

Protecting Cultural Heritage



About this brochure

This brochure outlines what is meant by Cultural Heritage and the steps we take to protect and preserve it.

Acknowledgement

Powerlink acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. We are committed to providing effective recognition, protection and conservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage through open and honest consultation and respectful and cooperative engagement with Traditional Owners.

We also recognise that our activities could impact on places of historic and other heritage value to the broader community, and that local, State and Commonwealth laws provide controls and processes to manage and conserve those heritage values.

Essential duty of care

Under Queensland law anyone conducting work on land has a duty of care to avoid harm to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. When we build new transmission lines or substations we take all reasonable and practicable measures to avoid or minimise harm to cultural heritage.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage includes areas or objects of cultural significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It includes objects and sites that hold archaeological or historic evidence of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander occupation of the land and waters of Queensland.

Queensland heritage includes places, areas, buildings, other structures or their remains of historical or cultural significance. We consult with a range of stakeholders, including landholders, local community groups and government agencies to manage historical and other heritage.

Information for our landholders

We recognise landholders as important stakeholders to our business and value their role in helping us maintain a safe and reliable transmission network for all Queenslanders.

There are times when we need to access landholder properties associated with the delivery of transmission services and this includes conducting cultural heritage assessments and surveys to ensure we meet our cultural heritage obligations, particularly during construction.

To meet our obligations under Queensland's *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* we consult with the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners for the area. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) or agreement will often determine how we meet our cultural heritage 'duty of care'. For new works this will typically require an on-site cultural heritage survey by Traditional Owners, often together with an archaeologist.

Our cultural heritage assessment does not create any additional restrictions on a landholder's use of their land, even though managing any heritage sites may place some constraints on our construction activities. Likewise, the presence of cultural heritage on your land does not mean your property is subject to Native Title and does not affect your legal title to your land.

Our commitment to protecting cultural heritage

For new transmission lines and substations we will engage meaningfully and respectfully with Traditional Owner groups to identify any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage that could be affected by our construction activities.

Where necessary, we will develop a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) or Cultural Heritage Management Agreement (CHMA) with the Aboriginal Party. Typically this will include a cultural heritage survey on-site and agreement about the effective management of any heritage identified.

A CHMP can contain steps for conducting an assessment and make recommendations for us to avoid or minimise harm to significant cultural heritage during the clearing, construction, operation, and maintenance of a transmission line.

What is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage?

Cultural heritage is valued by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as an ongoing connection to their history, traditions and country. It can also provide information

about occupation dates of a region, the types of tools and objects that were made, where people lived, how they interacted with the environment, and how significant an area or object may be to them.

Aboriginal cultural heritage found near our infrastructure is generally identified through consultation with the relevant Traditional Owners. The Queensland Government's Aboriginal cultural heritage database also provides information about the location of cultural heritage and the relevant Aboriginal Party for an area or region.

Examples of common types of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage that may be found near our infrastructure include:

- stone artefact scatters
- scarred trees
- hearths (fire places)
- grinding grooves
- stone tool quarries
- rock shelters
- story places and other sites of traditional or historical significance

What is historical heritage?

Historical heritage refers to places, sites, objects, structures or their remains that are valued for their cultural or historical significance by the broader local community or under Queensland and Commonwealth legislation.

A heritage area, object or place may be significant because of its importance to Queensland's history, because it has unique or rare aesthetic qualities, or has a strong or special association with a particular community or group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

Examples of common types of historical or other significant heritage include:

- railways
- early mine infrastructure
- bridges
- other industry that demonstrate engineering and technological achievements.

Historical cultural heritage may be identified by consulting

local and state registers, consultation with landholders and community groups, or archaeological or historical specialists who can advise on how to best conserve the heritage values.

Our process to avoid harm

Before we commence a new transmission line project we complete a range of activities to ensure that cultural heritage is identified and managed appropriately.

These processes may involve:

- Identifying the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander parties, Native Title parties and knowledge holders for a project area.
- Search the relevant State and Federal databases for information on previously recorded cultural heritage.
- During project investigations an assessment may be conducted along the proposed transmission line easement or substation site to identify significant cultural heritage and assess the potential project activities. This is typically done in accordance with a CHMP or another agreement with the Aboriginal Party.
- An archaeologist or other specialist may also assist with identifying historical heritage and make recommendations to us.

The consultation process

Consultation is important because we understand there is limited recorded information about the location of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage or historical heritage.

We recognise that cultural heritage does not always contain physical markings and the whereabouts of some significant areas and objects are only known to members of the Traditional Owner group. Powerlink consults with the relevant Aboriginal Party which may involve developing a CHMP or similar agreement.

Our steps to protecting cultural heritage

Before construction, our crews and contractors are briefed on their responsibilities about any identified significant cultural heritage areas or objects in the project area.

The significant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage areas and objects may be cordoned off and our cultural heritage staff are involved at all stages of a project to act as a liaison with Traditional Owners and to provide advice.

Contact Us

Further information about Powerlink and our projects can be downloaded from www.powerlink.com.au

General Enquiries FREECALL 1800 635 369 (during business hours) and ask for Landholder Relations

In case of emergency FREECALL 1800 353 031 (24 hours, 7 days a week)

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