



# Pesticide Use Notification Plan

May 2021



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### DOCUMENT AND AMENDMENT HISTORY

<b>Issue No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
1	January 2007	Environmental Services Manager	This is the first edition.
2	September 2015	Environmental Services Manager	Minor amendments to reflect changes to Pesticide Regulation 2009 and the Pesticides Amendment Act 2015, The amendments are not of sufficient substance to warrant public consultation
3	May 2021	Environmental Services Manager	Updated references to Pesticide Regulation 2017

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# 1 Introduction

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This pesticide use notification plan (the plan) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Pesticides Regulation 2017 (the Regulation).

The aim of this plan is to address the community's general right to know about pesticide applications made to public places that are wholly or partly owned or controlled by Ausgrid. This plan does not address applications of pesticides to privately held lands. There is an existing process in place for notifying of these applications.

In this plan, the term 'pesticides' is a generic reference to products used to control any type of pests. Pesticides include herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, termiticides and rodenticides (for more details refer to Section 7 Definitions).

The plan allows members of the community to take action, if they wish, to avoid contact with pesticides in situations where a contact risk is assessed as reasonably possible. Ausgrid applies pesticides to public places in a safe, responsible manner, minimising harm to the community or the environment.

The plan sets out, in respect of accessible public places, how Ausgrid will notify members of the community of pesticide applications and also, where notification of certain applications will not be made by Ausgrid.

The plan describes:

- what public places are covered by the plan
- who regularly uses these public places and an estimate of the level of use
- how and when Ausgrid will provide the community with information about its pesticide applications in public places (ie what notification arrangements will be used)
- what notification arrangements will be used for pesticide applications in public places that are located adjacent to sensitive places
- how the community can access this plan and get more information about Ausgrid's notification arrangements
- how future reviews of the plan will be conducted
- contact details for anyone wishing to discuss this plan with Ausgrid.
- situations where Ausgrid will be using pesticides in public places and will not be notifying the public.

This plan will be reviewed every five years, or as required.

## 1.1 Ausgrid's network

Ausgrid's network connects more than 1.8 million customers across a network franchise supply area spanning 22,275km<sup>2</sup> - from Waterfall in Sydney's south, over to Auburn in the west of Sydney, to the Upper Hunter Valley in the north.

Ausgrid's operations include:

- around 50 administration and depot premises
- more than half a million power poles
- over 30,000 substations
- almost 50,000 km of underground and overhead cable.

Figure 1: Ausgrid's supply network



## 1.2 Ausgrid's pest management programs

Ausgrid's pest management programs aim to apply best practice in pesticide usage, so that there are minimal adverse impacts upon the environment. Ausgrid, or our qualified contractors, use pesticides when necessary to control pests, to protect public property (including electrical infrastructure) from pest damage, and to protect the users of public places from nuisance or danger from pests, or danger from damaged public property.

The majority of pesticide use by, or on behalf of, Ausgrid consists of application by hand of:

- solid fungicides during timber pole inspections
- selective and non-selective herbicides (preference is given to use of selective herbicides where applicable) for weed control and occasionally for vegetation regrowth control
- insecticides to manage certain insect pests, such as termites.

Ausgrid does not carry out broad scale spraying of pesticides (eg large scale applications of pesticides using aerial spraying or boom spray equipment).

Bait, powder and liquid insecticides are used for termite control to protect timber structures, whenever this is considered an effective solution. This also improves public and employee safety.

Ausgrid also uses moderate quantities of pesticides that are widely available in retail outlets and ordinarily used for domestic purposes, including home gardening. This includes herbicides (such as Roundup), aerosol insecticides for wasps, ants, spiders, cockroaches, etc, and rodenticide baits for mice and rats.

Some pesticide applications are done as part of routine maintenance programs. The frequency of programmed pesticide applications depends upon seasonal growth conditions. Typically, the frequency ranges from a one to a four year cycle for pole inspection and treatment, and noxious weed and vegetation regrowth control. Other pesticide applications are on an as-needed basis.

Further information on Ausgrid's pesticide use can be obtained by calling Ausgrid's Call Centre on 13 13 65 or by visiting the website **[www.ausgrid.com.au](http://www.ausgrid.com.au)**

## 2 Public places covered by this Plan

Ausgrid proposes to use or allow the use of pesticides in the following categories of prescribed public places within Ausgrid's network area, wherever Ausgrid's assets are situated.

