole,
- The physical location of the monument at the manufacturing plant,
- The remainder of the manufacturing plant.

History of the Place

Electricity Supply, AESCo and ETSA

The use of electricity in South Australia emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century. Originally associated with the advent of the telegraph in the 1850s, its broader applicability was widely recognised by the last decades of the century, particularly for street lighting. In 1882, the first public electricity supply bill was assented, which created the South Australian Electric Company. The venture failed to produce electricity, partly due to opposition from the South Australian Gas Company, which advanced gas as a power source.

About a decade later, private enterprise revived the attempt to establish an electricity industry in South Australia. In 1895, the South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company was registered and supplied electric lighting to the City of Port Adelaide and district in 1898. After overcoming initial difficulties with establishing a reliable service, it expanded its operations, securing a five-year contract with the City of Adelaide in 1899.

That same year, the company was purchased by the UK-based British Electrical Engineering Company Ltd. In 1900, its Adelaide operations were bought by the Electric Lighting and Traction Company of Australia, another UK-based company. Meanwhile, an interim powerhouse was constructed to begin supplying electricity to Adelaide while a permanent facility was constructed on Grenfell Street (now Tandanya SHP 10984).

The company's subsequent commercial and financial growth made it a viable business proposition. Recognising this opportunity, British investors purchased the company and incorporated the Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd (AESCo) in London in 1905. This was followed by a period of expansion that resulted in the rollout of electricity to the suburbs surrounding the city, such as Thebarton.[1] The use of electricity in South Australia was further boosted by the advent of the electric tram network and the government's creation of the Municipal Tramways Trust (MTT) in 1906, which first used AESCo-generated electricity until it established its own generators.[2]

AESCo began to experience significant growth during the 1910s, reporting a rise in the number of its consumers from 4,810 in 1911 to 47,366 in 1923.[3] Further demand for supply meant AESCo began looking for a site to build a larger power station and a site at Osborne was chosen. However, the First World War halted planning and construction until 1919. On 12 August 1923, the station at Osborne came on line and by 1925 was supplying the city's entire needs, resulting in the closure of the Grenfell Street powerhouse (now Tandanya SHP 10984).[4]

While electricity had originally been largely used for lighting, by the 1920s it was being increasingly used to power industry, household appliances and heating systems. Following an Act of Parliament in 1922 that enabled AESCo to supply electricity 'in any

part of the State',[5] the company began to expand beyond Adelaide and quickly became South Australia's principal electricity provider.[6]

Guaranteed electricity supplies became an important factor in the industrialisation of the State in the years following the Second World War. Supply issues caused by industrial action in the eastern states led to the nationalisation of AESCo and the formation of the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA) in 1946. To ensure a supply of fuel for electricity generation, Premier Thomas Playford supported the establishment of the brown-coal mine at Leigh Creek (c.1943), and the establishment of the power station at Port Augusta (1954, now demolished) designed to burn the brown coal.[7] In 1997, ETSA was disaggregated and then privatised as separate companies in 1999, notably ElectraNet and ETSA Utilities, the latter becoming SA Power Networks in 2012.[8]

Preparing to Expand into the 'Country Districts'

As AESCo was unable to supply electricity beyond the metropolitan area prior to the change in legislation in 1922,[9] some country towns, such as Gawler and Victor Harbor, built their own generators to provide a local supply, particularly for street lighting.[10] With authorisation to supply electricity across the State, AESCo chair, George Brookman advised shareholders that while demand was strong, much still needed to be devised to enable its rollout.[11]

In 1923, AESCo was able to seriously pursue its country ambitions when in March it purchased Gawler's municipal electric supply and in August the Osborne Power Station came on line, giving the company the capacity to generate and supply electricity to the country districts.[12] By the end of the year, C. A. M. Sprigg, the Board of Directors' secretary, reported that the mains were being extended to Gawler and Mount Lofty and that arrangements were being made to extend the 'Gawler line to Freeling and Angaston'.[13]

Transmitting electricity from the Osborne Power Station to the country districts beyond Gawler was an enormous undertaking as developing the necessary infrastructure was capital intensive. One of the major impediments was the use of timber utility poles. Such poles had been used for decades within South Australia for electricity and telegraph lines, including by the company,[14] however, South Australia lacked sufficient timber and had to import it from interstate, primarily from New South Wales.[15] Compounding the problem was the brief service life of the poles due to dry rot and termites, the latter being particularly aggressive in South Australia.[16]

James Cyril Stobie and the 'Stobie Pole'

In 1924, AESCO's chief draftsperson, James Cyril Stobie devised a solution to the company's utility pole issue. Stobie, known by his peers as Cyril, was born in Parkside on 15 September 1895 to James and Alice Stobie. In 1916, Stobie acquired an associate diploma in mechanical and electrical engineering from the South Australian

School of Mines and Industries. That same year, he was employed by AESCo. Frederick Wheadon, the company's director, subsequently befriended Stobie and became his mentor. In 1923, while still in his 20s, Stobie was promoted to AESCo's chief draftsperson.[17] While working for the company, he acquired his bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering, respectively in 1921 and 1932.[18] In addition to his engineering duties, he was also deeply immersed in AESCo's culture, evidenced by his role as the founding-editor of *Adelect*, the company's staff magazine established in 1926.

