

Powerlink Queensland

# The Energy Charter Disclosure Statement 2024/25

---



The Energy  
Charter



# Contents

|                                                          |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| About Powerlink                                          | 2  |
| Chair and Chief Executive message                        | 3  |
| Customer scorecard                                       | 4  |
| The Energy Charter Customer and Community Maturity Model | 6  |
| Challenges and learnings                                 | 7  |
| Reporting on our customer and community priorities       | 8  |
| #BetterTogether                                          | 13 |
| Appendix                                                 | 14 |

## The Energy Charter Commitment

The Energy Charter is a national CEO-led collaboration that supports the energy sector towards a customer-centric future. By committing to the Charter, Powerlink joins other organisations across the energy supply chain in committing to progress the culture and solutions needed to deliver more affordable, reliable and sustainable energy systems in line with our customers' and communities' expectations.

This disclosure statement has been compiled with input from Powerlink's Board of Directors, Chief Executive and leadership team.

## The future of our accountability process

The Energy Charter continually evolves how signatories should demonstrate accountability. Looking forward, there will be greater emphasis on how energy businesses measure and demonstrate customer and community outcomes.

With this in mind, we began a review of the way we set commitments, report on progress, and hold ourselves to account for delivering what we said we would.

We see this as a continuing, collaborative process with our Customer Panel, based on input from and insights about the people we serve.

# About Powerlink

## Who we are

Powerlink Queensland (Powerlink) is a leading Australian provider of high voltage electricity transmission network services, combining innovation with insight to deliver safe, cost-effective and reliable solutions. We are a Government Owned Corporation that owns, develops, operates and maintains the high voltage electricity transmission network in Queensland. Our network extends 1,700 kilometres from Cairns to the New South Wales border.

Our purpose is to connect Queenslanders to a world-class energy future, providing electricity to more than five million Queenslanders and 241,000 businesses. Through our unique and central position in the power system, we are guiding the market to help influence the energy system of the future – one comprising a diverse array of generation technologies, batteries and storage solutions, new grid technologies and demand management that effectively balances customer needs.

Powerlink's network provides the platform to enable the provision of these and many other energy services while maintaining a sharp focus on safety, affordability and reliability of supply for our customers.

## The voice of the customer in this disclosure process

Powerlink's Customer Panel has been engaged in the preparation of this disclosure statement. Perspectives from the panel have particularly informed the measures included in our scorecard.

The Customer Panel, comprising representatives from across Queensland's electricity system, plays a critical role in our customer governance framework. We extend our sincere thanks for their continued contribution and commitment to this important work.

Our customer and community priorities have been informed by our engagement with customers, including from our stakeholder and community insight results.

## Our customers and communities



# Chair and Chief Executive message

Cost of living remains a significant challenge for many Queenslanders. Costs across the energy sector have increased, shaped by many global and local factors.

Powerlink is operating an increasingly complex power system with more large-scale generators and loads connecting to our network. Yet, we have maintained a high level of reliability for our customers, with our network performing strongly during peak demand times and extreme weather events, including Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

Global supply chain constraints have persisted, so we have continued to focus on building strong relationships with key suppliers to reduce cost and delivery timeframes.

The higher cost environment makes it more important than ever for Powerlink to continue innovating to manage customer impacts.

Customer engagement has played a crucial role in progressing the Gladstone Priority Transmission Investment, as well as the preparation of Powerlink's Revenue Proposal for the 2027–32 regulatory period.

We also sought insights through the annual Queensland Household Energy Survey, our community sentiment research, stakeholder perception survey and connection customer interviews.

We supported stronger engagement between the energy and agricultural sectors by funding a dedicated advisory role in the Queensland Farmers' Federation. Our First Nations Leadership Group has been formalised to provide advice and guidance on engagement and partnerships with First Nations communities.

We are delivering significant transmission projects in regional Queensland, which will contribute to the State's growth and regional development. At the same time, we are carefully implementing community engagement and community investment approaches that will ensure sustainable benefits for communities and First Nations people.

This disclosure statement is a transparent account presenting highlights of our progress and work to deliver better outcomes for Queensland energy customers and communities. It describes how we are doing things differently as we find new ways to collaborate within the energy sector, leverage technology and challenge our investment decisions to ensure they deliver best value.

We are always open to learning more about our customers and communities and invite their feedback on the content of this disclosure statement.



