## Powerlink focus areas for 2019/20

The following outlines some of the actions undertaken by Powerlink in response to the 2019 Evaluation Report by the Independent Accountability Panel.

### 1. Know your customers and communities

- Powerlink completed a customer segmentation project to better understand what our customers value, to drive our future strategy and help improve our customers' experience. We reviewed our customer survey insights, conducted interviews and reviewed external customer research. It became clear that different customer segments value different things from Powerlink, and prioritise them in different orders. With this deeper insight we now have a better understanding of what our direct and indirect customers value, and plans in place to improve on our delivery of that value. The outcomes of our customer segmentation work are included in our Energy Charter Disclosure Statement (pages 2 to 3).

### 2. Go above and beyond compliance

- Powerlink is undertaking a comprehensive engagement approach for our 2023-27 Revenue Determination process. To achieve this goal, we were the first network business to co-design its engagement approach with customers. The co-design approach has ensured we meet customer needs and preferences. To facilitate a deeper level of customer engagement, we formed a Revenue Proposal Reference Group comprising five members of our existing Customer Panel. Powerlink engages with this group regularly, in significant detail as we develop our Revenue Proposal.

- We engaged meaningfully with generation customers, contractors and suppliers to inform development of new estimating tools and processes. Our new price book enables us to be more accurate, consistent and responsive when preparing project estimates. It feeds into improved processes and platforms for scoping and estimating projects to ensure better clarity, direction and accountability across the business. We improved our quality assurance activities to better address internal and external variations to projects, and introduced a more robust 'lessons learned' process to equip our project delivery teams to reflect on and share key insights for future projects.

- We continued to apply our Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) Stakeholder Engagement Matrix to give our customers and stakeholders a better opportunity to be involved with this review process that applies to all network investments and reinvestments above $6 million. This matrix ensures that Powerlink engages with customers in line with their expectations and not the minimum regulatory requirements.

- We identified practical ways to assist customers facing vulnerable circumstances as a result of COVID-19. This included supporting property lessees facing hardship by offering lease payment deferrals and implementing a specific procurement guideline to pay suppliers as quickly as possible ahead of our standard payment terms to enhance their liquidity. We also surveyed our suppliers directly to ask how we could support them better during the pandemic recovery. In collaboration with Ergon Energy Retail, we reallocated funds from our 2019/20 sponsorship program to establish a community support-based partnership with the Indigenous Consumer

Assistance Network to offer seven scholarships in financial counselling in regional Queensland. The partnership will also develop an online Energy Literacy Module for professional development for Financial Councillors/Financial Resilience employees and others interested from the community services sector.

**3. Leverage high-impact points for change together**

- We placed emphasis on boosting the role customers play across all levels of our organisation, including the Board. Key examples included our Chair's attendance at a Revenue Proposal Reference Group meeting to discuss the Board's involvement in the Revenue Determination process and its approach to risk management. Directors also engaged with customers at our Transmission Network Forum in September 2019 and sought customer insights and perspectives by undertaking a customer survey with proponents of renewable generation projects, and considering the results of the 2019 Stakeholder Perception Survey. Our Chair played a key role in preliminary work to establish the 'Customer Voice' #BetterTogetherInitiative. This will assist with embedding customer perspectives at a Board level across Energy Charter signatories.

- Powerlink was a co-lead on the #BetterTogether initiative focused on 'Knowing your customers and communities'. This initiative is about working with signatories to sharpen our focus on end-user customers and communities, to meet their needs, expectations and interests. This initiative led to the creation of a Shared Learning Platform that provides better case examples of customer engagement categorised against the IAP2 Spectrum.

**4. Develop metrics and report on progress**

- Powerlink has been working with its NSW transmission counterpart, TransGrid, to identify consistent measures and metrics where possible, in the context of variable reporting frameworks and cycles between our two organisations. Our 2019/20 Disclosure Statements mutually report on renewable generator connections finalised, future renewable generator connections, Net Promoter Score and customer trust score. We will continue exploring additional consistent measures and metrics for future Disclosure Statements.

**5. Close the loop on initiatives**

- Within the context of reporting parameters for the 2019/20 Disclosure Statement, Powerlink has endeavoured to provide tangible examples of specific processes, activities and outcomes achieved during this reporting period. We have tried to authentically highlight areas for improvement and the proactive steps taken to rectify, mitigate or enhance these more challenging areas. Throughout the document, we have focused on anchoring discussion on key activities by including information on "the why" – drawing the link for how the activity or initiative is addressing the needs and preferences of our customers. Our Customer Panel meetings have a strong governance structure to ensure all meetings are minuted, with assigned actions recorded. A strong focus is placed on demonstrating to the Customer Panel how their input has influenced decision-making.

**6. Evaluate and optimise dispute resolution**

- We undertook an external audit of our complaints management process to ensure compliance with relevant Australian Standards. The audit findings have largely been actioned, with some longer-term activities to be considered in 2020/21. Specific actions include providing clearer information on how to make a complaint via our website and clarifying procedures for complaint managers in terms of identified responsibilities. A key focus was on better information being recorded in closing out complaints to further drive improvement and lead to more comprehensive consideration of lessons learnt.

- To strengthen the skills of our people in managing disputes and more effectively support our customers and stakeholders, our complaints management training program was updated in 2019/20. While planned face-to-face training was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions, an online version was delivered to key teams in July 2020, placing priority on building the skillset of field staff involved in maintenance and project work.