

Media Release

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Essential Energy reviews power outages

As NSW adjusts to the impact of COVID-19, regional electricity distributor Essential Energy is asking for the community's understanding to help complete critical maintenance work to ensure a safe and reliable power supply for customers.

Essential Energy CEO John Cleland said "We understand that many of our customers are at home and that power outages at this time can be really inconvenient.

"Essential Energy is reviewing every task to minimise the spread of Covid-19 while ensuring critical work to maintain the power supply continues. Some outages that are required to support the operation of critical infrastructure such as hospitals, nursing homes, telecommunications and NBN will go ahead.

"If we do not complete maintenance work, the risk of unplanned outages increases. It is critical that risks to supply are minimised, particularly to facilities involved in the response to COVID-19. We also need to connect new infrastructure to support people working from home," said Mr Cleland.

Mr Cleland also asked people to consider Essential Energy's employees.

"Please remember our employees are working to provide safe and reliable electricity, as well as dealing with many of the additional pressures that others in the community are facing. We'd also like to remind the community that as an essential service, our employees are exempt from the limitation of no more than two people together at the one time."

"We would like to reassure the community that our primary goal in our response to this COVID-19 crisis is to protect the health and wellbeing our community and our employees."

Essential Energy has consulted with national and state health bodies, engaged the advice of a Chief Medical Officer, and with staff and unions to develop comprehensive rules for working together and with members of the public during this time.

Essential Energy is working with energy retailers to support customers through the COVID-19 pandemic, and customers who find themselves concerned about energy bills are encouraged to contact their energy retailer directly in the first instance.

FACT FILE:

- **Essential Energy builds, operates and maintains one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks, servicing 855,000 customers across regional, rural and remote NSW.**
- **Our footprint covers 95 percent of NSW, traversing 737,000 square kilometres of landmass with 183,612 km of powerline, 163,417 of those in designated bushfire zones.**
- **The network services more than 855,000 customers with approximately 4.6 customers to each kilometre of powerline, which is almost one-tenth the customer density compared with our counterparts in NSW.**
- **Essential Energy's footprint also includes 1.38 million power poles, equating to 1.6 power poles per customer.**
- **Essential Energy is proud to be the 2019 winner of the Australian Apprentices – Employer Award.**

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