**Kathy Hirschfeld AM**  
Chair



**Professor Paul Simshauser AM**  
Chief Executive

# Customer scorecard

The scorecard was co-designed with our Customer Panel members. It captures relevant performance measures across the five principles of The Energy Charter and supports customer evaluation of Powerlink's customer maturity. The scorecard metrics offer indicative insights but do not establish a direct correlation with maturity ratings across principles. Based on feedback, we made minor improvements to the scorecard in 2025, more clearly noting changes or where targets are not appropriate.

| Measure                                                                      | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Targets                                                | 2023/24                                                                                                                                     | 2024/25                                                                                                                                     | Commentary                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Principle 1: We will put customers at the centre of the energy system</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                        |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Staff understanding of customers</b><br>(survey score)                    | The extent to which staff feel they know who their customers are. The percentage represents the proportion of staff who scored between 8 and 10.<br><br><i>Source: Powerlink Employee Engagement Survey<sup>1</sup>.</i>                                             | >85%                                                   | 87%                                                                                                                                         | 89% (↑2%)                                                                                                                                   | 77% participation rate                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Principle 2: We will improve energy affordability for customers</b>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                        |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Bulk Electricity Price Trend</b><br>(\$/MWh expressed as real values)     | Three-year average forecast of wholesale electricity prices, adjusted for CPI <sup>2</sup> .<br><br><i>Sources: AEMO; Powerlink; AER; Australian Stock Exchange; Australian Bureau of Statistics.</i>                                                                | Flat or declining in real terms over a 3-year horizon. | Historical 3-year average as at:<br>Jun 22: \$128.28<br>Jun 23: \$160.47<br>Jun 24: \$167.78<br><br>Forecast 3-year average (Jun 24): \$108 | Historical 3-year average as at:<br>Jun 23: \$160.47<br>Jun 24: \$166.88<br>Jun 25: \$141.60<br><br>Forecast 3-year average (Jun 25): \$119 | Efficient transmission enables timely, lower-cost generation and can help contain bulk electricity prices.                                   |
| <b>Unsupplied system minutes</b><br>(minutes)                                | An industry measure of transmission performance as experienced by consumers. It calculates energy not supplied (in megawatt minutes) divided by historical maximum demand and is included in the AEMC's annual Market Performance Review.<br><br><i>Source: AEMC</i> | < +0.58                                                | 1.342                                                                                                                                       | 0.146                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Affordability</b><br>(descriptive report back)                            | An annual briefing outlining actions to help meet our regulated operating expenditure target for the current regulatory period.<br><br><i>Source: Powerlink</i>                                                                                                      | N/A                                                    | Completed                                                                                                                                   | Completed                                                                                                                                   | Briefing provided annually at September Customer Panel meeting. Meeting summaries can be found at <a href="#">Customer Panel   Powerlink</a> |
| <b>Non-regulated project delivery on time</b><br>(percentage)                | The percentage of non-regulated projects in execution phase that are forecast to be delivered on time.<br><br><i>Source: Powerlink</i>                                                                                                                               | Trend +/- current vs previous                          | 100%                                                                                                                                        | 96% (↓4%)                                                                                                                                   | Minor performance impact due to site access restrictions, approval timing, contractor availability, and resolution of minor defects.         |

<sup>1</sup> Powerlink Employee Engagement Survey: independently conducted staff survey open to all staff.

<sup>2</sup> Metric includes the wholesale electricity price and transmission charges. Retailers recover these, along with other costs, through the prices charged to consumers.