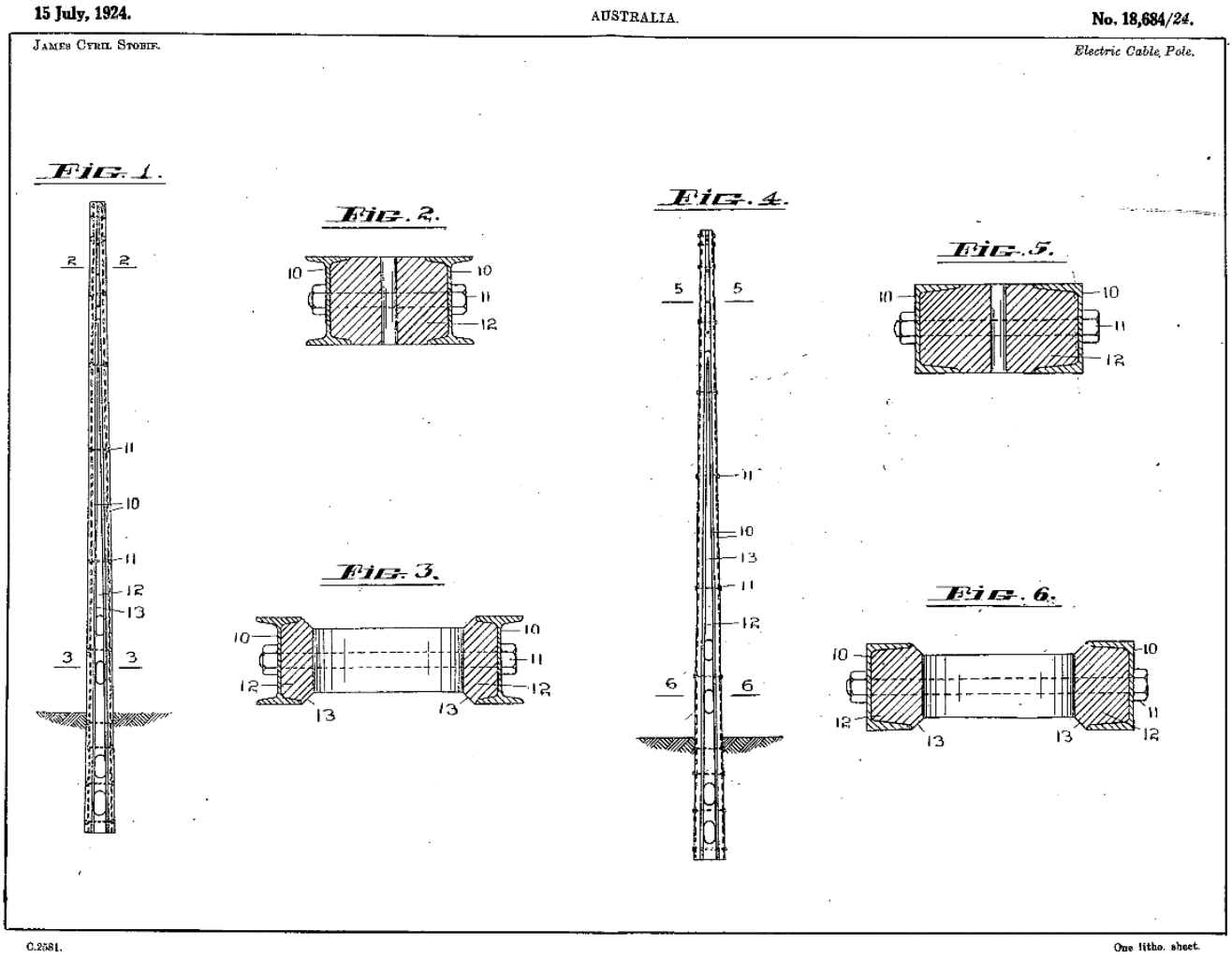
James Cyril Stobie, 1895-1953.

Source: Sir Thomas Playford ETSA Museum

Rather than build the poles out of timber, or even stronger materials like steel or concrete alone, Stobie proposed to build composite poles out of metal *and* concrete.[19] His application to the Commonwealth Department of Patents, submitted on 15 July 1924, describes his invention as an 'improved pole for carrying electric cables, telegraph and telephone wires and other purposes'.[20] It adds that this 'improved pole' consists of the following:

> two flanged beams of iron or steel, preferably rolled steel joists of I or channel section, placed one beside the other with their flanges inward and preferably at a very slight angle one with the other and held together by means of tie bolts, the space between them being filled with cement concrete.[21]

As Andrew Russack notes, the combination of steel and concrete not only resisted dry rot and termite damage, but also allowed for high load tolerances. Stobie understood that utility poles are not symmetrically loaded across the vertical axis. He was further aware of the static and dynamic loading placed on the poles, as well as the directionality of the forces in play. Ultimately, Stobie knew that the poles needed to be very strong in one direction only and thus their weight could be reduced by limiting the amount of steel required and focusing its use at points exposed to higher forces, primarily where the pole meets the ground.[22]



James Cyril Stobie's original 1924 design for an 'improved pole for carrying electric cables, telegraph and telephone wires and other purposes'.

Source: IP Australia, Commonwealth Government of Australia

The patent was granted in Australia in early 1925.[23] Although an employee of AESCo, Stobie submitted the patent application under his own name, making him the owner.[24] In February 1925, Stobie accepted £500 from the company in exchange for a license permitting it to produce and use the poles at no further cost.[25] The company had already been erecting the poles along South Terrace, Adelaide.[26] After the agreement, it was free to erect as many as it wanted.[27]

Expanding the Network

Equipped with the new pole design, AESCo began extending the network northwards beyond Gawler in late 1924. Manufacturing sites were established at railway station depots in Gawler, Freeling and Nuriootpa and in September, line construction using the new pole design commenced in Freeling.[28] Under the direction of Charles Wreford, six workers built and erected the new poles between Freeling and Templers.[29]

Construction advanced into 1925 and by June that year, AESCo's network had spread considerably, primarily northwards, but not exclusively so. The *Adelaide Register* noted in June that townships that had been or would soon be connected to the Osborne Power Station included 'Reynella, Salisbury, Gawler, Freeling, Angaston, Nuriootpa, Kapunda, Wasleys, Mallala, Owen, Balaklava, Gumeracha, Birdwood, Ambleside, and Mount Barker'.[30] By mid-September, around 700 steel and concrete poles had been installed between Gawler and Balaklava, and Gawler and Angaston.[31]

