



# COMMUNITY



Senior Project Manager Andrew Owen (right) speaking with community members.

COMMUNITY

## ACHIEVING

- community engagement on 14 environmental impact assessments for major transmission projects
- engaged with diverse stakeholders through a variety of methods
- reviewed our sponsorship guidelines and identified a more strategic approach to corporate community investments
- responded to 342 applications for development and easement co-use, as well as enquiries from landowners and asset operators about activities on or near our easements.

### Stakeholder engagement

As our operations stretch across Queensland, we have a diversity of stakeholders that we engage with when conducting our business. It is our aim to share information with our stakeholders in an effective, timely and transparent way. We use a variety of methods when engaging with our stakeholders, including, but not limited to: face-to-face meetings, providing reports and briefings, workshops, letters, internet and other written and verbal communication.

Throughout the 2011/12 year we have engaged with stakeholders including:

- shareholding Ministers
- government departments
- council officers
- Members of Parliament
- Mayors and Councillors
- Australian Energy Regulator (AER)
- Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC)
- Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)
- electricity distributors
- large customers
- landowners
- community and environmental groups
- suppliers and contractors
- industry associations
- unions
- Energy Users Association of Australia (EUAA)
- Energy Networks Association (ENA)
- Grid Australia
- other transmission network service providers
- our employees
- media.

## Consultation for new infrastructure projects

Before we can construct a new transmission line or substation, Powerlink needs to undertake environmental assessment and community consultation in accordance with a government approved process under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA).

Throughout this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process we consult with community members and stakeholders about the need for the new transmission infrastructure and how we will minimise or mitigate associated environmental, economic and social impacts, and publish an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also share information about the processes we need to undertake to ensure we meet our legislative and regulatory obligations.

Under the SPA, Powerlink obtains planning approval for new electricity infrastructure. Powerlink does this by requesting Ministerial designation of a transmission line route for community infrastructure, before the transmission line can be built. Further information about projects which reached the stage of Ministerial designation in 2011/12 can be found on page 23.

Consultation activities for easement and site acquisition projects are traditionally spread over a number of years. There are a number and variety of activities undertaken in accordance with the consultation required under the SPA. Activities can include: public advertising, media releases, face-to-face communication, newsletters and other written and verbal communication.

### Consultation for new infrastructure projects

EIA Consultation activities	Project stage as at 30 June 2012
<b>North Region</b>	
<b>Collinsville Substation</b>	
Consultation for EIS concluded April 2012.	Request for Ministerial designation is currently being prepared.
<b>Central Region</b>	
<b>Broadsound to Lilyvale transmission line</b>	
Consultation commenced May 2012.	Draft EIS is currently being prepared.
<b>Eagle Downs Mine Connection</b>	
Consultation for EIS and designation completed.	Ministerial designation was received in December 2011. Construction is under way.
<b>Galilee Basin Transmission Project (Stage 1 and Stage 2)</b>	
Consultation for EIS and designation for Stage 1 concluded.	Request for Ministerial designation for Stage 1 was submitted in December 2011.
Draft EIS for Stage 2 completed January 2012.	Final EIS for Stage 2 is being prepared.
<b>Northern Bowen Basin (Stage 1 and Stage 2)</b>	
Consultation for EIS and designation for both stages completed.	Request for Ministerial designation for Stage 2 is currently being prepared.