# Customer scorecard

| Measure                                                                               | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Targets                       | 2023/24   | 2024/25       | Commentary                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Principle 3: We will provide energy safely, sustainably and reliably</b>           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                               |           |               |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Renewable electricity generator and battery storage connections completed (MW)</b> | Capacity of renewable electricity generation and battery storage projects for which all Powerlink's works are completed. Generation may not be at full capacity as facilities may still be under construction or commissioning.<br><br><i>Source: Powerlink</i> | N/A                           | 300       | 2622 (↑774%)  |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Renewable electricity generator and battery storage connections committed (MW)</b> | Capacity of renewable electricity generator and battery storage connections committed. Committed projects are projects under a Connection Project Delivery Agreement or a Connection and Access Agreement.<br><br><i>Source: Powerlink</i>                      | N/A                           | 2154      | 2806 (↑30.3%) |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Renewable energy generated in Queensland (percentage)</b>                          | Queensland's renewable energy generation as a percentage of consumption. Includes generation from bioenergy, hydro, wind, solar, rooftop PV.<br><br><i>Sources: OpenNEM</i>                                                                                     | N/A                           | 28.5%     | 30% (↑1.5%)   |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Network Security Market Notices (number)</b>                                       | This metric counts the instances where AEMO intervenes to maintain system security under normal conditions, based on relevant Market Notices.<br><br><i>Source: AEMO</i>                                                                                        | ≥10 Red<br>≤5 Green           | 1         | 0             |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Principle 4: We will improve the customer experience</b>                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                               |           |               |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Reputation score (number)</b>                                                      | How stakeholders rate the overall reputation of Powerlink. Results are on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is the highest.<br><br><i>Source: Powerlink Stakeholder Perception Survey<sup>3</sup></i>                                                                | Trend +/- current vs previous | 7.26      | N/A           | Will not be available until FY26.<br><br>Measurement is occurring after 30 June 2025.                                                        |
| <b>Customer trust score (number)</b>                                                  | How stakeholders rate Powerlink as being trustworthy. Results are on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is the highest.<br><br><i>Source: Powerlink Stakeholder Perception Survey<sup>3</sup></i>                                                                     | Trend +/- current vs previous | 7.29      | N/A           | Will not be available until FY26.<br><br>Measurement is occurring after 30 June 2025.                                                        |
| <b>Principle 5: We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances</b>         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                               |           |               |                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Support for vulnerable customers (descriptive report back)</b>                     | An annual briefing detailing key outcomes from the Uniting Energy Program, employee volunteer and sponsorship programs.                                                                                                                                         | N/A                           | Completed | Completed     | Briefing provided annually at September Customer Panel meeting. Meeting summaries can be found at <a href="#">Customer Panel   Powerlink</a> |

<sup>3</sup> Powerlink Stakeholder Perception Survey: includes customers, customer advocacy groups, contractors, suppliers, environmental and community groups, industry associations, landholders, government, regulators and utilities.

# The Energy Charter Customer and Community Maturity Model

Our self-assessed level of organisational maturity for each Charter customer principle is captured below. The assessment reflects on how organisational processes and behaviours have contributed to customers' overall energy experience.

Maintaining our maturity ratings in 2025 amid rising complexity and change, evolving stakeholder expectations and shifting compliance standards has required deliberate and sustained effort.

Communities were added to the model by The Energy Charter in 2024. Powerlink's primary accountability and disclosure assessment for communities is captured in our Better Practice Social Licence Guideline priority actions status update (see [Appendix](#)).

|            |                                                                              | Maturity levels* |          |          |           |           | Change from last year |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
|            |                                                                              | Elementary       | Emerging | Evolving | Empowered | Exceeding |                       |
| Principles | 1. We will put customers at the centre of our business and the energy system |                  |          |          |           |           | ●                     |
|            | 2. We will improve energy affordability for customers                        |                  |          |          |           |           | ●                     |
|            | 3. We will provide energy:                                                   | Safely           |          |          |           |           | ●                     |
|            |                                                                              | Sustainably      |          |          |           |           | ●                     |
|            |                                                                              | Reliably         |          |          |           |           | ●                     |
|            | 4. We will improve the customer experience                                   |                  |          |          |           |           | ●                     |
|            | 5. We will support customers facing vulnerable circumstances                 |                  |          |          |           |           | ●                     |

Key:

← Declining ● Stable → Improving

## \* Maturity levels:

- **Elementary:** no formal approach to the majority of the Principles in Action
- **Emerging:** emerging and repeatable approach to the majority of the Principles in Action
- **Evolving:** evolving and defining the approach to the majority of the Principles in Action
- **Empowered:** empowered and proactive approach to the Principles in Action and customer outcomes measured and managed
- **Exceeding:** exceeding all Principles in Action achieving optimal customer outcomes.

# Challenges and learnings

An important part of being accountable is being transparent on the key challenges faced by Powerlink and our customers over the past year. We are continuing to focus on the following challenges that require ongoing focus.

## Costs of delivering our services

The cost of delivering transmission services has increased over the past 12 months, driven by external factors including global supply chain pressures, interest rates and higher equipment and construction costs. Powerlink's internal costs have also increased due to a growing workforce to meet the demands of our future project pipeline.

