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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | AUGUST 2024

Calvale to Calliope River Transmission Line Reinforcement Project



MANAGING BIOSECURITY

We understand that biosecurity is a priority for the Gladstone and Banana Shire communities.

These Frequently Asked Questions have been developed to provide landholders with information about Powerlink's systems and processes for managing biosecurity risk, including avoiding the spread of weeds.

Why is it important to manage biosecurity?

Powerlink owns, builds, operates and maintains the high voltage electricity transmission network in Queensland. To build and maintain this critical infrastructure, our workers and contractors are required to access properties and transmission line easements in vehicles and machinery, and travel between various locations.

We understand that biosecurity risks can severely impact Queensland's agriculture industry, environment, livestock and livelihoods. We take biosecurity seriously and have processes in place to avoid spreading weeds, pathogens and diseases between properties or introducing new biosecurity material from outside the local bioregion.

What is the 'general biosecurity obligation'?

Powerlink has a responsibility to minimise the risk of our activities introducing pest animals, weeds and animal and plant diseases, on private or public land. The *Biosecurity Act 2014* requires everyone to minimise risks associated with invasive plants and animals under their control. This is called a 'general biosecurity obligation'. Powerlink complies with the *Biosecurity Act* and takes action to ensure our activities do not introduce or spread weeds, pathogens and diseases.

What is Powerlink's approach to vehicle wash downs?

Powerlink conducts regular wash downs to reduce the risk of spreading weeds, as well as soil-borne pests and diseases and has dedicated wash down facilities across our transmission network. Our people and contractors are trained to know when and how to conduct vehicle wash downs and comply with the following:

- complete the national standard training, 'Inspect and clean machinery of plant, animal and soil material' (AHC BIO201A), on projects or locations where there is a high biosecurity risk
- comply with the Queensland Government inspection and wash down procedures
- only carry out wash downs at designated locations
- complete a Biosecurity Declaration Form after completing a wash down and before accessing the next property or biosecurity zone.

Does Powerlink keep wash down records?

Wash down records are kept with vehicles and machinery. Landholders can inspect these records on request when we enter a property, and with advance notice, we can also provide a copy of these records.

What if there are no suitable wash down facilities?

Powerlink workers have access to Biosecurity Toolkits to manage risks on properties with specific entry requirements, or in areas without suitable wash down facilities. These toolkits contain several items including brushes, disinfectant, detergent, garbage bags, containers, and gloves for individuals to use for biosecurity clean downs.

What other measures do we take to minimise exposure to weeds?

We take preventative measures to minimise exposure to weeds, such as:

- avoiding travel through areas heavily affected by biosecurity matter
- visiting clean areas first, before travelling to affected areas
- staying on roads and designated access tracks in work areas
- obtaining weed and seed declarations on any fill material brought onto a property.

How does Powerlink work with landholders to manage biosecurity risk?

Powerlink will work with landholders to identify biosecurity risks on each property. We discuss biosecurity and weed management with landholders during our initial meetings. This helps us understand any biosecurity risks and develop appropriate management measures to avoid spreading weeds, diseases and pathogens.

We value our long-term, working relationships with landholders, and maintain communication about biosecurity from the planning phase through to construction, operation and maintenance. Our Land Access Protocol provides information on the standards and commitments we adhere to when accessing properties, including for biosecurity management. You can view information on the Land Access Protocol on our Powerlink website.

How does Powerlink consider biosecurity at every project stage?

Transmission projects have multiple levels of governance for managing biosecurity risks. A Biosecurity Management Plan is developed early and is part of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP). The EMP outlines Powerlink's key controls (e.g. biosecurity protocols and vegetation management strategies) to minimise the spread of biosecurity material as part of our activities.

The EMP is submitted to the Minister responsible for planning as part of project approvals and is subject to formal public consultation. Once approved, the EMP feeds into the Health, Safety and Environment Specification for contractors, to ensure on-site workers are aware of obligations and commitments.

For ongoing easement access and maintenance, biosecurity requirements are documented in an Environmental Works Plan (EWP). The EWP is the main tool for identifying biosecurity risks at Powerlink sites on a property. It is developed in consultation with each landholder and displays all known biosecurity considerations for a location, and any access requirements or constraints.

Powerlink employees and contractors are made aware of biosecurity risks and are provided maps and training to ensure they understand procedures and obligations for site visits.

Figure 1 below shows how biosecurity is considered at every stage.



Figure 1 Biosecurity at every stage

Will weed surveys be undertaken?

Prior to construction, Powerlink undertakes ecological surveys to identify environmental risks, and develops control measures in consultation with landholders. This includes pre-construction weed surveys to identify weeds on and near areas to be accessed during construction. This information is used to develop project-specific biosecurity requirements for the construction phase.

Surveys are also conducted at the end of construction, after the first wet season, to identify any impacts of construction activities on weeds. Any changes are managed in consultation with landholders. Information from the post-construction survey feeds into strategies for managing biosecurity risks during ongoing maintenance works.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For enquiries about Powerlink and our biosecurity practices, please call 1800 635 369 (Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 5pm) and ask for Landholder Relations or email LandholderRelations@powerlink.com.au.

If you would like to know more about how to control and manage the spread of weeds within Queensland, contact the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on 13 25 23.

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.

