

Proposed Genex Kidston Connection Project

Engagement recommencement following project approvals



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About Powerlink

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

Enabling a renewable energy economy is a key focus for Powerlink. Transmission networks will play a vital role in facilitating new, large-scale renewable and low emissions generation. Powerlink is well placed to support the development of renewable energy sources and deliver efficient connections for large-scale renewable generators to the National Electricity Market.

About the Kidston Clean Energy Hub

Genex Power Limited (Genex) is developing the Kidston Clean Energy Hub, a combination renewable energy and hydro pump storage power generation facility at Kidston, approximately 270km north-west 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. Powerlink is the proponent of this electrical infrastructure project. For more information, visit www.genexpower.com.au.

Key points

- Since late 2016, Powerlink has undertaken activities to investigate development of a 275kV electricity transmission line and switching station to connect Genex's renewable generation project at Kidston to the national electricity grid.
- This has included engaging with landholders and other stakeholders about the connection project, proposed infrastructure location and completing environmental and technical assessments which resulted in the Draft Environmental Assessment Report (EAR), released in September 2018.
- Since that time, Genex has been finalising commercial arrangements for the project and in March 2021, Powerlink received a 'Notice to Proceed' (NTP), which signalled the reactivation of activities to formally progress the connection project. Genex subsequently reached financial close for the project on 20 May 2021.
- This landmark project paves the way for renewable energy projects to play a larger role in the National Electricity Market and is Australia's first pumped hydro project in 37 years.
- Powerlink is now reactivating project planning activities, including engaging with landholders and other stakeholders about next steps, and identifying remaining technical, environmental and cultural heritage assessment work to take place.
- In recognition of landholders' ongoing cooperation and potential impacts of re-engaging with Powerlink on this project, we are implementing a variation of our 'Project Participation and Access Allowance' (PPAA) for landholders. This provides payment to eligible landholders whose properties are impacted by upcoming activities to progress project planning.
- Our commitment to seeking planning approval for the proposed connection project under Infrastructure Designation remains unchanged (as per the *Planning Act 2016*). No decision will be made about the final route for the proposed transmission line until a comprehensive impact assessment process and associated consultation is finalised, and planning approval is granted by the Planning Minister.
- Activities such as planning approval, easement acquisition and construction will involve additional engagement and consultation opportunities for landholders and other stakeholders.
- Construction for the transmission line is expected to commence in April 2022, for completion by early 2024 (weather dependent). It is important to note that construction will not commence until completion of all the necessary steps to achieve planning approval under the Infrastructure Designation process and other necessary approvals.



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Transmission line location

Powerlink is seeking to reconfirm the suitability of the draft transmission line alignment outlined in the Draft EAR prepared in September 2018. Environmental consultant AECOM is undertaking a currency review of the Draft EAR and Powerlink will engage with landholders and other stakeholders to progress planning work as required. Since the Draft EAR was prepared, there have been some changes to specific steps within the Infrastructure Designation process. This revised process is outlined in Powerlink's updated Network Development Process brochure, available at www.powerlink.com.au.

Building on comprehensive engagement previously undertaken, Powerlink is recommencing its engagement activities at Step 5 in this flowchart – 'Seek Minister's consideration on Infrastructure Designation'. This process involves preparation of an Assessment Report which will be made available for formal consultation in late 2021. This report will be largely based on the previous Draft EAR but will contain updated information to reflect changes since the report was originally prepared, as well as additional input from landholders and other stakeholders, and findings from further field studies. The document will assess the potential social, environmental and economic impacts of the proposed transmission infrastructure, and outline how those impacts will be managed or mitigated.

Similar to our engagement approach for consulting on the Draft EAR released in 2018, we will invite submissions on the Assessment Report when it is published later this year. These will be considered by the Planning Minister when determining designation approval.

Compensation

When we acquire land to enable our transmission infrastructure to be built, operated and maintained safely and reliably, compensation will be payable to landholders whose properties are traversed by transmission line easements. Compensation is a payment that reflects any change in the market value of a property as a result of this new infrastructure and associated work on the property.

Powerlink is committed to being fair, transparent and equitable throughout the land acquisition and compensation negotiation processes. We provide compensation to directly affected landholders in accordance with the *Acquisition of Land Act 1967*. Powerlink will reimburse landholders for reasonable professional fees to access expert legal, valuation, tax and agronomy advice relating to compensation matters. Wherever possible, we seek 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.

We will be contacting landholders in the near future to start discussions on the negotiated compensation process. More information on our compensation approach can be found in Powerlink's Compensation brochure, available on our website www.powerlink.com.au.

Project Participation and Access Allowance (PPAA)

We would like to thank landholders for their ongoing cooperation in providing valuable information about their properties, as well as facilitating access, to gather additional on-ground information and progress project planning.

We recognise that engaging with us may interrupt activities on a landholder's property that contribute to their income. In recognition of this, we provide payment to eligible landholders whose properties are impacted by field investigations or other activities as we consider land acquisition arrangements. Known as the PPAA, this payment is totally separate and in addition to the compensation paid to landholders for the acquisition of easements or land. In this particular case, we are implementing a variation of our PPAA and will provide more information directly to landholders about next steps.



Further information

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

Murray Abel
Manager Landholder Relations
Ph: (07) 3860 2377
Email: mabel@powerlink.com.au

📞 FREECALL: 1800 635 369
(business hours)

✉ pqenquiries@powerlink.com.au

🌐 www.powerlink.com.au

➡ Connect: [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [v](#)