Our network is becoming more complex, adding cost and complications to day-to-day operations, and making it harder to gain access to our network for maintenance work and capital projects.

Powerlink also has new regulated responsibilities — including our role as Queensland's System Strength Service Provider — which, while essential to system security, are adding costs to our business.

## Step changes in operating environment

When we lodged our 2023–27 Revenue Proposal in 2021, Powerlink's operating environment was markedly different to what we face today. Our forecasts of a reduction in capital expenditure and no real growth in operating expenditure were reasonable at the time and reflected our view of the future operating environment. The proposal was aimed at keeping costs low for Queenslanders.

But since then, the global environment has fundamentally shifted in ways that could not reasonably be foreseen. The energy sector, like many others, has been impacted by the longtail economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Global instability and efforts to boost national energy security and address climate change have driven step changes in transmission equipment costs, extended lead times, and intensified competition for labour.

While we are sharply focused on minimising any additional expenditure, our work to deliver Powerlink's regulatory obligations and keep our network safe and reliable has resulted in the need to spend more than the current regulatory allowances which were set in early 2022.

Reflective of the broader shifts in the operating environment for critical infrastructure, the overspend is not unique to Powerlink. Similar trends are being observed across other transmission and distribution businesses in the National Electricity Market.

## Transparency of future plans

Transmission is a key enabler of future energy investment. Our stakeholder insights show that Powerlink is looked to as both a trusted technical advisor and a leader in Queensland's energy system. Our investments and plans drive investment certainty and attractiveness for prospective new generators and industry.

Through recent customer research, we have heard that we need to better communicate our future plans. Transparency about what is coming and how it is progressing, and information about changes to plans are key drivers of trust — and areas in which we will focus on transparency improvements.

## More focus on direct local benefits as part of the energy transition

Powerlink's community sentiment research has shown that we need to improve the way we communicate about the direct local benefits of our projects in Queensland communities. We need to shift our narrative to local benefits and impact rather than just system wide energy objectives.

Previously we have tended to focus on the broader, system-wide benefits of our work, but we need to do more to deliver and demonstrate the local benefits — in terms of what matters to communities — jobs, investment, improved local services and building resilience in the regions.

The top drivers of trust in communities are demonstrating that the benefits of a project outweigh the impacts, and that the benefits and costs are equitably shared.

**We are responding to these challenges and learnings through our customer and community priorities.**



# Reporting on our customer and community priorities

## Delivering better coordination of energy projects

*We are improving our capabilities, processes and relationships to optimise the delivery of transmission projects and to coordinate effectively with other energy developments in communities with new network connections.*

### Our progress

#### Innovation in project delivery

Powerlink is using innovative technological, engineering and process solutions to reduce construction risks and costs, streamline planning and enhance our environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance, including:

- concrete maturity sensors to measure the relationship between concrete temperature, time and strength development, providing more accurate data for better decision-making and significantly reducing construction timelines
- ground wetness prediction modelling to identify high-risk wet areas where inaccessibility could cause construction delays
- a 3D CAD platform for primary substation design for more efficient and accurate asset management, and seamless transition from design and construction to operations.

#### Land Access Code for transmission

Significant transmission network development is being delivered across Australia and land access is under scrutiny. We want to be more accountable to landholders for our behaviours when we access their land, building trust which will bolster our ability to build and maintain the network.

We are strengthening Powerlink's current Land Access Protocols and finalising a Land Access Code for transmission to ensure land access processes are conducted in a managed and consistent manner, driving accountability and fostering positive outcomes for landholders.

To assist in developing the Code, we hosted a collaborative workshop with industry, agricultural and community stakeholders.

#### Road safety

Safe behaviours are critical for our people who traverse a road network footprint of more than 1.6 million kilometres each year, and engaged suppliers who transported more than 23,000 items of freight. We share information about road safety with our people and joined the National Road Safety Partnership Program Utilities Forum to collaborate on industry-wide improvements in road safety.

Powerlink also led a submission with The Energy Charter to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to gain funding to run an industry-wide #BetterTogether initiative on road safety. This initiative aims to address the cumulative effect on local roads and communities caused by increased heavy vehicle

activity associated with energy developments. It is intended to work towards a shared commitment by energy businesses, contractors and subcontractors to better road safety practices, and shared responsibility for improving road safety outcomes in areas associated with energy infrastructure developments.

