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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | AUGUST 2024

Bayview Heights to White Rock Underground Cable and Joint Bay Refurbishment Project

Planning is underway for essential works along Powerlink's existing 275kV underground transmission cables that run between the Bayview Heights and White Rock transition stations in Cairns. The 2.7km underground cables are critical to maintaining a reliable and secure power supply for residents and businesses in Cairns and the Far North Queensland region.

The works are required along sections of the underground cable and easement located in Mount Sheridan's Forest Gardens Estate and include:

- vegetation management along the easement, including selected removal of approximately 385 trees identified as being a high or future risk to the underground cables
- easement restoration, including replanting with compatible vegetation
- refurbishment works at two joint bay sites located near Alpinia Terrace and Amazon Close.

Vegetation management works started on Monday 29 July 2024 and we will keep residents updated on the timings of these works.

Q: WHY DO TREES NEED TO BE REMOVED?

Powerlink undertakes regular inspections of our transmission network to monitor its condition and identify issues such as vegetation that can impact the reliability of power supply.

If not managed appropriately, some vegetation can be a hazard to our network and damage critical infrastructure, affect power supply and impact easement clearance zones.

Inspections of the underground cables, easement and neighbouring Bayview Heights Transition Station have identified significant issues with the surrounding vegetation. This includes species with intrusive root systems encroaching on the underground cables.


Selected tree removal and vegetation management is required along the easement to manage risks to the underground cables and ensure the continued secure supply of power to the Cairns region.

Q: WHICH TREES ARE BEING REMOVED?

A local, qualified arborist and Powerlink electrical engineers have assessed the vegetation within a 10m zone either side of the underground cables. The assessments considered:

- species type
- tree trunk diameter
- if the species have intrusive root systems able to cause damage to critical infrastructure
- tree protection zones
- easement clearance zones.

Due to the extent of vegetation along the easement and its social and environmental value, a site-specific clearing approach has been developed for the project. The approach involves keeping as much existing vegetation as possible, while managing risks to the underground cables.



The vegetation to be removed includes:

- all woody vegetation (i.e. plants with hard, woody stems like trees and shrubs), within 3m either side of the underground cables
- trees with intrusive root systems that have been identified as posing a high risk, within 3m to 10m either side of the underground cables.

Q: HOW MANY TREES WILL BE REMOVED?

Approximately 385 trees have been identified for removal to ensure the continued reliable and secure power supply to the Cairns region.

Q: WHAT WILL BE DONE TO OFFSET THE REQUIRED TREE REMOVAL WORKS?

An arborist and fauna spotter will be on-site prior to and during the tree felling works. The arborist will ensure compliance with the clearing plans and the fauna spotter will remove and manage any impacted fauna from the site to a safe, nearby habitat outside of the clearing limits.

Powerlink is committed to restoring the easement while maintaining required safety clearances for the underground cables and easement.

We are working with Cairns Regional Council to appropriately plan for the restoration of the easement, including identifying new amenity opportunities for the area such as shade structures and seating.

Restoration works will involve replanting along the easement with compatible species that will not impact on the underground cables or the easement in their mature state. Approximately 24,000 grasses and plants will be locally propagated from local provenance seed and cuttings.

Q: HOW CAN I PROVIDE MY FEEDBACK ON THE WORKS?

Powerlink is planning to stage the vegetation removal and easement restoration works and sought community feedback on two proposed options.

Both proposed options involve:


- removing selected trees posing a high-risk to the underground cables in 2024
- using mulch, where possible, to cover areas where trees have been removed until restoration works commence.

Further information about the two options, including a map, is available in Project Newsletter - June 2024 and on our project website at powerlink.com.au/bayviewheightswhiterock

The feedback received confirmed a preference for **option one** which involves removing most of the vegetation in 2024 and undertaking progressive restoration works.

Q: HOW LONG WILL THE WORKS TAKE?

Vegetation management works are starting from Monday 29 July 2024 and we will keep residents updated on the timings of works.



The vegetation management approach will start by removing high risk trees along the easement and selected trees in four key cluster areas. This approach removes the need to disturb some areas more than once and enables progressive restoration works to start in the cleared cluster areas.

The vegetation removal and easement restoration works will occur over a three-year period between 2024 and 2026.

Q: WHAT IS THE EASEMENT GOING TO LOOK LIKE AFTER THESE WORKS?

We recognise removing trees will have visual and amenity impacts for residents of the Forest Gardens Estate, and the wider community.

Landscape drawings and visual materials have been prepared for different viewpoints along the easement to show how the area looks with existing vegetation and what it will look like after the vegetation management and restoration works are completed.

