

# General Information Notice

## Electrical Safety & Compliance

Notice Number: GI08\_20

24 March 2020

### Subject: Ausgrid Response to COVID-19

Ausgrid is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, their families, our ASPs, contractors and customers.

At this stage there will be **no changes to the way we are working with ASPs and other partners to plan and schedule outages** that allow for new customer connections and other work on the network to proceed. We will update you if there is any change to this decision.

We also want to share with you the actions we are taking to respond to the pandemic, aligned with the best information from Australian and international health authorities.

We are working hard to protect our staff, so they can continue to deliver essential services to the community. We have introduced:

- **Strict isolation protocols** for people who are showing symptoms, have come into close contact with COVID-19 or who are being tested, have returned from overseas or come into close contact with someone who has
- **Limits on face-to-face interactions** between crews and workgroups and encouraging staff who can work from home to do so
- **Additional cleaning of our sites** with a particular focus on those areas that are used by critical staff
- **New visitor protocols at all our sites** to ensure that no visitor to any Ausgrid site would be in breach of our strict isolation protocols
- **Lock down arrangements in critical business units** (for example, control rooms and the contact centre) and ensuring critical staff avoid public transport
- **Additional personal protective equipment for staff**, including disinfectant wipes, masks and extra work gloves
- **Additional guidance for staff** on how to reduce infection risk when they visit a customer's home
- **Telephone contact with customers before crews arrive** to understand whether the customer is in isolation or a high-risk group
- **Phone notification of planned outages**, rather than face to face, to life support customers. Where a customer cannot be contacted, door knocking will apply with additional controls
- **A suspension of disconnections for non-payment**, similar to others in the industry

For the safety of our staff and the security of power supply, we are continuing with **our planned programs**.

While we acknowledge planned outages may be disruptive to customers, however completing this work now is vital to avoid future outages on essential services such as hospitals or nursing homes. It is also important that this work is done now in the event our workforce is impacted by the spread of COVID-19.

As we plan outages to support your work, it is important that both Ausgrid and our partners take proactive measures to ensure sites are safe for workers to attend. Where appointments are being made by Operational Support for customers premises, Ausgrid will be seeking confirmation of the site, specific controls and personnel conditions at the time of booking.

Ausgrid also asks that ASPs and other partners do not send anyone to an Ausgrid site, or appointment associated with contestable or other works, if they:

- are showing symptoms of COVID-19;
- have come into close contact\* with anyone who has COVID-19 or who is being tested;
- have travelled to – or come into close contact\* with anyone who has visited – **mainland China, Iran, South Korea or Italy** in the past 14 days; or
- have returned to Australia on, or after Monday, 16 March, from **anywhere overseas**.

\*Close contact includes being face-to-face for at least 15 minutes; or in the same closed space for at least two hours.

More information about the measures we will be using to ensure the safety of our staff and sites will be provided in due course.

There are currently no identified or confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Ausgrid or PLUS ES, and that all Ausgrid sites remain open and work being completed in the field continues.

These measures strike the right balance between delivering our essential services while protecting our staff and our partners.

Please note, that these measures may be revisited at any time due to the rapidly changing conditions associated with the pandemic and where they do we will advise accordingly.

**Regards,**

**Trevor Armstrong**

**Chief Operating Officer**