#### Environmental offsets

We agreed to collaborate with Natural Resource Management (NRM) Regions on environmental offsets for social and environmental benefits for communities and land, in balance with our network operating needs. We gained insights into potential climate change impacts on our network and bushfire risks in partnership with National Hazards Research Australia and the Queensland Fire and Biodiversity Consortium.

#### First Nations engagement

First Nations perspectives are central to our processes for land matters, native title and cultural heritage management. Our newly established First Nations Leadership Group provides advice and perspectives that guide our approach to engaging and partnering with First Nations communities, including agreement-making processes associated with our projects.

A new Indigenous Relationship Agreement approach has been developed to formalise respectful, long-term partnerships with Traditional Owner groups across Queensland, ensuring culturally responsive engagement and shared decision-making in the delivery of transmission infrastructure. Informed by Powerlink's First Nations Leadership Group and grounded in principles of co-design, the approach establishes clear mutual expectations, upfront commitments and financial benefit packages that support First Nations communities while reducing project risks and delays.

#### Future focus

We will continue to advance initiatives that help us improve the way we deliver transmission projects alongside other energy projects and strengthen collaboration with industry and community stakeholders. This includes becoming a more active participant in the National Road Safety Partnership Program Utilities Forum and contributing to developing tailored road safety measures, training resources and accountability mechanisms in response to the unique needs of communities hosting energy infrastructure through the #BetterTogether road safety initiative.

# Reporting on our customer and community priorities

## Scaled, ready and resilient for the future

*We continue to organise our teams and capabilities to meet new network asset management, investment and operating needs. We are innovating with technological solutions that give us access to timely and accurate data to help us to make decisions. We look to advanced transmission technologies to enhance efficiency and optimise asset utilisation – to drive value from our network by boosting its capacity to move energy efficiently and cost effectively from where it is generated to where it is needed.*

## Our progress

### Better data about our operating environment

Weather poses reliability risks, prompting our trial of climate modelling software to guide asset and operational decisions.

We currently use a combination of static and dynamic line ratings to determine transmission line capacity and ensure the network is safely operated. We are trialling technology including line-based sensors and ground-based weather stations on our network, which will provide real-time ratings of transmission lines. Real-time line ratings will allow us to better manage our transmission infrastructure by providing more precise data on transmission line capacity. In partnership with Bureau of Meteorology, we will analyse data collected in this trial to improve the efficiency and reliability of the network, unlock extra capacity and reduce costs by maximising the utilisation of existing transmission lines.

This also has potential to further improve the resilience demonstrated by our network in the past year, through record minimum and maximum demand, and weather challenges including Tropical Cyclone Alfred, storms, floods and bushfires.

These extreme weather events tested our updated Crisis and Emergency Management Handbook, which has improved our responses to system events.

We also revised network operations processes to better support new generator and energy storage connections, minimising impacts while improving responsiveness.

### Digital delivery

We moved our SAP systems to the cloud using RISE with SAP, a service that helps modernise and streamline core business processes. The new platform provides increased security and functionality such as new visualisation tools for critical asset information to improve management of our network.

RISE with SAP also achieves productivity gains and better Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration. This is part of our new digital capability, which increases data security and accessibility for our team.

Our new Field Data Optimisation tool empowers our remote workers to manage data more efficiently, and the revitalised Electrical Safety Rules and associated app improve employee access to this critical safety tool.

### Graduate and apprentice recruitment

The capabilities of our people are crucial to Powerlink's readiness and resilience. We strengthened our early careers programs to help ensure we have the right people for our future network. To this aim, we engaged in a program of educational, vocational and industry events throughout Queensland. This uplift increased applications by 227% for our apprentice intake, 195% for our graduate program and 80% for our vacation program.

We recruited 27 apprentices in 2025 – more than double the number recruited in 2022 – bringing our total number of current apprentices to 78. To further strengthen our talent pipeline, we recruited for new Civil, Environment and Engineering Officer Graduate Programs. This year, we achieved an increase in the number of First Nations people and women appointed in our early careers programs. It was an achievement to be named a finalist in the Best Graduate Development Program category in the 2025 Australian HR Awards. Winners will be announced in September 2025.

Our new apprentice supervision and training program will enhance our safety culture and ensure our apprentices are well-supported, well-prepared and confident in their roles, also with the goal of encouraging retention of skilled workers.