These visuals are available on our project website or you can contact our project team and request copies be provided to you.

Q: WILL THERE BE STUMP GRINDING OR TREE MULCHING ON-SITE?

A: The vegetation removal works will involve grinding tree stumps near the concrete footpath to address trip hazards and mulching all removed vegetation.

The majority of tree stumps will be kept along the easement to manage erosion along the creek bank and provide stabilisation for the remaining trees. Wherever possible, the mulch will be used as part of the restoration works.

Tree stumps will be cut as close to the natural ground line as practical and the remaining stump will be treated with herbicide to ensure the remnant root system does not pose a future threat to the integrity of the underground cables.

Q: WHAT TIME OF DAY WILL THESE WORKS BE TAKING PLACE?

Work crews will be on-site on Mondays to Fridays, between 7.30am and 5.00pm. To minimise impacts to local residents, tree removal, stump grinding and chipping activities will take place during restricted work hours between 9.00am and 5.00pm only.

Q: WHAT IS A JOINT BAY AND WHAT DO THE REFURBISHMENT WORKS INVOLVE?

Joint bays are used to join sections of the underground cable together.

Essential refurbishment works are needed at two joint bay sites located within Powerlink's easement, adjacent to Alpinia Terrace and Amazon Close in the Forest Gardens Estate.

The refurbishment works on the joint bays will be undertaken during planned network outages in 2025 and will not result in any impacts to electricity supply.

As the joint bays are located underground, the area above (approximately 20m x 12m) will be established as a construction site. This will involve installing fencing, vegetation clearing, excavation of the joint bays and setting up equipment in preparation for the refurbishment works. Security will be present outside of work hours.

Q: WILL I LOSE POWER DURING THE REFURBISHMENT WORKS?

These planned refurbishment works will not impact power supply.

Q: HOW WILL I BE IMPACTED?

We do not need to access residential private properties to complete the refurbishment or vegetation management works.

Local residents may notice an increase in traffic on the roads leading to access points for the easement and the joint bays situated within the Forest Gardens Estate in Mount Sheridan.

Local traffic and pedestrian management plans will be in place to maintain safety and access for residents and community members during the works.

We will keep local residents updated about the works happening near them and what to expect.

Q: HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED OF UPCOMING WORKS?

Our project team will contact local residents with regular updates and you will be notified before any works start in your local area.

We will be door-knocking residents adjoining the easement, doing letterbox drops, putting up signage and providing information on our project website powerlink.com.au/bayviewheightswhiterock. You can also contact us on 07 4034 7600 or fngprojects@powerlink.com.au.

Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POWERLINK AND ERGON ENERGY?

Powerlink operates and maintains the transmission network that transports electricity over long distances at high voltages, ensuring it gets from power generators to local electricity distributors.

Ergon Energy is regional Queensland's electricity distribution network provider.

Q: WHAT OTHER WORKS IS POWERLINK DOING IN THE LOCAL AREA?

Bayview Heights to White Rock Underground Cables Project – White Rock

Powerlink is undertaking refurbishment works at the joint bay site located on the perimeter of the Trinity Anglican School property, adjacent to Sheehy Road in White Rock.

Vegetation management and selected tree removal of approximately 30 trees are also required along this section of the easement to ensure the continued reliable and secure supply of power to the Cairns region. Powerlink is also working with Cairns Regional Council to plan for planting new street trees in this area.

On-ground works are scheduled to take place between June 2024 and September 2024.

Bayview Heights to Davies Creek Transmission Line Refit Project

Powerlink is undertaking refit works on our transmission towers at Bayview Heights in Cairns, running west through the wet tropics rainforest to Davies Creek, east of Mareeba.

This section of line is approximately 16km in length, consisting of 37 towers – some of which are the tallest in Powerlink’s network at 85m, designed to sit above the forest canopy. It has been identified that 21 of the 37 towers along this stretch of line require refit maintenance works to extend their operational life.

Site establishment and maintenance activities on the towers commenced in 2023 and will continue to occur during planned network outages from:

- April 2024 to December 2024
- April 2025 to December 2025.

Further information is available at powerlink.com.au/projects/bayviewheightsdaviescreekrefitproject.

FURTHER INFORMATION

About Powerlink Queensland

Powerlink Queensland is a Government Owned Corporation that owns, develops, operates and maintains the transmission network in Queensland. We connect Queenslanders to a world-class energy future, providing electricity to more than five million Queenslanders and 253,000 businesses.

We are also responsible for connecting large-scale renewable energy developments, including wind and solar, and providing electricity to large industrial customers in the rail, mining and LNG sectors.

Find out more about Powerlink, visit powerlink.com.au or scan the QR code.