According to the *Adelaide Mail*, the 'new concrete-steel pole' was 'only in its experimental stage' and the company was yet to determine if they would completely replace timber poles on all new lines. Nonetheless, the article commented that the new poles had thus far 'answered all tests satisfactorily' and noted that they were being built at a site in Kilkenny to be erected along the Mount Lofty to Mount Barker line.[32]

The following year, Stobie refined the design and submitted a new patent application on 19 May 1926, which was eventually granted on 4 March 1927.[33] While similar to its predecessor, several alterations were made. Most notably, the weight-saving cutouts in the concrete were removed and the base now had a pointed shape. These revisions made the poles quicker and cheaper to build and install.[34] All subsequent poles adhered to this design, accepting variations in height and width (see Photos).

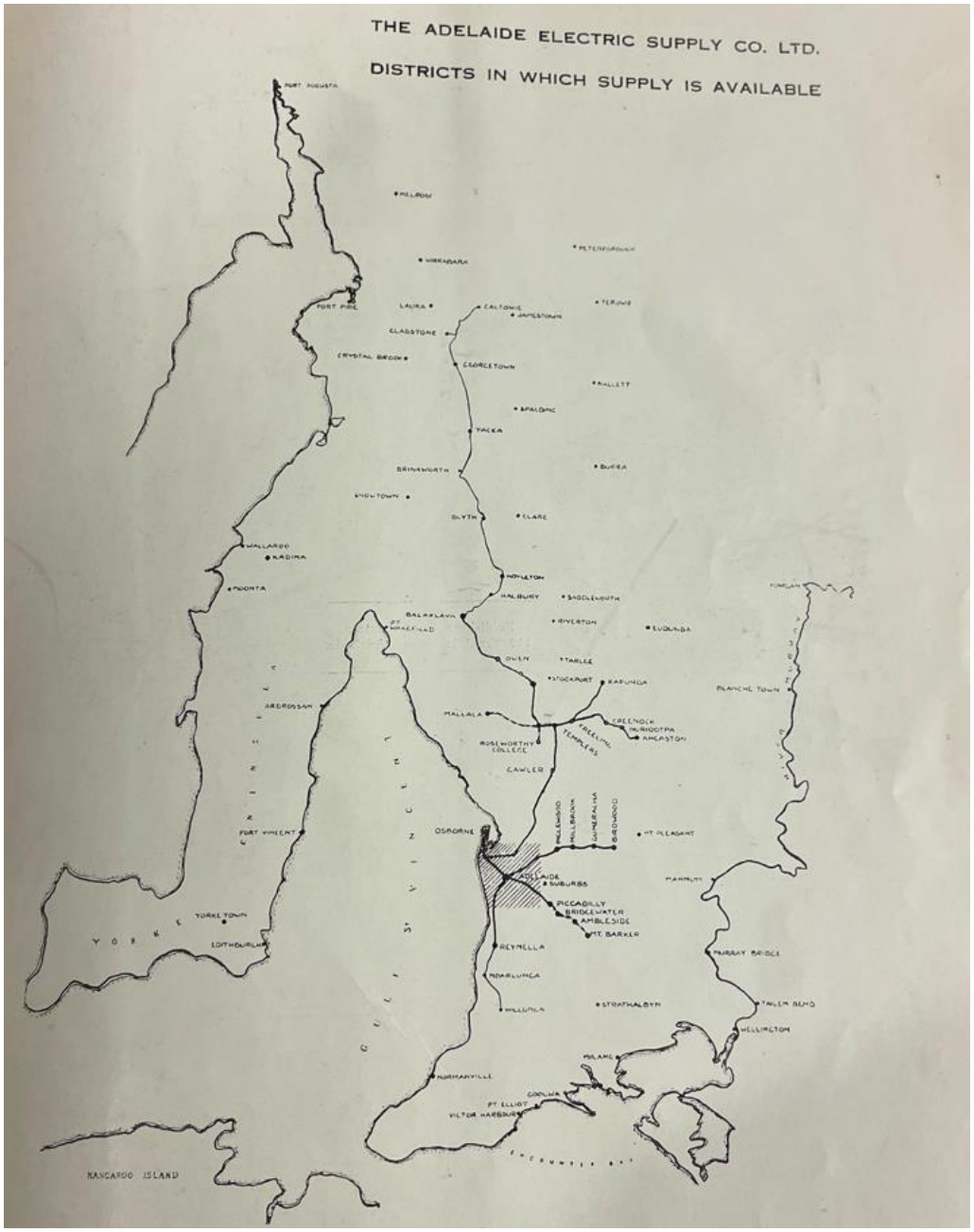
By the end of 1926, AESCo's utility poles had become widely known as 'Stobie poles' and any doubts about the exclusive use of Stobie's design were dispelled. Frederick Wheadon informed the Board of Directors that the company had been making 'extensive use' of Stobie poles, which were proving to be 'suitable in every respect'. He went on to recommend that the company use them exclusively.[35] The Board agreed and AESCo thereafter primarily used Stobie poles, though timber poles were still occasionally erected in the hills.[36]

Stobie poles were soon erected everywhere across South Australia. In September 1936, writer H. A. Lindsay reflected on their pervasiveness,[37] while in 1939, anonymous author 'R. L.' observed poetically that:

> Over hill and valley, through waterless wastes, and along flat, thickly populated city and country, there march ever-growing lines of electric conveying poles.

