

# Genex Kidston Connection Project

## Project update



MARCH 2022

### 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 270 kilometres 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](http://www.genexpower.com.au)). Powerlink has been engaged by Genex to deliver this electrical infrastructure project.

### Acknowledgement

Powerlink acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands and waters of Queensland and in particular, the lands on which we operate. We pay our respect to their Ancestors, Elders and knowledge holders and recognise their deep history and ongoing connection to Country.

### Key points

- Powerlink is seeking planning approval for the Genex Kidston Connection Project and has submitted the Ministerial Infrastructure Designation Assessment Report (MIDAR) for the project to the Planning Minister.
- The Planning Minister undertook formal consultation on the MIDAR in late 2021. Powerlink will provide the Planning Minister with responses to submissions received through the consultation process.
- As part of MIDAR consultation activities, Powerlink held three local community information drop-in sessions to meet with landholders and other stakeholders, and further discuss the project. We greatly appreciated everyone's involvement and interest at these sessions.
- We are continuing to negotiate with directly affected landholders about easement arrangements and thank landholders for engaging with us.
- Powerlink will be negotiating voluntary Indigenous Land Use Agreements with the Native Title holders for the area and their legal advisors.
- The proposed switching station near Mount Fox has been named Guybal Munjan Switching Station, following consultation with the Native Title holders of that area and we thank Traditional Owners for engaging with us.
- Preliminary on-ground works to extend Knuckledown Road near Mount Fox have been undertaken with involvement of local suppliers.
- 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.



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## The planning approval process

Planning approval, under the *Planning Act 2016*, is required before a decision is made about the final alignment for the proposed transmission line and the switching station location at Mount Fox.

To seek planning approval, Powerlink submitted the Ministerial Infrastructure Designation Assessment Report (MIDAR) for the connection project to the Queensland Government Planning Minister. The Planning Minister's formal consultation period for the report closed on 22 December 2021.

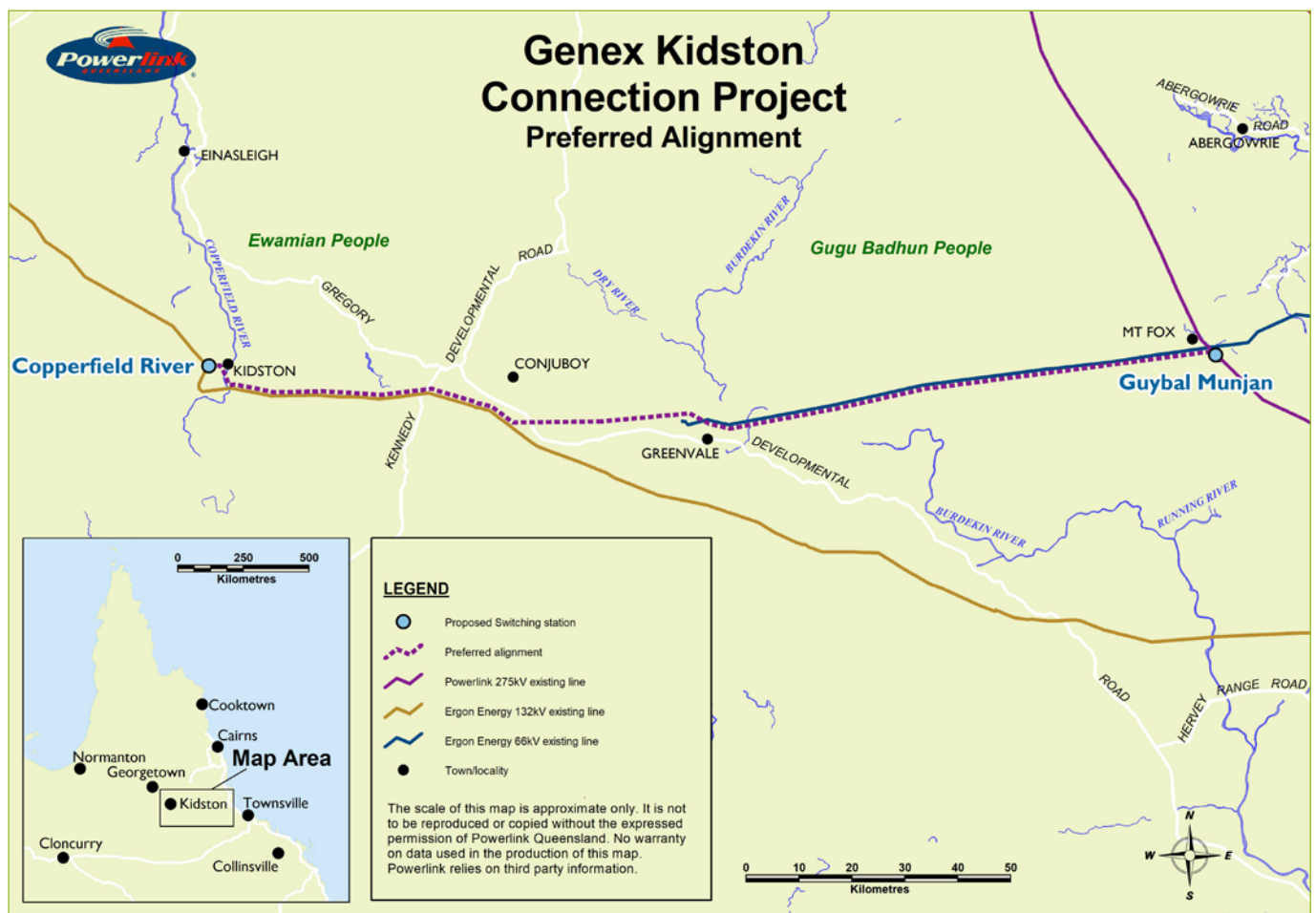
Submissions on the MIDAR from landholders and other stakeholders were provided to Powerlink by the Planning Minister. Powerlink will provide the Minister with responses to the submissions.