Ausgrid's estimate of the level of community use, and regular user groups for each of these public place categories is summarised in the following table.

*Table 1: Public places used or controlled by Ausgrid*

Prescribed public place	Regular user groups	Level of use
<b>Public parks, gardens, playgrounds, picnic areas</b>	Children, Adults, Elderly, Workers	High
<b>Schools and TAFEs (excluding building interiors)</b>	Students, Workers, Visitors	High
<b>Sporting fields, ovals and golf courses</b>	Sporting clubs, School groups, General recreation, Golfers, Visitors, Workers	High
<b>Road verges, reserves, footpaths, laneways and pathways</b>	Local residents, Visitors	Medium
<b>Easements accessible to the public (including National Parks or other lands reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, State forests or Crown lands)</b>	Local residents, Visitors, Workers	Medium to low
<b>Interiors of certain Ausgrid buildings and within depot grounds</b>	General public, Workers	Low

Ausgrid's notification arrangements consider situations where pesticides are applied in public places that are located adjacent to sensitive places. Adjacent is defined as being within 20 metres of the boundary of a sensitive place.

Sensitive places are:

- Schools, pre-schools and kindergartens
- Childcare centres
- Hospitals
- Community health centres
- Nursing homes

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) can declare additional places to be sensitive places by publication of a notice in the Government Gazette. Ausgrid will review the plan in light of the gazettal of any additional sensitive places.

Sites not covered by this plan include private land, publicly inaccessible Ausgrid buildings or depots, substations, switching stations or communication sites.

### 3 Notification arrangements

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This section of the plan describes how and when Ausgrid will provide notice of pesticide use in public places.

These notification arrangements are based on Ausgrid's assessment of:

- the level of usage of public places where pesticides may be used
- the extent to which members of the public who are most likely to be sensitive to pesticides (e.g. young children, sick, pregnant and elderly people) are likely to use these areas regularly
- the extent to which activities generally undertaken in these areas by the public could lead to some direct contact with pesticides
- the types of pesticide used
- where, how and in what quantities they are applied
- where the pesticides reside once they are applied
- the resulting public accessibility to the pesticides and the consequent contact risk to the public.

Notice of pesticide use will be provided by notification letters and/or signs displayed at the site during application and/or information on Ausgrid's website.

In public areas where multiple agencies have individual responsibility for land management (in this case pesticide application), and where there are no physical or visible boundaries, the agency undertaking the pesticide application will follow their own Pesticide Notification Plan. This will include any incidental pesticide applications in areas that are controlled by other agencies.

The following table sets out the notification arrangements for Ausgrid's pesticide applications.

Table 2: Notification arrangements for Ausgrid’s pesticide applications

Prescribed public place	Type of pesticide use								
	Timber pole treatment					Vegetation control	Equipment	Insects	Rodents
	Hand application of solid or paste fungicide inside pole and around pole base, beneath the soil	Hand painted application of liquid fungicide to treat damaged areas of CCA* treated poles	Hand application of liquid residual termiticide to soil immediately around pole base	Hand application of solid bait termiticide inside protective cover mounted on pole	Hand application of dust termiticide inside pole or inside termite gallery on the pole	Spot or spray application by hand of liquid herbicide to vegetation, including painting stumps of cut vegetation	Hand application of aerosol insecticide spray to pole top equipment and substation cabinets	Hand application of aerosol insecticide spray to floors, walls, cupboards, etc	Hand application of solid rodenticide baits
Public parks and gardens	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	■	■	⊙	N/A	N/A
Playgrounds	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	■	■	⊙	N/A	N/A
Picnic areas	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	■	■	⊙	N/A	N/A
Sporting fields, ovals and golf courses	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	■	■	⊙	N/A	N/A
Road verges, reserves, footpaths, laneways and pathways	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	N/A	N/A
Easements accessible to the public (including National Parks etc, State forests or Crown lands)	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	N/A	N/A
Schools and TAFEs (excluding building interiors)	⊙	⊙	■	⊙	■	■	⊙	N/A	N/A
Interiors of certain Ausgrid buildings and within depot grounds	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Within or adjacent to sensitive places	⊙	⊙	■ and ★	⊙	■	■ and ★	⊙	N/A	N/A

■ - Notice by display of signage during the pesticide application.    ⊙ - No specific notice will be given    N/A – Not applicable.

★ - When applying liquid pesticides outdoors, sensitive places must be notified 5 days prior to application as outlined in Section 3.1.