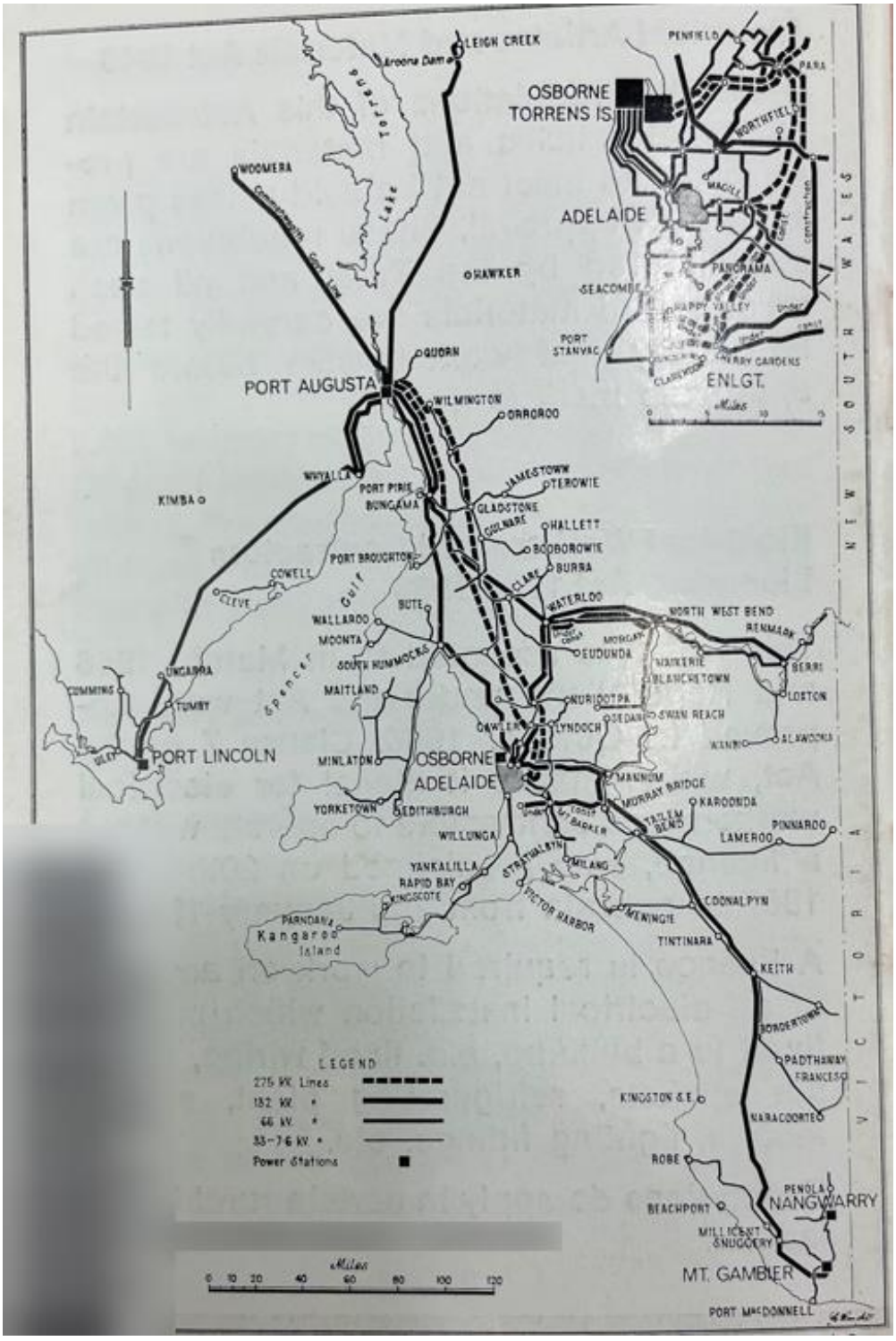
> These poles have spread throughout the length and breadth of our land, pointing their sharp finger to the sky, and weaving over our heads a cross-cross pattern of sometimes dark, sometimes gleaming, wires conveying light where once only darkness reigned, unlimited power where once only the strength of man's labor [sic] sufficed.[38]

Within 15 years, Stobie poles had come to be identified as a ubiquitous part of the South Australian landscape, as had their role in the wholesale electrification of South Australia, a process that continued well into the 1960s.



The extent of AESCo's network as of March 1927, showing it has reached Caltowie to the north and Willunga to the South.

Source: *Adelect*, March 1927



ETSA's transmission system by the end of the 1960s.

Source: *ETSA: In the Service of South Australia* (1969)

Stobie's Legacy

James Cyril Stobie died on 15 August 1953 at the age of 57. He was survived by his wife Rita and their four children and was buried at Centennial Park cemetery in Pasadena.[39]

Stobie's colleagues from AESCo and ETSA immediately mourned his passing and continued to recognise his contributions years afterwards.[40] On 2 October 1960, ETSA unveiled a tribute to Stobie at their Stobie pole manufacturing plant located in Angle Park.[41]

The tribute was designed by Brian Lewis from ETSA's Civil Design Branch.[42] Its main feature was a Stobie pole originally installed in the 1924 Templers to Freeling line. The pole was raised on an angle atop a base and was accompanied by a commemorative plaque. The unveiling ceremony was conducted by J. R. Brookman, an executive and friend, who recalled a limerick about Stobie he had sent to AESCo's manager in 1927:

There was a young fellow named Stobie
On the subject of poles remarked, "O be
Blowed to the wood, it never has stood –
It suffers from termites and fungustobie.
If you want a good pole to set in a hole
And scorn every wind that may blow-be,
Take two lengths of steel joist
Fill the concrete while moist
And bolt 'em with bolts a la Stobie".[43]

Guests at the unveiling included Stobie's wife Rita, his sisters, son Peter and daughter-in-law Margaret. Afterwards, Rita commented that the family 'all felt the plaque and mounted pole made a dignified tribute to Cyril's memory'.[44]

Unveiling the Tribute to James Cyril Stobie, 2 October 1960.

