

# Interflow manages essential employee safety

While COVID-19 is forcing many Australians to stay home, plenty are still working in the field to ensure essential services such as water and wastewater continue to function. To meet these needs while ensuring employee safety, water infrastructure specialist Interflow has adapted its operations.

In the wake of the pandemic, operations at work sites have changed dramatically and essential service businesses have had to quickly adapt to restrictions and incorporate new methods, while guaranteeing customers and employees remain safe – and ensuring business continuity.

As a lot of companies tackle this uncharted territory, Interflow has recognised that adaptability and communication are emerging as the best way forward.

## Interflow's quick risk response

Interflow Executive Manager Health and Safety Adrian Smith says the company reacted immediately when the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in February 2020 and swiftly put enterprise risk management plans in place.

“COVID-19 has created significant changes to the way we work,” says Mr Smith.

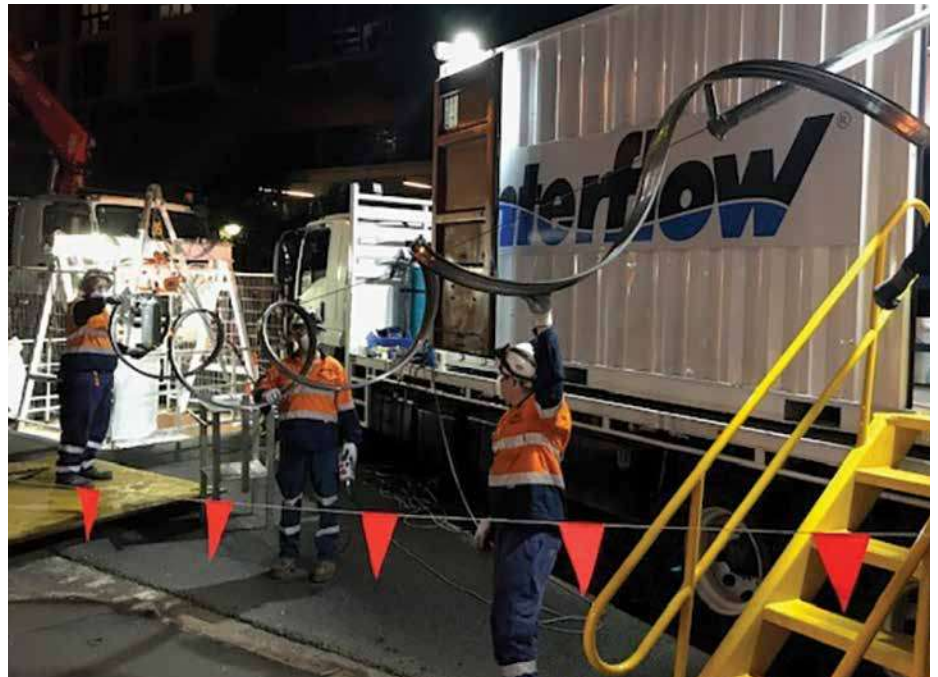
“We’ve implemented a business continuity plan with five response teams to identify and resolve critical issues around workforce protection, supply chain stabilisation, customer engagement, operational lead and lag management and stress testing financials.”

Interflow is using similar parameters within its current health and safety strategy, titled Harm 2 Zero (H20), with the new response teams meeting twice a week to discuss any issues and actions that need to be taken. Mr Smith says the company’s executive team has become the nerve centre of its COVID-19 response.

## Employee safety steps in the field

The additional safety and procedural policies that Interflow is implementing include social distancing, which involves rethinking the way crews work; reinforcing hygiene by providing COVID-19-appropriate level of PPE for workers; ensuring current signage across all sites; and providing teams the right information so they understand all new company procedures.

“We’re currently developing a second communication pack for workers, with updated rules of engagement, and every week our Managing Director creates a video message to



To ensure services can continue to run for customers, Interflow workers are practicing social distancing even while onsite.



Interflow has altered its operations to ensure the safety of the community and its essential workers.

all employees,” says Mr Smith.

“In this current situation, we are classed as essential and the most important thing is having our field teams across the details of what we are doing to manage this crisis.”

Interflow says open communication has been key to the company’s response, with a focus on using appropriate channels to disseminate updates. The business also ensures information cascades to all frontline workers and any issues from work sites also filter back up to management.

The company says an example of this success was demonstrated on a recent ACT project, when a client visited a site to talk with frontline workers and enquire about what Interflow has been doing during the pandemic.

All workers onsite knew exactly what additional safety and procedural policies had been put in place and were able to provide the client a consistent message, highlighting that the pandemic response isn’t just a high-level strategy but something that has been implemented throughout the entire business.



Interflow Executive Manager Health and Safety Adrian Smith says the new safety measures and protocols have been well received.

**Understanding the issue to respond in unity**

With a workforce spanning Australia and New Zealand, Interflow has also been keeping on top of all health and government changes both nationally and in specific regions to ensure the business remains compliant.

Interflow says its aim is for these new safety procedures is to become routine as it anticipates the impact of COVID-19 will be felt for at least the next few months.



Interflow essential workers have begun wearing increased safety gear when working on site.

“Our clients see us as a valuable business partner – as an essential function to assist with their continuity,” says Mr Smith.

“We’re here to solve our customers’ problems, we’re able to adapt, and our response to COVID-19 has allowed us to connect as one team quickly and efficiently.”

Interflow will be conducting a post-implementation review once its operations return to normal. So far, the response has allowed the company to capture key information surrounding what has worked and what has not, which will provide vital learnings for the future. ●

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