



Community Engagement Strategy

July 2021

Connecting Queenslanders to a world-class energy future



A message from the Chief Executive

With the sheer breadth of change that comes with the new energy future here in Queensland, meeting the needs and expectations of the communities we work in is more important than ever. We have always held a strong view that engaging with local communities is an important part of providing our electricity transmission services safely, reliably and cost effectively. This is front and centre as we look at the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Our infrastructure stays in service for up to 50 years, and partnering with all of our host communities from Cairns down to the New South Wales border is important to building relationships based on respect and trust. Most importantly, we are focusing on partnering that delivers local community benefits for the longer term.

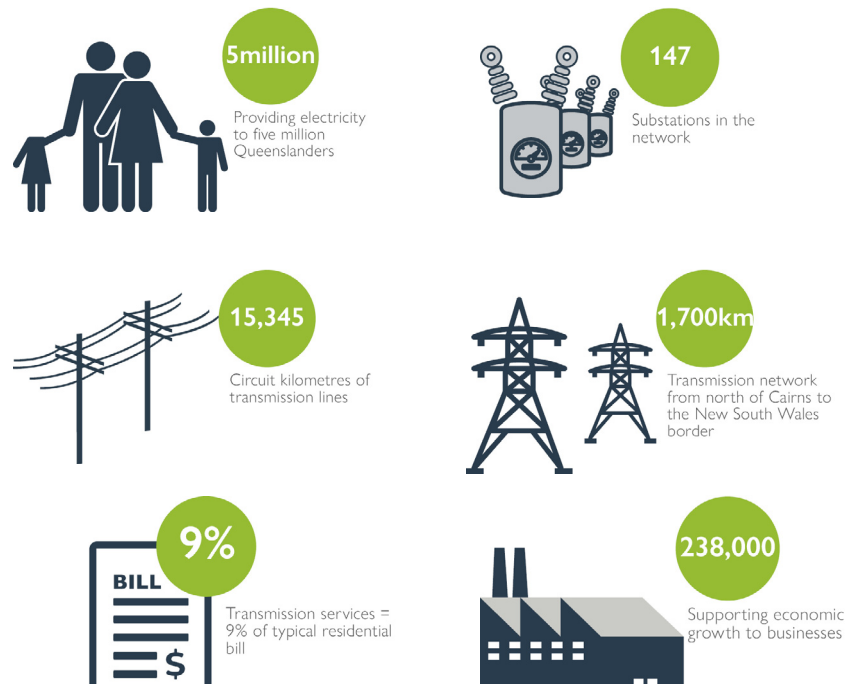
This strategy outlines our community engagement planning approach and the principles we will live up to – from operating and maintaining our existing network, through to planning and building the network of the future. We know some of the goals we've set for ourselves here are aspirational, and will involve hard work and focus. We're up for the challenge with your help and guidance.

We are keen to see communities sharing in the benefits of our state's new energy future, and we know building strong, positive relationships across the life of our transmission network will set us all up for future success. It's an exciting time to be in energy, and bringing opportunities to the local communities we work in is a huge part of that.

We look forward to working with you.

Paul Simshauser
Chief Executive - Powerlink Queensland

Who we are





Our approach

Powerlink operates under an overarching Corporate Citizenship Framework with three key streams – operational performance, stakeholder engagement and community relations. These streams are underpinned by our corporate values of accountability, customer, teamwork and safety.

The framework’s key focus is on identifying opportunities for mutual value creation between Powerlink and our stakeholders, customers and communities.

This Corporate Community Engagement Strategy underpins our overarching citizenship framework and sets out our principles for engagement, our commitments and actions, defines who our communities are, the benefits of community engagement, community investment and also how we intend to monitor and measure our success.

In an environment of significant change, we want to be engaging and building relationships in communities in which we operate. This strategy outlines our approach to engagement, and how it will guide and inform others about the work we do. Understanding the importance and value of these relationships will help ensure we can build and maintain a positive social licence to safely operate and importantly, deliver on our purpose – to connect Queenslanders to a world-class energy future.