Source: *Adelect*, January 1961

The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie as it originally appeared in 1960.

Source: Invitation to Unveiling, 1960; SA Power Networks (Courtesy Brian 'Doc' Docking)

Stobie's colleagues acknowledged that the Stobie pole best represented his contribution to South Australia's electricity industry. This recognition was echoed in 2003, when Andrew Russack, then a manager for ETSA Utilities, commented that 'Stobie's contribution to South Australia cannot be overestimated'.[45]

Although Stobie poles were integral to the electrification of South Australia, they have also been derided for their perceived ugliness.[46] In the 1960s, Don Dunstan explored the cost of their removal as, in the words of the *Bulletin*, the poles 'disfigure the settled areas of South Australia'.[47] While prohibitively expensive to overhaul the network, Dunstan's apparent disdain for Stobie poles is likely why West Lakes was developed without them.[48]

While the robustness of Stobie poles has made them a notorious roadside hazard to motorists in the event of vehicle collisions,[49] Stobie poles continue to be a vital part of South Australia's electricity infrastructure. As of 2024, there are around 650,000 poles, covering about 70,000km of the network. In comparison, underground transmission covers only 20,000km.[50] Completely undergrounding the lines could cost between

$40-60 billion.[51] Stobie poles therefore continue to be economical and durable means of supplying electricity, each pole on average lasting around eighty years.[52]

The historical and cultural importance of the Stobie pole is reflected by their entry within the *Wakefield Companion to South Australia*[53] and addition to Bank SA's Heritage Icons list in 2002.[54] Moreover, the artistic potential of the Stobie pole has been embraced by local councils and they are often a canvas for artists and residents.[55]

July 2024 marks the hundredth anniversary of the Stobie pole. This milestone has attracted media coverage about their place in South Australia's history and culture.[56] SA Power Networks also arranged a series of events at Angle Park to commemorate the occasion, led by Brian 'Doc' Docking.[57] The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie has featured in these events. Around 2011, the 1924 pole was temporarily removed from its original base and then placed elsewhere at the plant alongside another pole reflecting Stobie's 1926 design. Shortly afterwards, a replica was then created for the new location, and the 1924 pole was restored to its original place.[58]

Chronology

Year	Event
1882	First public electricity supply bill is assented.
1895	**James Cyril Stobie is born.** South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company is registered and begins discussions to supply electric light to the municipality of Port Adelaide.
1898	First (temporary) powerhouse is established at William Marston's shop on the corner of St Vincent and Lipson Streets, Port Adelaide.
1899	Nile Street Powerhouse begins operating. Electrical Engineer F. W. H. Wheadon arrives in July bringing the knowledge and expertise to successfully expand the State's electricity network. The contract to supply electric lighting to the City of Adelaide is secured. UK-based Electrical Engineering Company of Australia Ltd purchases South Australian Electric Light and Motive Company.
1900	Electric Lighting and Traction Company Ltd purchase all of Adelaide's electricity operations.
1901	Powerhouse on Grenfell Street (Tandanya) becomes operational.
1902	First suburban power supply provided to North Adelaide via underground cables.
1905	Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd (AESCo) is incorporated in London and purchases Electric Lighting and Traction Company of Australia Ltd operations.

1907 Nile Street Powerhouse is closed.

1914 Consumers of electricity increased from 585 in 1904 to 13,192 in 1914.

1916 James Cyril Stobie is employed by AESCo.

1919 Land reclamation and construction of the Osborn power station begins.

1921 The control and management of AESCo is transferred from London to Adelaide on 1 March.

1922 The *Adelaide Electric Supply Company's Act 1922* is assented, enabling the company to expand outside of Adelaide, including into 'country districts'.

1924 James Cyril Stobie lodges his first patent for an 'improved pole for carrying electric cables, telegraph and telephone wires and other purposes'.

AESCo commences its expansion into the country districts in November.

1925 AESCo's expansion continues and by June has reached 'Reynella, Salisbury, Gawler, Freeling, Angaston, Nuriootpa, Kapunda, Wasleys, Mallala, Owen, Balaklava, Gumeracha, Birdwood, Ambleside, and Mount Barker'. About 700 poles are erected.

1926 James Cyril Stobie redesigns his 'improved pole' and lodges a new patent. It is granted the following year.

Stobie pole is embraced by AESCo as its preferred pole type.

1936 The Stobie is by now the only kind of pole manufactured and used by AESCo.

1946 AESCo is nationalised by the state government and is reconfigured as the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA).

1951 ETSA begins to establish a manufacturing plant at Angle Park, then a part of Woodville Gardens.

1953 James Cyril Stobie passes away at the age of 58.

1955 ETSA establishes a pole production facility at its new manufacturing plant at Angle Park.

1960 2 October, the Tribute to James Cyril Stobie is unveiled at ETSA's Angle Park facility.

c.2011 The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie is temporarily relocated at the site. It is returned to its original location not long after once a replica is produced.

1994 Legislation converts the Electricity Trust of South Australia into ETSA Corporation.

c.1997 Demolition of the Osborne Power Station commences.

1998 ETSA Corporation is disaggregated into separate business components. ElectraNet SA and ETSA Utilities are created in the process.

1999 The state government privatises ETSA.

2002 Bank SA adds the 'Stobie Pole' to its Heritage Icons List.

2012 ETSA Utilities becomes SA Power Networks.

2024 SA Power Networks hosts multiple events to celebrate the centenary anniversary of the Stobie pole's invention.

By the start of 2024, there are around 650,000 Stobie poles situated throughout South Australia.

