

# Powerlink Customer Response to COVID-19

April 2020



The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted Powerlink's customers and the communities in which we operate.

As a signatory to The Energy Charter and aligned with one of our Corporate Values of *Customer*, Powerlink is undertaking a range of activities to help our customers and our communities during this time.

We are working with government and our energy industry colleagues to find and put into place more support measures in the coming weeks.



## SAFE AND RELIABLE SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY

Now more than ever, our customers and our communities need a safe and reliable supply of electricity. Powerlink has implemented a number of business continuity plans to ensure we continue to deliver our essential service to more than four million Queenslanders. We have taken a number of steps including developing different ways of doing our work, segregation of critical work functions, increased monitoring of cybersecurity risk and providing information technology and logistics support for our people who are able to work from home in line with government requirements to prevent the spread of the virus.



## RELIEF MEASURES FOR DIRECTLY-CONNECTED (LARGE GENERATORS AND INDUSTRIAL) CUSTOMERS

Powerlink has a dedicated team in regular contact with our directly-connected customers. Our team is proactively working with our customers to consider financial hardship requests and potential changes to project delivery timeframes to support them during this time.



## LABORATORY SERVICES CUSTOMER SUPPORT

All customers of our laboratory services have been contacted to let them know about changes to our collection, testing and delivery processes to ensure we can continue to provide our services. This included updating information on the website to make it clear to customers what was changing.

## PAYMENT SUPPORT FOR SUPPLIERS

We have developed a specific procurement guideline to support Powerlink's small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) contractors during the global pandemic. We have adopted a new approach and are paying our suppliers as quickly as possible rather than our previous standard payment terms.

## COMMUNICATION



### ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION ABOUT POWERLINK'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

A dedicated section with a range of COVID-19 resources has been created on the Powerlink website. This is easily accessible from the home page and provides information on energy saving tips, state-based support organisations and details on self-meter reading. In addition, the Powerlink website has been updated with key details on direct customer-facing services, to ensure our customers can continue to access these services despite changed modes of operation.

### SUPPORT FOR ENERGY LITERACY AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Powerlink is working with Energy Charter signatories to help develop a consistent approach to energy efficiency and energy literacy programs. Together we see great value in providing information to allow customers to better manage their energy costs as more people are working from home.

### SHARED MESSAGING ON EXTERNAL CHANNELS

The focus for Powerlink social media channels has shifted from business-focused messaging, to sharing important COVID-19 related messages and information, particularly as it relates to energy supply and power use. We know it is critical that our customers are kept updated and informed, and right now they want to know where help and support is available.

## LEASE HOLDERS



### RENT RELIEF

We have contacted organisations and individuals that lease land or property from Powerlink to discuss lease payment deferrals for non-government tenants experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of COVID-19. We are committed to working with our tenants to find the best solution. We support the Queensland Government's freeze on evictions for residential tenants for a six month period from 29 March 2020 and will extend leases for at least a further six months if a tenant's lease expires during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

## COMMUNITY



### COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

Powerlink will re-allocate \$35,000 from its sponsorship budget into a community grants program to assist customers and community members in vulnerable circumstances. Powerlink is investigating partnering with Energy Queensland on this program. As a new member of the Thriving Communities Partnership (FY 20/21), Powerlink is seeking advice and direction from the program team and Queensland-based customer advocates to ensure funds are appropriately allocated to where it is needed most.

### PROPERTY ACCESS

Powerlink is working with landholders who have our infrastructure on their property to update and/or escalate access and working conditions where required. This means aligning with COVID-19 restrictions currently in place to ensure our property owners' safety as well as that of our people, but also to ensure we respond and implement any additional conditions requested by landholders based on their own personal circumstances or COVID-19 impacts.