

3 November 2023



2023 Transmission Network Forum



Powerlink hosted its annual Transmission Network Forum on Friday 3 November 2023. The forum was held as a hybrid event, allowing regional and interstate stakeholders to join online along with in-person attendees.

The record attendance of 450 attendees reinforced the important role the transmission network will play in the future of energy in Queensland and the wider National Electricity Market.

This year's forum had a focus on engaging with Queensland communities and Queensland Renewable Energy Zones (REZ).

The forum was opened with a video address from Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement the Hon. Mick de Brenni MP. The Minister provided an update on the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, launched in September 2022, and the work needed to underpin delivery. A key foundation is The Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023 introduced to Parliament on 24 October 2023 to support new legislation for the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan to lock in renewable targets and more.



“We are not smarter than the market...we need to be mindful of what the market wants from us...”

Paul Simshauser, Chief Executive, Powerlink

Powerlink Chief Executive Paul Simshauser delivered a 'State of the Network' address, sharing insights into the key challenges and opportunities for Queensland's transmission network, including how the electricity grid is being shaped in alignment with the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan reinforcing we exist for Queenslanders.



“Energy is a foundation to the economy”

Paul Simshauser, Chief Executive, Powerlink



Engaging with Queensland communities

Dr Kieren Moffat, CEO, Voconiq shared insights from recent community sentiment research undertaken on behalf of Powerlink regarding key aspects that drive trust and acceptance in Queensland communities. Dana Boxall, General Manager Community and Delivery Services, outlined the new Powerlink processes to engage with communities to acquire transmission easements and provide landholder payments.

Following this session and after the success of our first industry panel last year, we invited key experts from across the industry to share their views on how to best build trust and social licence to operate with communities. Panel members included:

- Andrew Bray, National Director, RE-Alliance
- Dana Boxall, General Manager Community and Delivery Services, Powerlink Queensland
- Jo Sheppard, CEO, Queensland Farmers' Federation
- Dr Kieren Moffat, CEO, Voconiq



The panel was moderated by Powerlink’s Gerard Reilly, General Manager Communications, Customer and Engagement and provided insights on coordinated engagement and community investment opportunities and the important of education, equity and empowerment of Queensland communities.

From their perspective, each panel member shared an opportunity for Queensland communities to benefit from the energy transition over the upcoming years:

- future energy opportunities – secure affordable and reliable energy for farmers in the future (eg: micro grid, batteries, etc)
- environmental benefits – shifting from coal and gas to clean energy sources and the capacity to improve local environments in best practice
- economic development potential – transform and create thriving sustainable communities
- improved community resilience – for instance, enabling improved digital connectivity using transmission infrastructure.

“The intensity of focus has increased significantly...demonstrated by the number of reviews being undertaken...an intense amount of focus on this term social licence”

Gerard Reilly, General Manager Communications and Customer Engagement, Powerlink

“Scale up and become a much more strategic process that’s going to deliver things that regional communities are actually interested in...”

Andrew Bray, National Director, RE-Alliance

“The key word in that distribution fairness space is equitable so the communities feel like they’re receiving an equitable share of the benefit relative to the impact they’re experiencing and also the benefit that others are experiencing”

Dr Kieren Moffat, CEO, Voconiq

“It’s really important we remember not every region is the same and we need to listen to communities and take onboard what their priorities are”

Jo Sheppard, CEO, Queensland Farmers’ Federation

“Working with communities to understand their values to leave that long-lasting legacy pieces”

Dana Boxall, General Manager Community and Delivery Services, Powerlink





“Community investment is important and critical...be clear about what you’re doing it for...coordinated investment into those factors that underpin resilience in communities makes your job easier in the longer term”

Dr Kieren Moffat, CEO, Voconiq

“Building trust in communities...people are a massive part of it but if you’re a farmer or a community member you think long term...governance is critical to building trust”

Jo Sheppard, CEO, Queensland Farmers’ Federation



Queensland Renewable Energy Zones

Gathering stakeholder input is important to our decision-making and planning, so the forum included an interactive workshop, which focused on the Queensland Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) presentation.

