

A message from Customer Connections



Dear ASP1,

Customer Connections within Ausgrid brings together teams involved in the end-to-end connections process. In response to your valuable feedback captured over the last few years, Customer Connections has launched a major program of reform called the Connections Excellence Program, which is focused on delivering an easier, faster and better value connections experience.

Our first release is planned to go live on 13 September 2024. This General Information notice is to advise you of the upcoming improvements.

What are we doing?

To address some of the customer identified pain points captured over the last three years, and to start to work towards a more seamless connections experience, we are making a number of changes aimed at streamlining aspects of our processes. The ASP1 Working Group has been consulted on these changes.

These include:

1. Advancing the pre-construction meeting into the Design stage of the connections journey, with the aim to expedite project timelines, reduce energisation timeframes, reduce re-design work, improve constructability, and provide greater accuracy in our estimations with less variations.
2. Introducing two new project statuses - Ready For Tender (RFT) and Ready For Construction (RFC – previously known as Certified). The design will be updated with a watermark indicating it has been certified as Ready for Tender. Once certified as Ready For Construction, a Ready for Construction number will be appended to the design title block. More information on these statuses are in the attached information pack.
3. A number of enhancements to the Customer Connections Portal:
 - › Digitising the pre-construction meeting request process, enabling the ASP1 project managers to request a pre-construction meeting via the Connections Portal.
 - › Submission of critical dates for review and acceptance via the Portal, removing the need for the Project Planning Form (PPF).

- › Automated email notifications to the customer, with scheduled auto-reminders to provide property related documentation to Ausgrid prior to electrification outages.
- › Enhancing the Outage Request process to enable ASP1s to upload their on-the-day outage documentation to the Portal.

What other improvements are we working on?

We are busy working on some other improvements that we will implement later in FY25:

1. We are untangling the complexity of our connection contracts for our customers. This will deliver greater simplicity and reduce the administrative burden on our customers.
2. We have undertaken a discovery process and are working on a design for a Shared Performance Program initially for ASP1s and ASP3s that shifts Ausgrid from a purely non-conformance management model, to a model that incentivises and rewards ASP1s and ASP3s for delivering high quality outputs and demonstrating good performance. Implementation is planned for later in FY25. Further details can be found in the information pack attached.

What does this mean for ASP1s?

The advancement of the preconstruction meeting will require earlier ASP1 involvement, which means the customer will need to initiate the tendering process once Ausgrid has certified the design as Ready For Tender (RFT) to the ASP3, for the purpose of ASP1 tendering and nomination. Final certification as Ready For Construction will be subject to the pre-construction meeting.

ASP1s will continue to coordinate the preconstruction meeting with all relevant parties. There is no change to the roles and responsibilities of all involved in the pre-construction meeting.

ASP1s will now have direct input into the design finalisation process through the pre-construction meeting, to minimise construction delays and the risk of redesign or variations.

The system enhancements will digitise manual tasks, resulting in a more streamlined process for ASP1s.

As per ES4 Accredited Service Provider Authorisation, the ASP3 or a suitable alternative representative of the ASP3 must attend the pre-construction meeting in person.

What do you need to do?

At the moment there is no requirement to do anything. However, the updating of design contracts from 13 September will require all stakeholders to temporarily operate under

both the current and new process, depending on when contracts were issued and offers accepted:

- **Current process:** All current contracts issued and offers accepted prior to 13 September 2024 will continue to operate with no changes under the current processes.
- **New process:** All contracts issued and offers accepted after 13 September 2024 will adopt these improvements.
- **Offered and not accepted:** For Projects with design contract offers issued prior to 13 September 2024, should the offer expire without acceptance, any new Design contract offer issued on that project will include the new process provisions.

How will we be supporting you?

A suite of support material will help you navigate these improvements. Details on where you can access these will be provided in further communications closer to the launch date. However, please find attached the following information to assist you:

- An information pack
- A Frequently Asked Questions document
- A Customer Information Sheet to help inform your customers on the upcoming changes, and what this means for them.

Should you have any further questions, please contact the team on connex@ausgrid.com.au.

Kind regards

Customer Connections