*Consultation for new infrastructure projects continued...*

EIA Consultation activities	Project stage as at 30 June 2012
<b>South Region</b>	
<b>Cumbboola South Transmission Network (transmission line and switching components)</b>	
Consultation for EIS and designation for transmission line component completed.	Transmission line component – request for Ministerial designation is currently being prepared.
Consultation for EIS and designation for switching station component of the project completed.	Switching station component – Final EIS was published in July 2011. Ministerial designation was received in December 2011. Project construction began May 2012.
<b>Cumbboola to Wandoan South transmission line and Wandoan South Substation and Wandoan South to QGC Woleebee transmission line</b>	
Consultation for EIS and designation completed.	Ministerial designation was received in January 2012. Construction of the transmission line commenced in May 2012.
<b>Cumbboola to Western Downs transmission line and Cumbboola Substation</b>	
Consultation for EIS and designation completed.	Request for Ministerial designation is currently being prepared.
<b>Orana Substation</b>	
Consultation for Draft EIS conducted.	Final EIS is currently being prepared.
<b>Springdale to Blackwall transmission line</b>	
Consultation for EIS and designation completed.	Submitted for Ministerial designation in December 2011.
<b>Wandoan South to Eurombah</b>	
Consultation commenced.	Draft EIS being currently being prepared.
<b>Wandoan South to Wandoan Coal Connection</b>	
Consultation for Draft EIS under way.	Draft EIS under consultation as at 30 June 2012.
<b>South East Region</b>	
<b>Larapinta to Algester transmission line and Larapinta Substation</b>	
Consultation for EIS completed. Consultation for proposed designation under way.	Request for public comment on proposed Ministerial designation was made in June 2012.
<b>Molendinar Substation</b>	
Consultation for Draft EIS under way.	Draft EIS under consultation as at 30 June 2012.

**Community Benefits Program**

Powerlink's Community Benefits Program gives community groups the opportunity to apply for funding to carry out projects of local importance in areas close to our new transmission lines. The programs facilitate key council and other community stakeholder engagement during transmission line construction, and build positive longer-term relationships for transmission line operation and maintenance activities.

The Community Benefits Program supports community projects that deliver tangible and lasting benefits, and essential facilities and services. Funding provided is separate and in addition to compensation that is paid directly to landowners affected by new transmission line easements.

During 2011/12, we administered two programs providing support for 20 community projects in the Western Downs and South Burnett regions and 16 community projects in the Townsville and Hinchinbrook regions.

**Community and environment programs**

We continued to deliver on Powerlink's strategic environmental and community-based commitments in 2011/12, with a focus on facilitating productive working relationships with local government, communities and other stakeholders in areas traversed by existing or future transmission assets. Our programs have been successful in building stakeholder understanding of our existing and planned network activities, while supporting practical, community-based initiatives aimed at improving the amenity of areas near our existing and future transmission infrastructure.

## CASESTUDY

**TACKLING EROSION  
WITH WESTERN DOWNS  
LANDOWNERS**

**Erosion management workshops were held for more than 60 landowners across Wandoan, Miles and Tara in early 2012, funded by Powerlink's Community Environmental Program in partnership with Western Downs Regional Council.**

High-intensity summer storms make erosion in the Western Downs area a major degradation issue. The hands-on workshop, run by the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) and Landcare, has equipped Western Downs landowners with practical skills to better manage erosion and help protect their land.

"The workshops were motivating because they were relevant and we continue to share information through fact sheets and learnings from the monitoring sites established," says QMDC Project Manager Vanessa McDonald.

"This is an investment in the long-term management of erosion across the catchment," she said.

Terry Miller, Powerlink's Manager Network Development, said the workshops were part of the community projects funded by the Community Environment Program.

"The erosion management workshops and other projects funded by the program provide widespread community benefit," Terry said. "They improve the amenity of areas in the vicinity of Powerlink's future high voltage electricity infrastructure in the Western Downs Regional Council area."

**GreenWorks**

Our GreenWorks program is delivered in partnership with the Lockyer Valley, Somerset, South Burnett and Toowoomba Regional Councils, and Ipswich City Council, and with the involvement of local community members and environmental groups.

The program supports worthwhile environmental projects near future proposed 500 kilovolt transmission lines in Southern Queensland. In 2011/12, GreenWorks committed to support six projects addressing important local environment issues including extending support for erosion control in a hard hit flood area, rehabilitating and conserving high value bushland and wetlands, enhancing koala habitats, and providing environmental and Indigenous bush tucker education.

The six new projects were selected from a field of high calibre applications submitted by local community groups, and are expected to deliver positive environmental benefits while promoting environmental education to younger members of the community. All projects are expected to be completed by June 2013 when the program is scheduled to conclude.

