

Genex Kidston Connection Project

Ministerial Infrastructure Designation Assessment Report Release



NOVEMBER 2021

About Powerlink

Powerlink is a leading provider of electricity transmission services, delivering safe, cost effective and reliable network solutions. Our transmission network extends 1,700 kilometres from north of Cairns to the New South Wales border.

Our purpose is to connect Queenslanders to a world-class energy future, providing electricity to five million Queenslanders and 238,000 businesses. We are centrally placed to help guide the market towards a power system for the future. Our focus is on effectively balancing customer needs, while moving to a low carbon future comprising a diverse array of generation technologies, batteries and storage solutions, new grid technologies and demand management.

About the Kidston Clean Energy Hub

Genex Power Limited (Genex) is developing the Kidston Clean Energy Hub, a combination solar and hydro pumped storage power generation facility at Kidston, approximately 270km northwest of Townsville. This facility is proposed to connect to the National Electricity Market via a new 275kV electricity transmission line and switching station, collectively referred to as the Genex Kidston Connection Project (for more information visit www.genexpower.com.au). Powerlink has been engaged by Genex to deliver this electrical infrastructure project.

Key points

- We thank all directly affected landholders, including local Traditional Owner groups, for their ongoing assistance and involvement in meetings to discuss the Genex Kidston Connection Project and property-specific considerations.
- Comprehensive on-ground investigations and works to date have included environmental, cadastral and Cultural Heritage surveys, and tower surveys and pegging.
- **Following this engagement and technical research, the Ministerial Infrastructure Designation Assessment Report (MIDAR) for the connection project has been submitted to the Queensland Government Planning Minister for planning approval and has now been publicly released for review and comment.**
- The MIDAR identifies the preferred alignment for the transmission line and preferred switching station location at Mount Fox.
- **Submissions on the document are welcome by close of business on Wednesday 22 December 2021.**
- **We invite you to attend local community information drop-in sessions about the project and assessment report, being held during December 2021.**
- We are continuing to negotiate with directly affected landholders about compensation and easement arrangements.
- We have established formal Cultural Heritage Management Agreements with relevant Aboriginal parties and have been discussing our approach to address Native Title with the Native Title Holders.
- We are concurrently seeking environmental approval for the connection project from the Australian Government.
- No final decisions on the transmission infrastructure's location will be made until all required approvals have been achieved. We will continue to keep landholders and other stakeholders informed.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: FREECALL 1800 635 369 | www.powerlink.com.au



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About the MIDAR

The MIDAR for the Genex Kidston Connection Project is now available for public review and comment. The report has been submitted to the Queensland Government Planning Minister for approval under the *Planning Act 2016*. The report is a public document and can be accessed in several ways:

- electronic copies have been provided to potentially directly-affected landholders and other stakeholders
- download a full copy (chapter-by-chapter) from Powerlink's website at www.powerlink.com.au/genex-kidston
- printed copies can be viewed at the Greenvale Post Office, Hinchinbrook Shire Council's Customer Service Centre at Ingham, Charters Towers Regional Council's Administration Centre at Charters Towers, and Etheridge Shire Council's Shire Office at Georgetown
- copies will be available for viewing at community information drop-in sessions
- request a USB or printed copy by email at pqenquiries@powerlink.com.au or FREECALL 1800 635 369.

The MIDAR was prepared by environmental specialist AECOM, through a process that involved extensive engagement with landholders and other stakeholders, environmental and technical assessments and a comprehensive review of the connection project's Draft Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) which was released in September 2018.

The preferred alignment for the transmission line and preferred switching station location at Mount Fox are identified in the MIDAR. The alignment is predominantly co-located with existing Ergon Energy powerlines where possible. Most of the 186km preferred alignment is the same as the draft alignment shown in the Draft EAR. About three kilometres of the preferred alignment differs from the draft alignment. These proposed changes occur at the eastern and western ends of the preferred alignment following recent landholder engagement and technical investigations.

The MIDAR identifies the potential environmental, economic and social impacts of the project, and how those impacts can be mitigated or managed, across the whole lifecycle of the infrastructure where possible. The report concludes that provided Powerlink implements the recommendations outlined in the MIDAR and associated Environmental Management Plans, there are no social, environmental or economic factors that would prevent the connection project from proceeding.

Making a submission on the MIDAR

Formal submissions on the MIDAR are now invited and must be received in writing by the Planning Minister by close of business on Wednesday 22 December 2021.