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SITE DETAILS

Tribute to James Cyril Stobie **PLACE NO.: 26588**

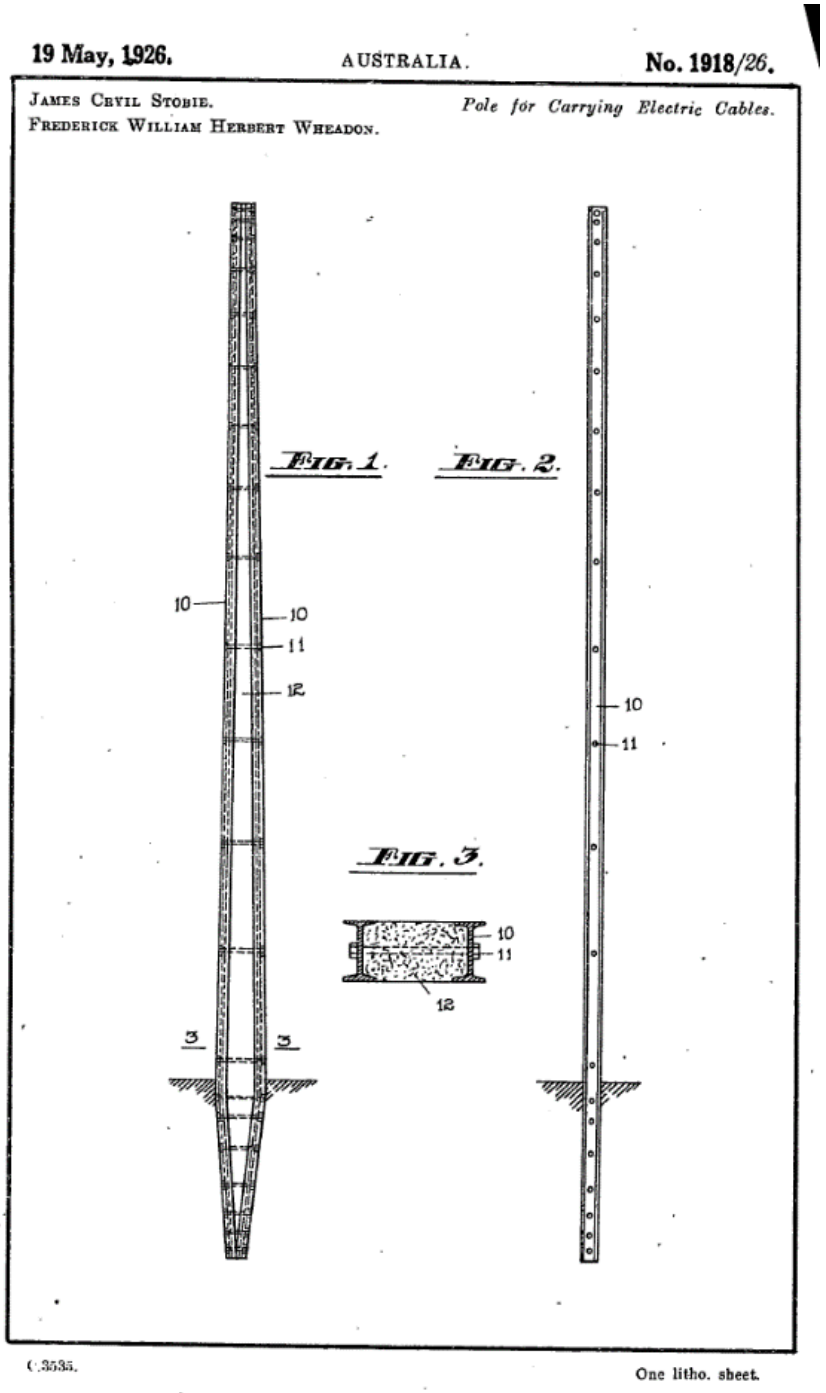
500 Grand Junction Road, Angle Park

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	A tribute to James Cyril Stobie comprising a 1924 Stobie pole and a commemorative plaque.	
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1924 (original Stobie pole); 1960 (tribute)	
REGISTER STATUS:	Identified, 5 August 2021 Provisionally Entered: 27 June 2024 Confirmed: 14 November 2024	
CURRENT USE:	Commemorative tribute, 1960 -	
DESIGNER:	Brian Lewis	
BUILDER:	Electricity Trust of South Australia, 1960	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	City of Port Adelaide Enfield	
LOCATION:	**Street No.:**	500
	Street Name:	Grand Junction Road
	Town/Suburb:	Angle Park
	Post Code:	5010
LAND DESCRIPTION:	**Title Reference:**	CT 6170/399, D72468 A207
	Hundred:	Yatala

PHOTOS

Tribute to James Cyril Stobie **PLACE NO.: 26588**

500 Grand Junction Road, Angle Park


19 May, 1926. AUSTRALIA. No. 1918/26.

JAMES CEVIL STOBIE.
FREDERICK WILLIAM HERBERT WHEADON.

Pole for Carrying Electric Cables.

FIG. 1. FIG. 2.

FIG. 3.

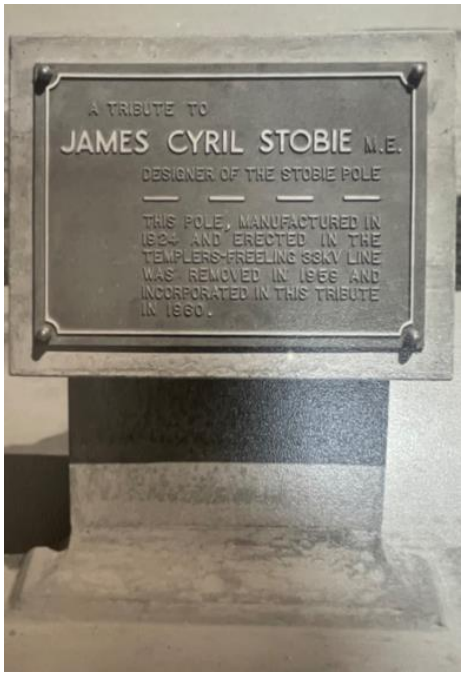
(.3535. One litho. sheet.