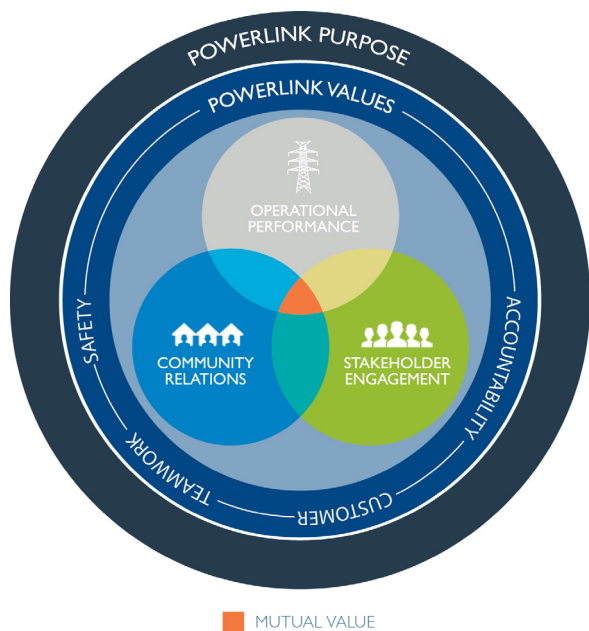


Figure 1. The three streams of our Corporate Citizenship Framework, which focus on identifying opportunities for mutual value creation, supported by our corporate values and purpose.

The communities we work with can be many and varied. Understanding who should be included in any engagement activity we deliver is a critical first step. In some cases, the community will be broad and wide-ranging based on the scale of the activity being undertaken. In other circumstances, we will identify a small and very specific community who will need to be engaged in a targeted way. Understanding who our communities are helps to set out what we need to deliver and the methods applied.

Alignment with The Energy Charter

Powerlink is a founding member of The Energy Charter, a principles-based disclosure regime involving businesses across the energy supply chain. It is focused on embedding a customer-centric culture in energy businesses to create tangible improvements in affordability and service delivery. Our community engagement approach aligns with the following Energy Charter principles:

Principle 1.4 – Have robust practices to determine customer and community needs and be accountable on how feedback has been considered and incorporated into decision making.

Principle 3.2 – Engage with customers and the community on investments, and manage operations in line with their expectations, demonstrating how customers benefit.

Principle 3.6 – Implement solutions across the supply chain that support energy connection, service and reliability that meets customers’ needs.

This strategy is also supported by the newly-developed ‘The Energy Charter - Better Practice Landholder and Community Engagement Guide’ to support landholder and community engagement on renewable energy developments across the National Electricity Market.



Setting clear expectations

Effective engagement occurs when there are clear expectations about the scope and role of the community. Powerlink is committed to clearly establishing what can be influenced by the community through engagement and what is ‘negotiable’ and ‘non-negotiable’.

Due to the nature of Powerlink’s operations and infrastructure development, there will often be elements that cannot be changed or influenced by community input. Where there are constraints on process or outcomes because they are impacted by laws, regulations and safety considerations, we will flag these early.

Setting a clear scope ensures that all participants in the engagement process divert their time and resources into aspects that can be influenced through meaningful dialogue.



Our commitments

This strategy has been designed to help Powerlink and its employees undertake respectful engagement that is tailored to the work being undertaken, from maintenance activity through to new infrastructure development.

We recognise the importance of relationships and the value and mutual benefits that good community engagement can bring. We also acknowledge that communities play an important role in the delivery of our services and activities. The following principles and commitments will help guide our engagement and outcomes across a range of activities, with the impact on customers, stakeholders and communities an important factor in our planning, decision-making and implementation.

Build relationships based on trust, and communicate in an accurate and clear way

- We will build and maintain respectful and genuine relationships based on trust, fairness and meaningful engagement
- We will consistently share information that is timely and accurate and we will be clear on whether our engagement is to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower.

Be an active community member: engage early and often

- We will be a proactive member of our communities
- We will engage as early as appropriate and offer different ways to engage
- We will be genuine and transparent in our engagement and will use language that is inclusive and easy to understand.

Deliver tangible benefits where we operate our network

- We will talk to communities about what is important to them and will listen and identify where mutual benefits can be achieved
- We will support activities that add value to communities that co-exist with our network.