We aim to foster inclusion while sustainably building diversity, leadership and cultural capability. We introduced a First Nations Recruitment and Professional Development Strategy, a Disability Inclusion Plan, and new procedures to support diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

We are also building our presence in regional areas, with more apprentices and project employees in locations including Townsville and Gladstone.

### Future focus

We will remain focused on innovating and adopting technology where it can unlock efficiency and operational improvements, as well as strengthening the capability and diversity of our talent pipeline to meet future workforce needs. As we continue to streamline our internal processes, we will embed a new organisational structure that will help us to be resilient and ready for the future network.

# Reporting on our customer and community priorities

## Streamlining connections

*There is more demand than ever for our connection advice and services. Those customers value speed to market, reduced uncertainty and cost management. We continue to improve the way we work with our customers and provide connection advice and services across the whole of their project life cycle.*

## Our progress

### Network connections

In the past year we finished constructing connections for three wind farms, one solar farm, and three battery energy storage systems (BESS). We finalised connection agreements for 9 new generators and BESS, and progressed 103 connection applications.

In our 2023/24 Disclosure Statement we committed to streamlining the connection process. We have made improvements to that process in an environment of unprecedented demand for our specialist connection information, advice and services.

In just three years, requests for our connection proposals have increased by 600 percent. We responded by improving the competitiveness and speed of our process to match customers' needs.

Our new bidding approach is a collaborative, expert-led process that uses real-time market data and detailed cost planning to create accurate, delivery-ready project estimates in half the usual time.

Website updates in this reporting period present clearer information to customers about the connection process, including timeframes and costs, and provide better access to resources.

Reflecting identified needs of our customers, we launched two new service offerings in the period:

#### 1. Early Engagement Products and Services

Helps customers identify potential risks and requirements early through indicative assessments and tailored advice, supporting informed decisions and reducing delays. Additional studies, such as connection or corridor options reports, may be offered based on project needs.

#### 2. Projects on Powerlink land

Supports customers developing infrastructure on Powerlink-owned land by outlining obligations and providing clear guidance. Offers conditional early access for site studies and planning to progress designs and assess potential impacts.

Our commitment to continuing to adapt and resource our account manager model (introduced in 2023/24) has this year seen us assign customers a dedicated specialist advisor with deep knowledge of each stage of their project – an approach that has been well received.

To further streamline the connection experience and end-to-end processes, we are working with AEMO, developers and Distribution Network Service Providers (DNSPs) on improvements to generator performance standards, testing and commissioning processes.

### Efficiencies in EPBC approvals

We signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to collaborate on initiatives to support environmental assessment of Powerlink projects under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). This creates opportunities to identify efficiencies in assessments, approvals and offset initiatives to support timely, effective and robust environmental assessments.

### Market insights

We improved our knowledge of priorities for energy companies seeking to connect to our network within a potential Renewable Energy Zone by undertaking a dedicated market insights project. More than 30 energy companies responded to questions on a series of topics including access arrangements, pricing, curtailment and community engagement. The responses will help us to better coordinate approaches to network connections to deliver improved outcomes in terms of speed, certainty and reduced costs for the market.

### Future focus

We will keep driving improvements in our connections process – prioritising activities that increase transparency, provide clear information and communication, and drive process efficiencies (particularly our approach to proposals) – including through enhanced ways of working with AEMO and others. We are targeting efficiency gains of 25 percent and a cost reduction of 25 percent, with a view to ultimately decreasing the price offered to customers by 10 percent.

# Reporting on our customer and community priorities

## Strengthening the transmission network in Queensland

*We recognise the central importance of timely network investment to ensure reliability and security of supply, which supports businesses, homes and essential services for Queensland electricity customers. It also promotes regional development and confidence.*

### Our progress

#### World-leading energy system modelling

As a leading provider of transmission services, we provided modelling, analysis, technical advice and other inputs to support the development of Queensland's energy roadmap, due for release in late 2025. We shared analysis of our state-wide energy system modelling with the Queensland Government's market modelling Centre of Excellence.

#### Gladstone Priority Transmission Investment (PTI)

Central Queensland's Gladstone area represents more than 20 percent of the State's total energy load and demand in the area is forecast to increase. Our 2023/24 Disclosure Statement committed to advancing the application of the PTI framework and we met this commitment by assessing credible transmission investment options for Gladstone under the PTI process.