Stobie's redesigned pole submitted to the Department of Patents in 1926.

Source: IP Australia, Commonwealth Government of Australia

The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie at the Angle Park manufacturing plant before its official unveiling, 1960.

Source: Invitation to Unveiling, 1960; SA Power Networks (Courtesy Brian 'Doc' Docking)



The commemorative plaque at the Angle Park manufacturing plant before its official unveiling, 1960.

Source: Invitation to Unveiling, 1960; SA Power Networks (Courtesy Brian 'Doc' Docking)

The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie after the 1924 pole and the plaque were temporarily moved in 2011 (left); the same site featuring a reproduction of the 1924 pole in 2024 (right).

Sources: Wikimedia Commons (user Mikie 121), reproduced per CC0 1.0 (left); DEW Files (right)

***All the following photos were taken by DEW staff on 16 May 2024.**

The Tribute to James Cyril Stobie showing the 1924 Stobie pole and the commemorative plaque, both resting on their original concrete bases.

Image showing the angular placement of the 1924 Stobie pole.

Frontal view of the 1924 Stobie pole showing oval cutouts.

Rear of the 1924 Stobie pole showing tie bolts.

Original concrete base of the 1924 Stobie pole.

Righthand side of the 1924 Stobie pole showing one of the steel beams.

NAME:	Tribute to James Cyril Stobie	PLACE NO.:	26588

Commemorative plaque on its original concrete base.

[1] Linn, *ETSA: The Story of Electricity,* pp.27-29.
[2] See Colin Seymour, 'The Port Adelaide Tramways 1879-1935', *Trolley Wire* No.262 (August 1995): pp.6-9; Linn, *Story of Electricity,* p.28; 'The Municipal Tramways Trust: Formation of the Municipal Tramways Trust', Tramway Museum, St Kilda, SA. https://www.trammuseumadelaide.com/the-mtt
[3] C. A. M. Sprigg, 'Report of the Directors' in Adelaide Electric Supply Company, Limited: *Report of the Directors and Statement of Accounts to 31st August 1923* (Adelaide: self-published, 1923), p.2 (of report).
[4] Linn, *Story of Electricity,* pp.31-32.
[5] *The Adelaide Electric Supply Company's Act, 1922,* Private Act (SA).
[6] Linn, *Story of Electricity,* pp.36-38 and p.42.
[7] Nic Klaassen, 'The Battle for Leigh Creek', in *Playford's South Australia: Essays on the History of South Australia 1933-1968*, Eds. Bernard O'Neil, Judith Raftery, and Kerrie Round (Adelaide: Association of Professional Historians, 1996); David C Rich, 'Tom's Vision? Playford and Industrialisation', in *Playford's South Australia*.
[8] See Rob Linn, *Pathways for Power: The Story of ElectraNet SA* (Cherry Gardens, SA: Historical Consultants Pty for ElectraNet, 2000), pp.77-90; and 'SA Power Networks', Australian Energy Regulator, 2023. https://www.aer.gov.au/industry/networks/entities/service-providers/sa-power-networks#:~:text=On%203%20September%202012%2C%20ETSA,all%20other%20details%20remain%20unchanged. Accessed 23 April 2024.
[9] See 'Increased Business: Electric Light Co.'s Report', *Mail* (Adelaide), 2 December 1922, p.8; Linn, *ETSA: Story of Electricity,* pp.36-38.
[10] Gawler established a municipal electric lighting scheme in 1912. The Victor Harbor Electric Supply Company was founded in 1916 and a power house was established in 1919. It was taken over by the Harbor Electricity Co. in 1923, which erected a new power house around that time. See 'Gawler Electric Light: Official Inauguration', *Evening Journal* (Adelaide), 15 August 1912, p.1; Donovan and Associates, Victor Harbor Heritage Survey, Volume 1: Survey overview (Blackwood: self-published, 1997), p.47; 'Electric Lighting: Service at Victor Harbor', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 9 September 1919, p.9; 'Step Back in History on Old Port Walk', *Times* (Victor Harbor), 11 January 1994, p.8.
[11] George Brookman quoted in 'Adelaide Electric Supply Company', 1 December 1922, p.12.
[12] 'Gawler's Electric Supply: Sold to the Adelaide Electric Supply Company', *Bunyip* (Gawler), 16 March 1923, p.2; 'The Electric Supply Transfer', *Bunyip* (Gawler), 4 May 1923, p.2; Linn, *Pathways for Power*, p.17.
[13] Sprigg, 'Report of the Directors', p.3 (of report).
[14] Linn, *Pathways for Power*, p.17; Andrew Russack, 'The Stobie Pole' (paper presented at Distribution 2003, 7th International Energy Transmission and Distribution Conference and Exhibition, Port Melbourne, 2003): p.2.
[15] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.2.
[16] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.2; Linn, *ETSA: Story of Electricity,* p.39.
[17] Rob Linn, 'James Cyril Stobie (1895-1953)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre for Biography, Australian National University. https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/stobie-james-cyril-11776 Accessed 20 March 2024.
[18] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.7.
[19] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', pp.2-3.
[20] James Cyril Stobie, 'An improved pole for carrying electric cables, telegraph and telephone wires and other purposes', 1924. Patent No. 18684/24, Department of Patents, Commonwealth of Australia, lodged 15 July 1924, accepted 16 February 1925.
[21] Stobie, 'An improved pole'.
[22] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', pp.2-3.
[23] Stobie, 'An improved pole'.
[24] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.3.