Leanne Caelers, Executive Director Transmission and Transformation, Department of Energy and Public Works, shared an overview of the energy transformation in Queensland, details of Queensland’s draft Renewable Energy Zone roadmap and the components of the new legislation.

Daniel Andersen, General Manager Energy Markets, then spoke about REZs from a Powerlink perspective and the focus areas of a REZ Management Plan.

The following question was posed to forum participants to gain further insights.

What renewable generator eligibility criteria do we need to maximise the benefits and create the best outcome for developers, community, and energy system?





A summary of the feedback is provided below.

The stakeholders highlighted that **community eligibility criteria** should demonstrate a developer's commitment to:

- long-term community benefits, with a view to provide a positive legacy for future generations.
- provide local jobs and infrastructure, support local businesses, and to contribute to community funds.
- collaborate with each other and with Powerlink to coordinate community events, funds, and impact assessments.
- minimizing the impact of renewable energy projects on local communities and ecosystems, and their ability to mitigate and respond to community concerns.

The stakeholders highlighted some of the issues that developers face, such as lack of pricing transparency, changing requirements, system strength costs, connection delays, and risk of curtailment. They also expressed their preferences for certainty, consistency, predictability, and flexibility from Powerlink and the government.

The stakeholders highlighted that the **developer's eligibility criteria** should demonstrate:

- a developer's strong financial position
- project alignment with the Queensland REZ Roadmap
- developers record of project delivery.
- plan for the end of the project's life
- how environmental and technical performance standards will be met.

The stakeholders highlighted that **energy system eligibility criteria** should highlight the importance of having a diverse and optimal mix of renewable energy sources (such as wind, solar, battery, and hydrogen) that can provide system security, firming, and grid-forming capabilities. They also suggested that Powerlink should guide the market within the REZs and incentivise specific development that suits the regional needs.

The stakeholder feedback from the interactive workshops at the forum will influence Powerlink's ongoing network planning and decision making.



This year’s forum had the 2023 Transmission Annual Planning Report (TAPR) delivered by Stewart Bell, Executive General Manager Network and Business Development. The report sets out the future direction in transmission for our customers and the Queenslanders we serve.

With the important task of engaging with the communities as part of the energy transformation process, Stewart presented the technical document’s key aspects. This included Queensland maximum and minimum energy and demand forecasts, generation outlook, network performance, system strength and project updates.

He also discussed Powerlink’s Asset Reinvestment Review done in partnership with the Customer Panel, Consumer Challenge Panel, Australian Energy Regulator and subject matter experts.

“We are on track for 80% renewables by 2035”
 Stewart Bell, Executive General Manager Network and Business Development



This session was followed by a panel of Powerlink’s experts who shared insights on the TAPR and how we’re increasing capacity, and customer value through efficiency and building an efficient transmission network through optimisation. Panel members included:

- Enrique Montiel, Principal Engineer Network Planning
- Nathaniel Dunnett, Manager Portfolio Planning and Optimisation
- Peta Starkey, Senior Market Specialist
- Sachin Goyal, Manager Power Systems Performance and Connections

Key themes included:

- consideration of future hydrogen loads
- evolution of non-network solutions and how Powerlink are using smarts to minimise costs
- system strength and determination of efficient levels in the market
- progress on the CopperString 2032 project a future potential of dynamic line ratings.

The full report can be read on our website: www.powerlink.com.au/tapr2023

The forum was closed by Powerlink Queensland Board’s Chair Kathy Hirschfeld AM who reinforced the board’s support of Powerlink’s open and transparent engagement with stakeholders and communities to shape our new energy future. Kathy also confirmed Powerlink will continue to work together with stakeholders and the community to deliver a world-class energy future for Queensland.





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