After an initial consultation process on the proposed assessment methodology and project need, we were directed by the Queensland Government to assess the project. A further public consultation on the Draft Assessment Report was completed, and we subsequently published the Final Assessment Report for the Gladstone Project in June 2025. It recommends the preferred transmission works to ensure ongoing reliability and security of supply, and meet the forecast electrical load in anticipation of aging power station closures. Additionally, these works would compensate for the loss of essential system services, such as inertia, system strength and voltage control capability, associated with any power station closures.

#### CopperString

We achieved milestones on the CopperString project, which represents a significant Queensland Government investment in economic infrastructure in North and North West Queensland, supporting future resource activity and allowing new generation to be connected.

The preferred corridor for the Eastern link (Townsville to Hughenden) was confirmed after formal consultation, and field work is underway for necessary environmental approvals.

#### System Strength RIT-T

We ran a Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) consultation process to identify technically and economically feasible solutions to address Queensland's system strength needs, to enable the power system to operate in a stable manner. The process identified a portfolio of solutions and we are working to procure services, contracts and investments to ensure system strength is available to support reliable supply of electricity.

We are working closely with customers as we investigate opportunities and frameworks that could provide benefits to customers by potentially minimising augmentations to the network.

#### Future focus

The Gladstone Project will continue to advance through the Queensland PTI framework. This will include ongoing engagement and communications on the project and the investment process to support knowledge, transparency and confidence in the process, and being open about our learnings. For Gladstone and other network investments, we will continue working to serve the needs of customers and communities. For CopperString, this includes delivering legacy benefits through a \$30 million community investment along the project corridor to support local initiatives including community infrastructure, housing and accommodation, as well as economic and workforce development.



# Reporting on our customer and community priorities

## Community partnerships and lasting benefits

*Building trust and acceptance of our activities requires us to prioritise community needs and values, and engage in a meaningful and transparent way. Working effectively with local communities is critical to our ability to develop and operate the energy network that will meet all Queenslanders' future needs. Please refer to the Appendix for further information on The Energy Charter's Better Practice Social Licence Guideline priority actions status update to which Powerlink is committed.*

### Our progress

#### Updated Community Engagement Approach

We updated our Community Engagement Approach, which sets out the principles and commitments that guide us when engaging with communities.

To support the delivery of project activities, we increased our presence in regional Queensland with engagement-focused team members located in areas including Chinchilla, Charters Towers, Townsville, Cairns and Cannonvale.

We also established a First Nations Leadership Group whose members provide advice on our approach to engaging and partnering with First Nations communities and developing our cultural capability.

#### Social Performance Plan

We sought stakeholder input when developing a comprehensive Social Performance Plan to meet community expectations and foster an inclusive energy future. We committed to finalising our Social Performance Framework and Plan in our 2023/24 Disclosure Statement. Our Social Performance Plan and our new Community Benefit Sharing Framework guide the way we invest in and promote social sustainability and economic development in communities hosting energy infrastructure. Our new Community and Social Performance team has been stood up and resourced to action this commitment.

Our community grants program is one of the ways we invest in communities to help build strong relationships and contribute lasting benefits. In 2024/25 we distributed more than \$320,000 in grants to 78 beneficiaries across 14 local government areas in Southern, Central, North, and Far North Queensland.

#### Supporting Customers in Financial Hardship

The latest Queensland Household Energy Survey shows more households are concerned about their ability to pay their electricity bills. Our continued support for the Uniting Energy Program enables help to households in the form of personalised one-on-one support to improve their electricity affordability, reduce power bill debt and build energy literacy. With our funding support since January 2022, Uniting has provided support to 165 households, many of whom are older Australians, delivering an estimated \$132,108 in quantified benefits (in terms of savings).

In addition, Powerlink contributes to broader industry initiatives aimed at supporting customers in financial hardship. We voluntarily support the Financial Counselling Industry Fund, coordinated by the Federal Department of Social Services in collaboration with Energy Networks Australia. This initiative helps address unmet demand for financial counselling services across Australia, ensuring individuals and families have access to the support they need during challenging times.

#### The Queensland Farmers' Federation role

Through our partnership with the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF), we funded an Energy Engagement and Education Advisor role from July 2024. This role has strengthened engagement with the agricultural sector through QFF's 18 peak body members and the 13,000 primary producers they represent.

In this first year, the Advisor strengthened engagement with the sector through:

- more than 80 stakeholder meetings and workshops
- four policy submissions
- representing agricultural interests at key regional and energy forums
- ensuring local needs are reflected in Powerlink's planning and strategy.