[25] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.3.
[26] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.3.
[27] As Stobie still held the patent, he could do what he wanted with it. In April 1925, he formed a syndicate with colleagues Frederick Wheadon and John Brookman and submitted patent applications overseas, including in the United States and United Kingdom.[27] He and the others hoped it would be embraced as the pole of choice around the world. Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.5; Linn, *ETSA: Story of Electricity,* p.38.
[28] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.3.
[29] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.3.
[30] 'The Electrical Age: A Visit to Osborne', *Register* (Adelaide), 5 June 1925, p.7.
[31] 'Concrete Poles: New Electric Carriers', *Mail* (Adelaide), 12 September 1925, p.3.
[32] 'Concrete Poles', 12 September 1925, p.3.
[33] James Cyril Stobie and Frederick William Herbert Wheadon, 'An improved pole for carrying electric cables, telegraph and telephone wires and other purposes', 1926. Patent No. 1918/26, Department of Patents, Commonwealth of Australia, lodged 19 May 1926, accepted 4 March 1927; Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', pp.4-5.
[34] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', pp.4-5.
[35] Frederick Wheadon quoted in Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.4.
[36] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.4.
[37] H. A. Lindsay, 'Discovery and Invention in Our State', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 19 September 1936, p.11.
[38] R. L., 'Poles to Carry Light and Withstand the Ravages of Time – and White Ants', *Mail* (Adelaide), 14 January 1939, p.25.
[39] Linn, 'James Cyril Stobie (1895-1953)', Australian Dictionary of Biography.
[40] 'Death of Mr. J. C. Stobie', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 17 August 1953, p.2.
[41] 'A Tribute to James Cyril Stobie', *Adelect*, January 1961, p.15. Construction of the new manufacturing plant commenced in 1955, but production did not begin until October 1956. Alan Bates, 'Woodville Gardens', *Adelect*, September 1959, p.4.
[41] 'A Tribute to James Cyril Stobie', p.15.
[42] 'A Tribute to James Cyril Stobie', p.15.
[43] J. R. Brookman's poem reproduced in 'A Tribute to James Cyril Stobie', p.15.
[44] Letter from Rita Stobie to C. R. S. Colyer, 5 November 1960.
[45] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.8. Similarly, historian Rob Linn, the author of ETSA's official history, stated in 1996 that 'the Stobie pole was, without doubt, central to the speedy expansion of AESCo's supply'. Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p. 39.
[46] Patricia Sumerling and Wilfrid Prest. 'Stobie Poles', in *The Wakefield Companion to South Australian History*, Prest, Wilfrid, Round, Kerrie, and Fort, Carol (eds.). Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2001: pp.517-518.
[47] 'Winds of Reform', *The Bulletin* 90:4615 (17 August 1968), p.22.
[48] West Lakes was 'one of the first developments to have underground electrical supply and telephone connections'. 'West Lakes, South Australia', Engineering Heritage Australia, 2024. https://heritage.engineersaustralia.org.au/wiki/Place:West_Lakes Accessed 15 April 2024.
[49] See C. N. Kloeden, A. J. Mclean, M. R. J. Baldock and A. J. T. Cockington, Severe and Fatal Car Crashes Due to Roadside Hazards: A Report to the Motor Accident Commission (Adelaide: Motor Accident Commission, 1999), p.6.
[50] Thomas Kelsall, 'Burying SA Powerlines to cost "Between $40 to $60 Billion"', InDaily, 31 March 2023.
https://www.indaily.com.au/news/2023/03/31/burying-sa-powerlines-to-cost-between-40-to-60-billion Accessed 23 April 2024.
[51] Kelsall, 'Burying SA Powerlines'.
[52] 'The Stobie Pole: A Century of Service', SA Power Networks, 2024.
[53] Sumerling and Wilfrid Prest. 'Stobie Poles', pp. 517-518.
[54] Russack, 'The Stobie Pole', p.1.

[55] This derives from the pioneering efforts of Ann Newmarch and the City of Prospect in 1983. Sara Garcia, 'Stobie poles are a South Australian icon, but how did they come about?', ABC News, 31 March 2023. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-03-31/what-is-sa-icon-the-stobie-pole/101755816 Accessed 23 April 2024.

[56] For example, see 'SA icon, the Stobie pole, turns 100', *Stock Journal*, 6 April 2024. https://www.stockjournal.com.au/story/8581786/sa-icon-the-stobie-pole-turns-100/ Accessed 23 April 2024; Kody Cook, 'Celebrating 100 years of the Stobie pole', *Utility*, 5 April 2024. https://utilitymagazine.com.au/celebrating-100-years-of-the-stobie-pole/ Accessed 24 April 2024; '100 years for a SA icon', *InDaily*, 5 April 2024. https://www.indaily.com.au/news/insider/2024/04/05/100-years-for-a-sa-icon-wine-has-gone-to-the-dogs-digging-up-the-colonel-word-of-the-week Accessed 24 April2 024.

[57] Including site tours and a 'birthday party'. '2024 The Year of the Stobie Pole', SA Power Networks, 4 April 2024. https://www.sapowernetworks.com.au/data/318096/2024-the-year-of-the-stobie-pole/ Accessed 23 April 2024; 'Stobie Pole party planned as iconic part of SA's history marks 100th year', Glam Adelaide, 14 April 2024. https://glamadelaide.com.au/stobie-pole-party-planned-as-iconic-part-of-sas-history-marks-100th-year/ Accessed 23 April 2024; 'Stobie Pole Centenary Year: Pole Manufacturing Facility Tours', South Australia's History Festival, 2024. https://festival.history.sa.gov.au/events/stobie-pole-centenary-year-pole-manufacturing-facility-tours/ Accessed 23 April 2024.

[58] Brian 'Doc' Docking, interview with the author, 16 May 2024.