\* Copper Chrome Arsenic (a common wood preservative).

### **3.1 Pesticide application adjacent to sensitive places**

Prior to outdoor application of a liquid pesticide (ie spray or injecting liquid pesticide into the ground) within 20 metres of a sensitive place property boundary, Ausgrid will provide five days advance written notice to the sensitive place. The notice will be via letter box drop, email or delivery in person and contain the information outlined in Section 4.

### **3.2 Emergency pesticide applications**

In cases where emergency pesticide applications in public places are required to deal with biting or dangerous pests such as wasps, bees, venomous spiders, fleas, bird mites or rodents (that pose an immediate health hazard), Ausgrid will, where possible, provide notice by posting signs nearby at the time of the application. If this is not possible, Ausgrid will provide information following a request from the public, via the person applying the pesticide.

When emergency pesticide application is required adjacent to a sensitive place, Ausgrid will notify the sensitive place prior to application of the pesticide and provide the specific circumstances of the emergency pesticide application.

### **3.3 Pesticide contractors and lessees of public places**

Where Ausgrid uses contractors to apply pesticides on its behalf, Ausgrid will check that notification by contractors is made in accordance with the notification requirements of this plan.

Where persons or organisations hold an existing lease on Ausgrid land that remains a public place and if they use pesticides in this area, Ausgrid will still require notification in accordance with the requirements of this plan.

### **3.4 When notification will not be provided**

With the exception of liquid applications adjacent to a sensitive place outlined in section 3.1 and unless stated otherwise elsewhere in this plan, Ausgrid does not intend to provide site-specific notice for the following pesticide applications:

- Timber pole treatment:
  - hand application of solid or paste fungicide inside the pole and around the pole base, beneath the soil
  - hand painted application of liquid fungicide to treat damaged areas of CCA treated poles
  - hand application of liquid residual termiticide to soil immediately around the pole base (in non-sensitive areas or areas with relatively low public access)
  - hand application of solid bait termiticide inside a protective cover mounted on the pole
  - hand application of dust termiticide inside the pole or inside the termite gallery on the pole (in non-sensitive areas or areas with relatively low public access).
- Hand application of aerosol insecticide spray to pole top equipment and substation cabinets.
- Hand application of aerosol insecticide spray to floors, walls, cupboards, etc
- Hand application of solid rodenticide baits.

In general, notice for these applications will not be provided because:

- the pesticide is non-toxic to people, and/or
- the opportunity for contact with the public during application is negligible - there are no fumes, vapours, mists or spray drifts, and/or
- the pesticides are not reasonably accessible following application as they are contained within the timber poles, and/or
- the applications occur in non-sensitive areas or areas with relatively low public access.

As a rule, the amount of pesticides used for each treatment of an Ausgrid timber power pole is small. All pesticides are applied by competent trained and licensed employees or contractors who are qualified in accordance with the Regulation. All timber pole treatments are recorded in Ausgrid's asset management system and information about individual treatments can be accessed if required.

Application of solid and/or paste fungicide occurs either within the pole itself and/or around the pole base beneath the soil. The solid fungicides are either small rods (about the size, shape and consistency of a big piece of blackboard chalk) placed inside holes drilled into the timber poles (the holes are plugged afterwards) or small pellets of the same material contained inside a plastic bubblewrap bandage that is wrapped around the base of the pole below ground level. The pesticide uses naturally occurring mineral salts to control rot in the timber. The paste is injected into any holes in the timber and is also wrapped on a bandage around the pole base, all below ground level.

Application of liquid fungicide paint to damaged CCA poles occurs by hand using a paint brush and typically uses several teaspoons of paint to scarred areas of a timber pole beneath the damaged CCA treated sapwood. This is done to repair mechanical damage from car accidents and the like. The paint is absorbed into the timber fibres and dries quickly.

Application of solid bait termiticide is done by hand and involves placing two sealed plastic bags of termiticide inside a protective container secured and sealed to the timber pole. The container cover is secured using tamper-resistant fixings and is sealed against weather ingress

Application by hand of aerosol insecticides occurs on pole top equipment or inside the locked cabinets of ground level substations to remove insect pests such as wasps, spiders or ants that could potentially pose a threat to employees or contractors who need to work on the equipment, or possibly to members of the public in the vicinity of the equipment. These insecticides are those typically available to the general public and are applied to a very localised area with no general access to the public.

