

Borumba Pumped Hydro Transmission Connections Project

POWERLINK QUEENSLAND

Welcome to our latest project newsletter

As the year comes to a close, we want to sincerely thank all landholders, Traditional Owner groups, community members and other stakeholders for their ongoing engagement and support.

We hope you and your families enjoy a safe, restful and joyful holiday season.

This newsletter aims to keep you informed about our project and highlight the events and activities we've supported in the region through the Powerlink Community and Social Investment Program, which focuses on strengthening social and economic outcomes for local communities.

We appreciate any feedback you may have on this update, so please reach out if you have any questions or suggestions, or if we can assist you in any way.

You can contact the Borumba Transmission Connections Team via email at borumba@powerlink.com.au or by calling our project numbers:

Halys to Borumba:

07 3898 4911

Borumba to Woolooga:

07 3898 4988

Powerlink acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands and waters of Queensland and in particular, the lands on which we operate. We pay our respect to their Ancestors, Elders and knowledge holders and recognise their deep history and ongoing connection to Country.



Freecall 1800 635 369

powerlink.com.au/borumbatransmission



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Project update

Powerlink continues to work with Queensland Hydro (QH) to progress the transmission infrastructure needed to connect the proposed Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage (PHES) Project to the electricity grid. A refreshed business case aligned with the Queensland Government's Energy Roadmap and future energy needs is underway.

Powerlink is continuing early works, including the environmental and planning approvals required through both Commonwealth and State Government pathways.

In late August 2025, we lodged our referral for the Borumba to Halys Transmission Connection under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC). The public comment period closed on 8 September 2025, and the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) received 63 submissions.

Following that, DCCEEW determined that the project is a controlled action, meaning it requires assessment and approval under the EPBC Act before it can proceed.

The referral will be assessed through a public environment report (PER), which is a detailed evaluation of the project's potential impacts on protected matters and the proposed management measures.

DCCEEW is currently finalising the PER guidelines, which outline the information we must provide for the assessment of the project. These guidelines are now available on the EPBC Portal for public comment, giving the community an opportunity to provide feedback. Learn more at epbcpublicportal.environment.gov.au.

Once all feedback has been reviewed by DCCEEW and the guidelines are finalised, we will prepare a detailed PER that addresses all requirements of the approved guidelines. This report will also be released for public comment, providing another opportunity for the community to review the information and have their say.

Further information about controlled action assessment methods under the EPBC Act is available on the DCCEEW website at dcceew.gov.au.

In the meantime, we are continuing key technical assessments to inform the project's design, including studies on traffic, landscape and visual amenity, bushfire risk and more.

Combined with more than 18 months of flora and fauna studies, and our upcoming social research to understand social impacts and opportunities associated with the project, as well as cultural heritage studies, this work will form a core part of the project's State planning approval process.

For the Borumba to Woolooga connection, seasonal ecological surveys were completed earlier this year, and we are continuing preparatory work for planning and environmental approvals.

We are also progressing desktop-level design assessments, which provide an early, high-level view of the potential route and help identify design constraints we may need to consider.

Project timeline update

- **December 2021**
Early engagement
- **July 2022 - October 2022**
Introduction to investigation area
- **November 2022 - April 2023**
Engagement on transmission corridor options
- **April 2023**
Release of recommended transmission corridors
- **August - October 2023**
Engagement on recommended transmission corridors
- **September 2023**
Release final corridor for Borumba to Halys transmission corridor and extended engagement on the Borumba to Woolooga corridor
- **November 2023**
Release of final corridor for Borumba to Woolooga transmission corridor
- **December 2023 - ongoing**
Landholder engagement on easement alignment
- **2025 - 2027**
Progress approval for the transmission lines through the Federal Government EPBC Act and State Government planning approvals via the MID progress under the *Planning Act 2016*



Cultural heritage surveys: Why this is an important step

Powerlink acknowledges and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. We are committed to providing effective recognition, protection and conservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage through open and honest consultation, and respectful and cooperative engagement with Traditional Owners.

Under Queensland law, anyone conducting work on land has a duty of care to avoid harm to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. When we build new transmission lines or substations, we take all reasonable and practicable measures to avoid or minimise harm to cultural heritage. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage includes areas or objects of cultural significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and includes objects and sites that hold archaeological or historic evidence of their occupation of the land and waters of Queensland.

To meet our obligations under Queensland law we consult with the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners for the area. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) or Cultural Heritage Management Agreement (CHMA) will often determine how we meet our cultural heritage duty of care. For new works this will typically require on-site cultural heritage surveys by Traditional Owners, often together with an archaeologist.

We continue to work with Traditional Owner groups in the project area to progress a CHMP or CHMA, and are looking to commence cultural heritage surveys in early 2026. These surveys will provide valuable information and is a key input to refine the final transmission line corridor to a 70m-wide easement alignment.



Housing snapshot: What the latest regional audit means

A new Regional Housing Audit, co-funded by Powerlink, has shed light on the shared and unique housing challenges across the Darling Downs and South West (DDSW) regions. For residents in the Southern Downs, South Burnett and Toowoomba regions, the findings highlight both growing pressures and important steps being taken to address them.

Southern Downs

Rental availability is extremely low, with vacancy rates close to zero in several towns. Seasonal farm work and major projects can quickly increase demand. Council is looking at practical solutions such as unlocking land, supporting small-home options and partnering with community housing providers.

South Burnett

The region is seeing growing housing stress as more people struggle to find stable and affordable accommodation. There is increasing need for social, youth and crisis housing. Council is reviewing land supply and exploring re-development opportunities to bring more homes online sooner.

Toowoomba

Toowoomba's rapid growth means demand is rising for a wider range of housing, including townhouses and smaller homes. Council is encouraging new development through incentives and support for expansion in surrounding townships.