**Community Environmental Program**

The Community Environmental Program is a strategic initiative that facilitates key council and other local stakeholder engagement by supporting community and environmental projects near Powerlink's future infrastructure in South West Queensland. The program is a partnership with Western Downs Regional Council, with the commitment and involvement of community members and groups.

In July 2011, we announced a round of funding would be allocated to community groups from across the Western Downs for 11 projects that will provide long-term environmental benefits.

The constructive stakeholder relationships forged during the program have assisted in generating community and stakeholder understanding of Powerlink's activities.

**Strategic sponsorships**

Powerlink has a long-standing tradition of investing within communities in the vicinity of its transmission network, and supporting and building relationships with key stakeholder groups as a part of its corporate citizenship activities. During 2011/12, we supported strategic sponsorships in the fields of community, education, environmental and industry activities. We sponsored specific activities in regional and urban Queensland, undertaken by groups including the Local Government Association of Queensland, Landcare Queensland, Engineers Australia, Energy Users Association of Australia (EUAA), Healthy Waterways, and the Bioelectromagnetics Society.

This year we again undertook a review of our sponsorship guidelines to ensure continued consistency with the State Government framework. We also further reviewed the framework to identify opportunities to take a more strategic approach supporting Powerlink's business objectives and values through our corporate community investments. Strategies to address those improvement opportunities have been identified and will be implemented in the coming year.

### Staff support for community organisations

For the third consecutive year, Powerlink and its staff supported the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal in 2011 to assist families throughout Queensland. As part of the appeal, our staff participated in a range of voluntary activities.

This year for the first time, Powerlink offered its employees an opportunity to participate in a corporate giving initiative – the Larapinta Trail Challenge, which is being run in September 2012 in support of the Reach Foundation. Employees were given the opportunity to apply in writing and one person was randomly selected to take part. Powerlink is supporting the employee's participation with in-kind assistance, and Powerlink staff are actively fundraising through a variety of initiatives.

### Integrating infrastructure into communities

During 2011/12 Powerlink responded to 342 applications for development and easement co-use, in our role as a referral agency for development applications adjacent to existing transmission lines and easements, under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*. We respond to enquiries from landowners and asset operators with regard to their activities near or on our easements and offer planning advice, assistance and tools to planning and development professionals, including mapping of transmission easements in local government planning schemes and easement co-use guidelines.

Our property search service responded to approximately 8,000 enquiries as to whether Powerlink has an interest on a nominated or adjacent property, or if we are investigating a new line route which may affect the property.

### Electric and Magnetic Fields

Electric and magnetic fields (EMF) are found everywhere electricity or electrical equipment is being used – including in the home, office, work sites and around transmission lines. Like other transmission authorities in Australia, Powerlink takes advice about EMF from recognised national and international health authorities. Powerlink continues as a member of the Energy Networks Associations (ENA) Committee that monitors and compiles up-to-date information about EMF on behalf of all electricity network businesses in Australia.

In Australia, the Federal Government agency responsible for EMF regulation is the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA). ARPANSA has concluded that "scientific evidence does not firmly establish that exposure to 50Hz EMFs found around the home, the office or near power lines is a hazard to human health". (Source: ARPANSA fact sheet Electricity and Health.) Nevertheless, Powerlink follows the ENA EMF policy which includes applying a 'prudent avoidance' approach when designing and siting new electricity network infrastructure. This includes trying to locate new transmission assets away from homes, schools and community facilities where it is practical and cost effective to do so.

We continue to provide information from recognised public health authorities to interested communities and address EMF in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken for any new Powerlink asset. We also carry out EMF readings at the request of landowners. EMF readings at the boundary of a typical Powerlink easement are generally similar to those people would come across in their daily activities at home or work.

## LOOKING FORWARD

In 2012/13 and beyond, we will:

- review our corporate citizenship activities and stakeholder interests, to identify opportunities to improve in our corporate citizenship strategies
- identify and implement improved stakeholder relations strategies.