Partner with key stakeholders in our communities

- We will ensure our engagement is undertaken in an accessible and inclusive way that demonstrates respect
- We will collaborate with key stakeholders in our communities to ensure they are informed and empowered so that we can continue to build trust, respect and confidence
- We will work with our stakeholders to deliver programs and initiatives that bring long-term benefits.

Enable open and transparent dialogue

- We seek feedback on our activities and check-in with our communities
- We will listen, provide feedback on what we've heard and close the loop on how we've responded
- We will provide a clear and accessible path for advice, enquiry, information, escalation or grievance.



Benefits of good community engagement

As a business, we understand the importance of proactive and genuine community engagement which is implemented across all activities we undertake, and how it can deliver mutual benefits and value. As well as the shared benefit of communities and Powerlink being able to positively co-exist, there are additional benefits to effective engagement.

For communities, this can include:

- Delivery of mutually beneficial outcomes
- Minimised social and environmental impact
- Maximised benefits and positive co-existence
- Community development, capacity and sustainability is supported
- By our actions, we demonstrate to communities that their safety, wellbeing and resilience is important to us
- We build shared genuine and positive relationships, based on honest, open and transparent engagement.

For Powerlink, this can include:

- Building trust that enables us to deliver our services
- Meaningful engagement and enhanced relationships
- Building and maintaining a positive social licence to operate (SLO)
- We can deliver programs and initiatives that provide the greatest benefit and value because the community helped decide what we're doing
- Assists in the effective and efficient delivery of our transmission network functions.





Engagement approach

Our approach is based on a foundation of building mutual benefit and trusted relationships over time. It is focused on engaging early and often so we are able to genuinely work with our communities across the various phases of projects, maintenance activity and the safe day to day operation of our energy network.

Our foundation is the commonly used International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum. In terms of engagement that builds trust, the below spectrum provides a best practice framework for this to occur. The top two layers below are sourced from the IAP2 spectrum, while the bottom layer provides examples of how Powerlink might apply the different levels of the spectrum in delivering its community engagement program.

It is important to note that one level on the IAP2 Spectrum is not better or worse than another (i.e. Involve is not better than Consult). It is designed to provide clarity to all parties on their role for the appropriate level of engagement for a decision to be made.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE FOR POWERLINK	Develop materials and engage in conversations that clearly outline important information about Powerlink's activities eg: information sheets, web pages, community forums, social media posts, community newsletters and brochures.	Have robust practices to determine community needs. Be accountable on how feedback is considered and incorporated into decision making. Undertake community sentiment research and share results and information, seek feedback and respond. Seek input for complaints resolution.	Undertake focus groups and/or workshops with key community stakeholders. Identify local "heroes" who are based in or have knowledge of an area to be actively involved in community engagement. Train, resource and support Powerlink's workforce as they are a valuable human asset to deliver this strategy.	Implement innovative ways to work directly with landholders. e.g. establish a collaborative approach that factors in our infrastructure into property management and links landholders with independent consultants. Establish a formal community engagement council.	Give stakeholders the ability to decide where our infrastructure is planned/developed.



Community financial support

Community investment in its many forms can provide individuals and organisations with tools and skills to improve quality of life for individuals, their families, groups and their wider area. Our three pillars of investment is one component to create sustainable communities, assist in economic development, enhance community and social capacity, build resilience and create a positive legacy. The type and scale of the investment will vary, and will be determined by factors such as community input, available funding and the overall community impact of the work being undertaken. The three main categories of community financial support include:

1. Community grants – can be delivered quickly and broadly to communities
2. Community sponsorships – a more tailored approach designed to build community capacity
3. Community investment – associated with large-scale infrastructure project to deliver longer-term economic and social benefits.

Continuous improvement

An important part of implementing this strategy will be closing the loop with stakeholders on 'you said, we did' to show where their feedback has been considered. Supporting our staff to develop skills, provide tools and training, and continuously improve will also be important to delivering improved outcomes.

The strategy will also be regularly reviewed and updated to make improvements to our engagement approach in working with communities and stakeholders. Targeted plans focused on specific activities and programs of work will also be developed, based on the principles, benefits and actions outlined here.

This strategy and other more specific engagement planning closely aligns with 'The Energy Charter - Better Practice Landholder and Community Engagement Guide' to guide engagement on renewable energy developments across the National Electricity Market.





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