#### CopperString engagement

An important focus for our CopperString project has been building relationships with Traditional Owners, local businesses, suppliers, industry, local governments and communities. Our Supplier Capability Development Program was launched to help local suppliers and Indigenous businesses to engage with the project by delivering training and workshops in towns across the CopperString corridor alignment including Hughenden, Cloncurry, Richmond, Mount Isa and Julia Creek.

#### Country Universities Centre

We supported educational partnerships including a continued partnership with Country Universities Centre (CUC) Maranoa and added a new foundation partnership with CUC Western Downs at Chinchilla. We funded two new university scholarships for women and First Nations engineering students and agreed to provide James Cook University students, including First Nations people, with opportunities as part of the delivery of CopperString.

# Reporting on our customer and community priorities

Community partnerships and lasting benefits continued

## Community Electrical Safety Action Plan

Our new Community Electrical Safety Action Plan guides our actions to influence safe community behaviour around our network. We developed safety awareness materials and shared these at on-site stakeholder meetings and community engagement events, including FarmFest 2025. We worked closely with local government and community groups to embed powerline safety into relevant events, such as aero and kite-focused festivals, and engaged with rural fire brigades and plantation networks to share electrical safety and bushfire awareness education.

## Future focus

We will work to earn positive community perceptions of energy infrastructure projects, by returning recognisable benefits that matter to communities who host our projects and infrastructure. To support this shift, we will keep working in relationships with organisations that help us to contribute to a better future for communities and customers in meaningful ways. For example, we will expand our commitment to be a foundation partner at CUC Hughenden and move ahead to increase our on-the-ground presence in regional communities.

# #BetterTogether

The Energy Charter **#BetterTogether** initiatives are collaborative initiatives between energy businesses, customers and communities that deliver tangible customer and community outcomes.

| Powerlink actively participated in the following Energy Charter initiatives: |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| #BetterTogether Ag + Energy Social Licence Roundtable                        |
| #BetterTogether Better Practice Social Licence Guideline + Review            |
| #BetterTogether Biodiversity + Renewables                                    |
| #BetterTogether Cost of Living Supports                                      |

# Appendix

## Better Practice Social Licence Guideline priority actions status update

In mid-2024, Powerlink submitted its first 12-Month Accountability Report under The Energy Charter's Better Practice Social Licence Guideline, assessing performance against 37 principles covering areas such as land access, engagement, community investment, biosecurity and safety education. An independent review refined these 37 baseline principles in late 2024. Twenty priority principles were selected to sharpen focus and drive improvements. Further details on committed actions and improvement areas can be found on The Energy Charter website.

| Principle                                                                  | Status |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Consideration and communication around undergrounding                      | ●      |
| Upgrades and maintenance activities in construction and operations         | ●      |
| Regional engagement teams                                                  | ●      |
| Landscaping and screening options                                          | ●      |
| Easy and timely access to records of access on request                     | ●      |
| Management plan reviews                                                    | ●      |
| Annualised compensation                                                    | ●      |
| Proactive, tailored safety education programs                              | ●      |
| Strong, tailored biosecurity management plans                              | ●      |
| Proactive biosecurity audits                                               | ●      |
| Engage with landholders on soil requirements                               | ●      |
| Protect soil from compaction, erosion, or other damage                     | ●      |
| Engagement with landholders regarding use of scrap materials and equipment | ●      |
| Provide labour and equipment in-kind                                       | ●      |
| Develop Community Benefit Sharing programs                                 | ●      |
| Prioritise impact-aware Community Benefit Sharing                          |        |
| Consultation on community infrastructure needs                             | ●      |
| Prioritise access to affordable, reliable energy for hosts                 | N/A    |
| Social and environmental criteria in procurement decision-making           | ●      |
| Agreements with local businesses for local goods and services              | ●      |

● Committed actions and outcomes    ● Progressing    ○ Needs priority attention

## Contact us

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Registered office | 33 Harold St Virginia<br>Queensland 4014 Australia<br>ABN 82 078 849 233                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Postal address    | PO Box 1193 Virginia<br>Queensland 4014 Australia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Telephone         | +61 7 3860 2111<br>(during business hours)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Email             | <a href="mailto:pqenquiries@powerlink.com.au">pqenquiries@powerlink.com.au</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Website           | <a href="http://www.powerlink.com.au">www.powerlink.com.au</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Social media      |      |