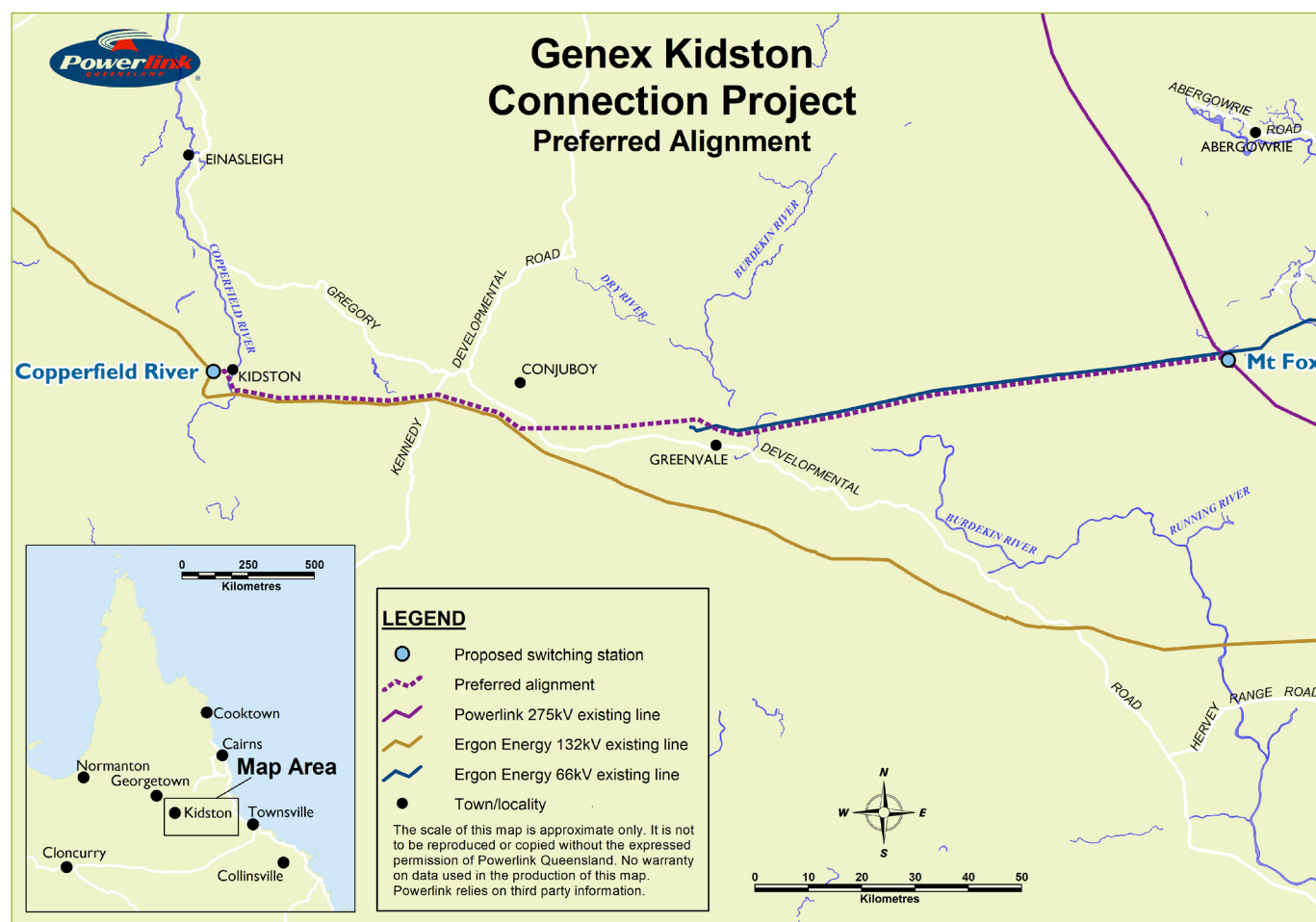
Submissions can be lodged in several ways:

- using the electronic form located at <https://planning.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/planning-framework/infrastructure-planning/infrastructure-designations>
- emailing infrastructuredesignation@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au
- posting to PO Box 15009, City East, QLD, 4002.

Landholders and other stakeholders are welcome to make a submission on any of the topics in the MIDAR. As a guide, the table below lists topics often raised by landholders during engagement and where to find information on these topics in the report.

Topics frequently raised by landholders	Related sections of the MIDAR
Bushfire risk	Chapter 22
Biosecurity	Chapter 12
Compensation	Chapters 3 and 15
Engagement with landholders	Chapter 28
Flora and fauna	Chapters 9 and 10
Local benefits from the project	Chapter 3
Potential impacts to property operations	Chapter 13
Roads and transport	Chapter 18

Preferred alignment



Community information drop-in sessions

Landholders, other stakeholders and interested members of the community are invited to attend community information drop-in sessions. These sessions are an opportunity to discuss details of the connection project and the MIDAR with members of our project team, including representatives from Powerlink and AECOM.

Community information drop-in sessions		
Venue and location	Date	Drop-in time
Mount Fox Campground opposite Mount Fox State School. 2957 Mount Fox Road, Mount Fox.	Tuesday 7 December 2021	9am to 12pm
Powerlink Project Office, Greenvale Progress Association Building. 2 Acacia Drive, Greenvale.	Wednesday 8 December 2021	9am to 12pm
Oasis Roadhouse, The Lynd. Kennedy Developmental Road, Conjuboy.	Thursday 9 December 2021	9am to 12pm

Next steps

Planning approval is required before a decision will be made about the final alignment for the proposed transmission line and the switching station location.

