

Frequently asked questions

March 2020

Q. Why do you have to conduct work on an existing transmission line?

A. A refit project is a reinvestment in existing assets to help extend their technical life. Refitting is a cost effective solution to ensure the network continues to reliably support existing and future demand. These works are necessary as these transmission towers are more than 50 years old. Targeted maintenance helps ensure the continued safe, cost effective and reliable supply of electricity to the community.

Q. Will there be an exclusion area around the towers during project works?

A. The safety of our people, contractors and the community is essential. During works, the area immediately around the tower will become a 'construction site' with restrictions in place to ensure everyone's safety. Only authorised personnel will be able to enter the site at this time. There will be varying distances for these safety exclusion zones based on the area around a tower. A key consideration will be allowing enough distance for the safe and efficient operation of any equipment and appropriate access to the site. Safety signage and temporary fencing will be established.

Q. If a tower located on public land is being refitted, can I still use the community facilities around the site e.g. parklands or sporting fields?

A. In accordance with our commitment to safety, we will enact exclusion zones around our towers being refitted, including those located in public or community spaces. We will endeavour to minimise disruption to the community's use of nearby facilities. Restrictions to access or use these areas will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the tower's location and potential safety risks associated with the recreational activities occurring near the site. Any local residents or members of the public in areas near the towers being refitted are required to observe all safety signage and temporary fencing to ensure their safety.

Q. I live near a tower being refitted, how much notice will I get before you start works?

A. Affected landholders will generally receive notification around two to three days before the expected commencement of the work, unless landholders specifically request more notice during our engagement process.



Q. If towers require painting, how are they being cleaned prior to applying paint?

A. To ensure a clean surface for painting, we wash the towers with a high-pressure water jet to remove any debris and salt. If the surface is degraded, a garnet grit is included in the water jet to remove any rust and leave clean steel. The garnet grit is a natural, non-toxic and safe material (commonly used by the building, energy and maritime industries). This garnet is often coloured and falls to the ground close to the tower in the form of a dust.

Q. If towers require painting, how will you manage noise from the surface preparation works?

A. As with all of our activities, care will be taken to minimise any disturbance resulting from this essential refit work. The high-pressure equipment used to wash the towers prior to painting will be the activity that creates the most noticeable noise. These noise levels will be higher the closer a person is to the tower. Powerlink will work closely with landholders near towers undergoing refit work, and where possible will schedule high-pressure cleaning activities during times which will reduce impacts on nearby residents. All work is required to be conducted in accordance with our environmental management requirements, including all relevant noise legislation, policies or standards that apply to refit projects.

Q. What controls do your projects have to avoid any dust coming near my property?

A. Each project has tailored environmental management requirements that establish preventative control measures for project activities and outline how potential environmental and social impacts will be minimised and managed. On refit projects, these requirements stipulate that staff and contractors are appropriately trained to complete the works using industry standard and well-maintained equipment. Drop sheets must be put in place to capture as much of the dust as possible for disposal. Additionally, monitoring systems must be used to track potential project impacts. For example, on-site weather monitoring equipment will be used to ensure surface preparation work does not occur in unfavourable weather conditions.

Q. Can my vehicles be near a tower while it is undergoing refit work?

A. During refit work, the area immediately around a tower becomes a construction site to ensure the safety of all parties and restrictions are put in place while work is being completed. It is therefore advisable to move any unhoused vehicles well away from a tower before work gets underway. Powerlink and its contractors are required to comply with all conditions set out in the comprehensive environmental management requirements with the aim to mitigate any potential environmental and social impacts as much as possible. We will engage with any potentially impacted landholders ahead of work occurring to ensure residents are aware of possible dust in these locations.

Q. Should I stay inside while work activities are underway?

A. There is no requirement for you to stay indoors during refit work. However, there will be increased noise levels during the tower painting surface preparation stage that you may wish to avoid.



Photos of similar types of surface preparation work taking place:



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