Application by hand of aerosol insecticides spray and rodenticide baits inside Ausgrid buildings and Depots is typically done outside of business hours to reduce potential risks to employees or to the public (in those limited areas accessible to the public).

Spot weed control or cut stump applications inside Ausgrid Depots and open substation yards is done by hand using domestically available pesticides and typically occurs in areas not accessible to the public. Additionally, the pesticides are not applied immediately before, during, or immediately after rain or in periods of windy weather.

## 4 What information will be provided

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In accordance with clause 41 of the Regulation, notices of pesticide use must include **all** the following information:

- the full product name of the pesticide to be used
- the purpose for which the pesticide is to be used
- the dates on which, or the range of dates during which, the pesticide is to be used
- the places where the pesticide is to be used
- any warnings about limitations on the subsequent use of or entry onto the land if such warnings are specified on the approved label for the pesticide or in the permit for use of the pesticide
- a contact telephone number or email address for the appropriate nominated Ausgrid officer or contractor whom the affected persons can contact to discuss the notice.

Signs will be easily recognisable to the public and workers.

Safety Data Sheets will be provided for any pesticide used as soon as practicable following the request.

Ausgrid's website will have a link to this notification plan.

## 5 Community consultation

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A pesticide use notification plan may be amended by another and must comply with clauses 42 and 43 of the Regulation unless Ausgrid considers on reasonable grounds that the amendment is not of sufficient substance to warrant public consultation.

For any future major revisions of the plan, Ausgrid will advise the public of the plan by:

- making a copy of the plan available for public viewing free of charge in Ausgrid's main offices, during office hours, at:
  - a) 24-28 Campbell Street, Sydney
  - b) 145 Newcastle Road, Wallsend
- placing a copy of the plan on the Ausgrid website at [www.ausgrid.com.au](http://www.ausgrid.com.au).

Comments on the plan, or any future major revisions of the plan, will be received and considered for a period of four weeks after publication of the notice on Ausgrid's website. The publication of this notice signifies the start of the community consultation period. Only written or emailed comments can be considered, sent to the contact details listed in Section 6, or as otherwise specified on the website.

## 6 Contact details

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Anyone wishing to contact Ausgrid to discuss the notification plan or to obtain details of specific details of pesticide applications in public places should contact:

James Hart  
 Manager - Environmental Services  
 GPO Box 4009  
 Sydney NSW 2001  
 02 9394 6659  
 Email: [environmentalservices@ausgrid.com.au](mailto:environmentalservices@ausgrid.com.au)

## 7 Definitions

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- CCA** Copper Chrome Arsenic (a common wood preservative).
- Pesticide:** Any substance or mixture of substances used to destroy, suppress or alter the life cycle of any pest. A pesticide can be a naturally derived or synthetically produced substance. Pesticides include, but are not limited to, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, termiticides and rodenticides. Under the NSW *Pesticides Act 1999*, a pesticide is an 'agricultural chemical product' as defined in the Commonwealth *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994*, namely: 'a substance or mixture of substances that is represented, imported, manufactured, supplied or used as a means of directly or indirectly:
- (a) destroying, stupefying, repelling, inhibiting the feeding of, or preventing infestation by or attacks of, any pest in relation to a plant, a place or a thing; or
  - (b) destroying a plant; or
  - (c) modifying the physiology of a plant or pest so as to alter its natural development, productivity, quality or reproductive capacity; or
  - (d) modifying an effect of another agricultural chemical product; or
  - (e) attracting a pest for the purpose of destroying it.'
- Herbicide:** These destroy, suppress or prevent the spread of a weed or other unwanted vegetation; for example, the herbicide glyphosate (eg Roundup) is used to control a range of weeds in home gardens, bushland and agricultural situations.
- Insecticide:** These destroy, suppress, stupefy, inhibit the feeding of, or prevent infestations or attacks by, an insect. Insecticides are used to control a wide variety of insect pests, including thrips, aphids, moths, fruit flies and locusts. In NSW, pesticides include products such as flea powders and liquids used externally on animals. Injections or other medicines administered internally to treat animals are veterinary medicines and are excluded.
- Fungicide:** These control, destroy, render ineffective or regulate the effect of a fungus; for example, fungicides are used to treat grey mould on grape vines and fruit trees.
- Termiticide:** Insecticide used to control termites.
- Rodenticide:** Pesticide used in the control or eradication of rodents such as mice and rats