What this means for the community

Across all three regions, the message is clear: housing demand is outpacing supply, rental options are limited, and many households are finding it tougher to secure affordable homes. Councils are responding with a mix of planning reforms, partnerships, incentives and targeted community housing initiatives. Powerlink is also considering how our work may influence local housing through the project's social impact research.

The audit helps bring these issues into focus and will support councils, community organisations and government to work together on long-term, practical housing solutions. Learn more at rda-ddsw.org.au/housing-audit.

This Regional Housing Audit was recently recognised nationally, winning the Regional Development Australia (RDA) 'Investing in Places' award at the RDA National Forum in Canberra.

Additionally, since the launch of the audit, more than \$56 million has been secured through the Residential Housing Activation Fund, making over 600 new home sites accessible across the DDSW region.



The Powerlink team out and about at the Yarraman Festival stall.

Powerlink joins the Yarraman Festival

In August 2025, Powerlink had the pleasure of sponsoring the Yarraman Festival – a lively celebration of local culture, music and family fun. Our team loved being there with a stall, meeting people from the community, and having the chance to chat about the work we do in the area.

Festival-goers were keen to find out how Powerlink helps keep electricity flowing reliably across the region and to hear about the projects we're doing to support and connect local communities. It was such a rewarding day, full of great conversations, curious questions and lots of smiles.

A big thank you to everyone who stopped by our stall.



The Powerlink team meeting with the AvoFest mascot.

A big day out at Blackbutt AvoFest

The annual Blackbutt AvoFest in September 2025 was a massive hit. Our Powerlink team had a great day attending the festivities, hosting an information stand, and chatting with locals about our projects and our role in the energy system.

It was fantastic to hear first-hand what matters most to the community and their region while soaking up the vibrant atmosphere and eating an avocado or two. Powerlink was proud to support this incredible event with a donation to help with logistics and coordination, and we're already looking forward to participating again.



Our Powerlink team joined EcoMarines at Tangalooma's Enviro Day Out, where students from across South East Queensland stepped up to learn, lead and champion environmental care.

Powerlink supports EcoMarines in regional schools

Powerlink has teamed up with the EcoMarines Foundation to deliver a pilot environmental education program to schools in the Gympie and Southern Downs regions. Following early planning with EcoMarines coordinators, Coolabunia State School joined the program in October 2025, with Amamoor State School coming on board in November.

The program empowers students to take action on water, energy, waste and habitats, providing hands-on learning through workshops, excursions and school-wide sustainability projects. Students also develop leadership skills as ambassadors for change in their communities.

By backing EcoMarines, we are helping regional students engage with sustainability, build skills and contribute to a greener future.



Powerlink and SES crews in Kingaroy celebrating the final equipment handover under the Energising Queensland SES Program.

Support for SES groups across the region

More than \$300,000 in essential new equipment has been provided to over 180 State Emergency Service (SES) groups throughout Queensland this year, with a particular emphasis on regions such as Toowoomba, Roma, the Gold Coast and Kingaroy.

The Energising Queensland SES Program, jointly delivered by Powerlink, Ergon Energy Network and Energex, recently celebrated a key milestone with the final handover of equipment in Kingaroy.

This funding allows SES groups to apply for resources to purchase critical equipment, strengthening their ability to support and protect local communities. The ongoing partnership demonstrates our commitment to the Queensland SES and highlights our shared dedication to community safety and resilience.

Local communities get a boost through Powerlink grants

Powerlink's most recent community grants round wrapped up on 22 August 2025, and once again local groups showed just how much great work is happening across the state.

Ninety-five groups were successful this year, each receiving up to \$5,000 to bring local ideas to life.

In total, more than \$370,000 in funding is going towards projects that support and strengthen communities in the 18 local government areas where our transmission projects are underway.

In Southern Queensland, we received more than 50 applications from communities across the Gympie, South Burnett, Somerset and Toowoomba local government areas. Twenty-eight community groups have been successful in receiving grants totalling \$100,000 in funding.

Their projects reflect the heart of their communities, focusing on wellbeing, connection and small improvements that make a big difference. A few examples include:

- new sign writing for the Wondai & District Men's Shed vehicle
- an older person's gymnastics program at Kilcoy Gymnastics Club
- inter-school sporting equipment for Toogoolawah State School
- a chilled water cooler for students at Durong South State School
- upgraded catering equipment for the Yarraman & District Bowls Club.

Powerlink is proud to support organisations that are creating positive change where it matters most.

If your group has a project in mind, keep an eye out for more information on the next round of Community Grants at powerlink.com.au/communitygrants.

Support

Powerlink is offering support to landholders and community members through a professional counselling service (Rural Health Connect). This is an independent and confidential provider.

To access this service, call 0493 432 144 or visit ruralhealthconnect.com.au/employee-assistance-program/. Select EAP from the services menu, select your psychologist and appointment time and complete the registration entering the EAP Program Code: 'Landholder Assist'.

About Powerlink Queensland

Powerlink is a leading Australian provider of electricity transmission services, focused on delivering a safe, cost-effective and reliable network for our customers. Our network extends 1,700km from Cairns to the New South Wales border and comprises 15,559 circuit km of transmission lines and 154 substations.

Our purpose is to connect Queenslanders to a world-class energy future, providing electricity to more than five million Queenslanders and 241,000 businesses. As well as connecting large generators to end-use customers through the distribution networks owned locally by Energex and Ergon Energy (part of the Energy Queensland Group), we also provide electricity directly to large industrial customers such as rail companies, mines and mineral processing facilities.

Further information

Scan the QR code to visit our project webpage and subscribe to keep up to date with project activities.



Or contact:

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