Burdekin River to Reid River Transmission Line and Substation FAQs

Why is this section of CopperString being re-assessed?

In March 2023, Powerlink took ownership of the CopperString project. In late 2023, a review was undertaken of the proposed transmission line and substation location from east of the Burdekin River to the proposed Mulgrave substation that identified significant constructability, access and environmental issues.

In mid-2024, Powerlink advised landholders and other stakeholders it would assess alternative locations to the north towards the Flinders Highway for the transmission line and substation.

In late August 2024, the Recommended Corridor and Substation Site Selection Report (RCSSSR) was released to landholders, Traditional Owner groups, community members and other stakeholders for feedback. The recommended corridor and substation location were reviewed in light of feedback received and changes were subsequently made to the location of the substation. The Recommended Corridor for the transmission line has now been accepted as the Final Corridor, within which the transmission line will be located.

A full copy of the Final Corridor and Substation Selection Report (FCSSSR) is available on the project website at http://www.powerlink.com.au/copperstring.

What engagement was undertaken for the FCSSSR?

Feedback was invited over a six-week period on the recommendations in the report. Additional time was also provided to stakeholders who requested it. Engagement activities included:

- upload of a report, fact sheet and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the CopperString webpage
- creation of an online interactive map that allowed people to provide feedback on a specific location
- briefing key stakeholders (elected representatives, local government and industry bodies) in-person and virtually
- an email update to the project distribution list (more than 1,500 recipients) providing links to the report and seeking feedback. Information was also sent to community groups, sporting organisations and chambers of commerce, inviting feedback and offering meetings
- two community drop-in sessions on 12 and 14 September 2024 (Mingela and Woodstock), where the community were invited to attend, learn more about the recommended corridor and substation site location and provide feedback in person
- social media posts and newspaper advertisements, promoting the community sessions and asking for feedback via the online interactive map
- phone calls, emails, letters, factsheets, mapping and meetings with landholders and Traditional Owner groups.

What feedback was received?

General feedback was received together with four formal submissions – two from government departments and two from landholders. Landholder feedback focused on minimising potential property impacts, the process for finalising the alignment, compensation and preservation of heritage values. Government feedback included comments about the comparative assessment of corridor options, environmental surveys and offsets, soil erosion, stock route preservation and consultation with mining tenement holders.

Powerlink acknowledges most of the matters raised by landholders during the engagement process relate to the potential impact of the transmission line on property operations and viability. The corridor has been carefully

selected to minimise impacts to properties and homes. It is intentionally wide at a minimum of two kilometres (km) to provide flexibility to work with landholders to determine an alignment for the proposed transmission line.

Based on the feedback received during the engagement process and assessments made following the consultation period, Powerlink does not consider amendments are necessary to the recommended Southern Corridor shown in the Recommended Corridor and Substation Site Selection Report (RCSSSR). It has now been adopted as the final corridor.

What infrastructure is proposed?

The section of CopperString between the Burdekin River and Reid River will comprise:

- a 300kV transmission line, approximately 54km long, between the Burdekin River and a proposed substation at Reid River. The line will be located within a 120m wide easement.
- two short sections of adjacent 275kV transmission lines, approximately 8km long, east from the substation at Reid River connecting to Powerlink's existing transmission network on the Strathmore to Ross 275kV line. The two adjacent lines will be located within a 120m wide easement which may widen at the connection point with the existing Strathmore to Ross line (subject to design)
- a 300/275kV substation at Reid River. The substation will be located within a 1km x 1.1km area.

What will the transmission towers look like?

Overhead transmission lines will be supported by steel lattice towers. Tower pads (including a temporary work area) will be approximately 60 metres (m) x 60m. Towers will generally be spaced around 500m to 650m apart depending on the local geography and other factors, such as land use, sensitive environmental areas, clearance requirements and structure loading limits. The towers are likely to be around 60m to 85m high, with shorter towers likely on higher ground and taller towers within low points of the corridor, again depending on the terrain, land use and other factors. Powerlink is planning the transmission route with the intent to minimise impacts on landholders and the local community. This includes identifying and minimising the number of dwellings near the proposed electricity infrastructure. More broadly, Powerlink also identifies other social infrastructure such as lookouts, camping areas, and community recreation facilities when assessing suitable corridors for visual impacts from its transmission lines.

How are each corridor and substation site assessed?

The corridor and substation site have been assessed using qualitative and quantitative information. Qualitative assessment includes professional expert input and observations in the field. Quantitative assessment considers numerical data on impacted areas such as high value environmental features, transmission line length and individual counts (for example, houses, number of land parcels and number of bend points for a potential transmission line).

The assessment process involves weighing up the potential environmental, social, technical and economic impacts of potential corridor and substation site options. The final corridor and substation site is the option that has the least overall impacts based on careful consideration of the assessment factors. When selecting a proposed route for a new transmission line or location for a substation, we consider a range of factors, including:

- social impacts, including land use and proximity to residential dwellings
- topography (features of the land, such as hills and creeks)
- important agricultural land and activities
- significant Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Cultural Heritage
- environment and conservation areas
- constructability and access
- location of towns and high population areas

- location of existing infrastructure
- economic cost.

Additional factors we consider when selecting a site for substations include:

- proximity to existing network
- sufficient space for maximum development, including rebuilding
- surrounding area suitable for transmission line connections
- flooding risk
- rocky and uneven terrain
- 24/7 substation access from nearest formed road.

Where can I find a copy of the Final Corridor and Substation Site Selection Report?

A full copy of the FCSSSR is available on our website at www.powerlink.com.au/copperstring.

Please contact us if you would like to receive a hard copy of the report.

What are the next steps to finalise the alignment?

In early 2025, the project team began work to determine the location of the transmission line within the corridor. Powerlink will work with directly affected landholders, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders and undertake a range of environmental, heritage and constructability studies to determine a proposed easement alignment for the transmission line within the final corridor. It will also progress engagement and studies for the final substation site.

Powerlink will share information about the construction process and timeframes and will agree to practical measures to minimise property impacts during this phase of the project. Potential construction mitigation measures may comprise temporary and permanent reconfiguration of property infrastructure (for example, fencing, gates, grids, watering points, holding yards), movement of cattle away from the temporary work area or agistment. Impacts on property operations are also considered as part of the compensation assessment.

Input from landholders, the wider community and other stakeholders about this project has been vital in guiding our decision-making and planning. We welcome feedback and will continue to work closely with directly impacted stakeholders.

To learn more about the final transmission line corridor or substation location:

- visit the project website www.powerlink.com.au/copperstring
- email copperstring@powerlink.com.au.