The Planning Minister will assess the MIDAR, consider the submissions received and Powerlink's response to those 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.

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 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.

## Preferred alignment



## Community drop-in sessions well attended

Nearly 40 people attended three local community information drop-in sessions hosted by Powerlink during the MIDAR consultation period in late 2021. The sessions were held at Mount Fox, Greenvale and Conjuboy.

Representatives from Powerlink and environmental specialist AECOM were present at the drop-in sessions to speak with landholders and other stakeholders about the MIDAR and other aspects of the connection project.

We thank everyone who attended the sessions for their time and valued feedback.

## Continuing engagement with landholders

We are continuing to work closely with landholders as we seek to reach negotiated settlements with each directly affected landholder for the registration of easements required for the project. Powerlink would like to thank them for their ongoing cooperation.

We remain committed to ongoing engagement 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.

## Engaging with Native Title holders

Powerlink appreciates the cooperation of the Native Title holders, the Ewamian People and the Gugu Badhun People, in engaging with Powerlink.

We will be negotiating with representatives of the Native Title holders, to negotiate these voluntary Indigenous Land Use Agreements to reach negotiated settlements. Powerlink looks forward to working with the Native Title holders on identifying beneficial opportunities.

On-ground Cultural Heritage surveys of the preferred alignment and switching station site are continuing. We thank Native Title holders and other landholders for their assistance and land access.



Community drop-in session at Mount Fox.



Community drop-in session at Greenvale.

## Guybal Munjan Switching Station

In acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners, we sought the advice of the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation, the Native Title holders for the switching station site as well as a significant portion of the connection project, to nominate a name for the proposed switching station to be located near Mount Fox.

The Gugu Badhun People selected the name Guybal Munjan, which means 'fire mountain' in local language, and is pronounced *guy/bel moo-wun*.

The name, Guybal Munjan Switching Station, has been adopted and is now used across all information and materials relating to the connection project.

## Preliminary works involve local businesses

Preliminary on-ground works have been undertaken to progress initial pre-construction activities for the proposed Guybal Munjan Switching Station, with the support of local businesses.

A number of local suppliers based in Ingham and Charters Towers provided materials and services for works to extend Knuckledown Road in Mount Fox to accommodate the proposed switching station.

The works included delivery of 7,000 tonnes of road material and 15 metres of concrete culverts used to build 1.6 kilometres of new road. Crews also installed 4.5 kilometres of fencing to safely secure the site.

Ahead of this work program, comprehensive traffic management plans were developed to safely address increased traffic movements on Mount Fox Road and minimise any disturbance to landholders and the wider community. Local residents were advised of expected increased traffic movements on Mount Fox Road.

We appreciate the role of local businesses in completing the preliminary works safely and efficiently, and will continue to maximise local employment and procurement opportunities wherever possible.

Information about sub-contracting opportunities associated with the connection project is available on Powerlink's website:

[www.powerlink.com.au/genex](http://www.powerlink.com.au/genex)

## 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 transmission line's preferred alignment, Powerlink referred the project to the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DoAWE) for assessment. In October 2021, DoAWE held a period of public consultation on Powerlink's referral.

We undertook additional ecological field investigations in December 2021 and are continuing to engage with DoAWE to progress the EPBC assessment as needed.

## Upcoming project activities

- Cultural Heritage surveys will be completed.
- Negotiations to reach voluntary settlements with landholders, including Native Title holders, will continue.
- If all approvals are received, we expect vegetation management and preliminary transmission line construction works to begin by mid 2022. We expect construction activities to take 18 months to complete (depending on weather conditions).
- We will continue to engage with landholders about property-specific matters as we develop a comprehensive construction program and detailed project plans.
- We will keep landholders informed of planned construction activities and discuss timing of works on individual properties. All property access will continue to be in accordance with Powerlink's Land Access Protocol and the conditions agreed with the landholder.
- We will continue to work with North Queensland businesses to maximise local employment and procurement opportunities.



## Further information

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

**Murray Abel**

Manager Landholder Relations

Ph: (07) 3860 2377

Email: [mabel@powerlink.com.au](mailto:mabel@powerlink.com.au)

📞 FREECALL: 1800 635 369  
(business hours)

✉ [pqenquiries@powerlink.com.au](mailto:pqenquiries@powerlink.com.au)

💻 [www.powerlink.com.au/genex](http://www.powerlink.com.au/genex)

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