Current status:

- Powerlink has submitted the MIDAR to the Queensland Government's Planning Minister seeking planning approval.
- Formal consultation on the MIDAR is being undertaken by the Planning Minister and Powerlink is also inviting submissions on the MIDAR.
- Powerlink is negotiating to seek a compensation settlement with each directly affected landholder.
- Powerlink will be negotiating Indigenous Land Use Agreements with the relevant representatives of the Native Title Holders.

Upcoming activities:

- The Planning Minister will review all submissions on the MIDAR and provide Powerlink with information about matters raised. Powerlink will review this information, undertake any required additional investigations and respond by outlining what (if any) changes have been made to the proposed connection project.
- The Planning Minister will assess the MIDAR and consider all submissions. If approval is granted, the decision will be published in the Queensland Government Gazette and notification will be provided to directly affected landholders, relevant local governments and Powerlink.
- Powerlink will continue to work with directly affected landholders to seek a voluntary negotiated compensation settlement to acquire easements for the transmission line.
- Powerlink will engage with landholders and other stakeholders to provide details about construction work, property-specific issues and how impacts will be managed or reduced, before vegetation management and other construction activities begin.



Compensation

If the connection project proceeds, compensation will be payable to landholders whose properties are traversed by the transmission line easements.

Wherever possible, we prefer to reach a voluntary negotiated settlement with each landholder and work closely with them to fully quantify the impacts of the connection project on their property and its operations.

Native Title agreements

Powerlink will be negotiating Indigenous Land Use Agreements with the relevant representatives of the Native Title Holders, the Ewamian People #2 and Ewamian People #3 and the Gugu Badhun People #2.

Powerlink's preference is to reach voluntary negotiated settlement with all landholders, including Native Title Holders, directly affected by the connection project. We approach this negotiation in good faith, with a commitment to meaningful engagement with all parties.

Matters of National Environmental Significance under the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999

Following the identification of some species and potential habitat listed under the EPBC Act in the vicinity of the preferred transmission line's alignment, Powerlink referred the project to the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DoAWE) for assessment.

The DoAWE's 10-business day public consultation period commenced last month for Powerlink's referral, with submissions closing on 25 October 2021. Landholders and other stakeholders were invited to provide comments to DoAWE on the project and Powerlink's referral under the EPBC Act. Powerlink will continue to engage with DoAWE in coming months to progress the EPBC assessment as needed.

Opportunities for local suppliers

Powerlink and the project's principal contractor UGL are continuing to help maximise local employment and procurement opportunities wherever possible during the project, particularly for supporting products and services.

Drop-in sessions were held during October 2021 in Charters Towers, Ingham and Townsville to provide local subcontractors with an opportunity to ask questions about tendering for work on the project. More than 30 representatives from local businesses attended the sessions to meet with our project team. We appreciated their attendance, questions and interest in the project.

Further information about sub-contracting opportunities is available on Powerlink's website www.powerlink.com.au/genex-kidston.



Ingham local supplier information session

Preparing for future works

If all approvals are received, Powerlink expects vegetation management and preliminary transmission line construction works will begin in the second quarter 2022. Construction is expected to take more than two years to complete (depending on weather conditions).

Some preliminary fencing work at the proposed Mount Fox switching station location has commenced with local contractors safely segregating the site ahead of future construction activities. The local community may have noticed an increase in traffic movements in the Mount Fox area from these works. As the project progresses, we will work alongside landholders and other stakeholders to refine our traffic management planning and associated vehicle movements. We seek to undertake all construction work safely and efficiently to minimise any disturbance to landholders and the wider community.

More broadly, we will continue engagement while we develop a comprehensive construction program and detailed project plans. This preparation may include additional cadastral surveys, which involves access for a registered surveyor to survey the preferred tower locations on each property.

All property access will continue to be in accordance with Powerlink's Land Access Protocol and the conditions agreed with the landholder. Our Land Access Protocol describes the standards and commitments we will adhere to when accessing properties to carry out our work.

We will keep landholders informed of planned construction activities and discuss timing of works on individual properties.

Project leader brings experience

Tony Janas, Powerlink's Genex Kidston Connection Project Director, brings a wealth of experience in safely and effectively delivering transmission infrastructure projects throughout Queensland since joining Powerlink more than 19 years ago.



Powerlink's Genex Kidston Connection Project Director, Tony Janas

"Having grown up in Gladstone with a strong understanding of regional Queensland, I feel privileged to be contributing to local communities in North Queensland as we work together on one of Australia's most ground-breaking renewable energy projects," Tony said.

"Our team of technical and environmental experts are dedicated to achieving the best outcomes for landholders, community members and other stakeholders, while delivering this important connection project.

"There's still a significant amount of planning work to do in preparation for starting construction. We value and appreciate the property-specific knowledge and input from landholders.


"It's vital that our project team continues to work hand-in-hand with landholders and the community to talk through the potential impacts and mitigation strategies from construction activities on their properties."



Further information

For more information on the Genex Kidston Connection Project, please contact:

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 **FREECALL: 1800 635 369**
(business hours)

 **pqenquiries@powerlink.com.au**

 **www.powerlink.com.au/genex-kidston**

 Connect:    

Use the QR code to access our project webpage.



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