

CopperString

POWERLINK QUEENSLAND

Message from our Project Director

As we welcomed 2026 the team at Powerlink continues to work collaboratively with Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) to deliver North and North West Queensland's largest economic development project.

I am privileged to have stepped into the role of CopperString Project Director from my role as Deputy Project Director.

Tom Dockray, has provided strong leadership and has guided this project through major and complex phases with strategic oversight. We thank him for all of his efforts and he will be missed by the team.

As the transition to QIC progresses, Powerlink's resourcing on CopperString will gradually reduce in line with the completion of its transition scope. QIC is in the process of establishing a dedicated entity which will take CopperString forward into delivery. This model will ensure continuity while enabling the development of long-term capability beyond our involvement.

Just before Christmas, we celebrated a significant step forward for the project, the news that the Flinders Substation had received Ministerial Infrastructure Designation approval. This substation will feed new energy generation across the Flinders Shire, into the project's Eastern Link and connecting to the National Electricity Market. On the ground works will commence later this year.

In our Experience Centre, we celebrated our 6,000th visitor, a milestone we are incredibly proud of since opening the doors in September 2024.

We welcomed the recent announcement from Queensland Treasurer and Minister for Energy, David Janetzski of the \$50 million CopperString Community Benefits Fund. The fund will see priority housing, water and local infrastructure projects delivered in Townsville, Charters Towers, the Flinders Shire, Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry and Mount Isa.

Our Supplier Capability Development Program has received positive feedback across the corridor. We are building supplier capability because we know that CopperString will bring more major projects to this region, and it is important that local businesses are ready for what's next.

As we continue to work through the transition, I want to assure you that the team remain committed to close collaboration with councils, communities, landholders, Traditional Owners, regional leaders and key organisations along the CopperString corridor. We will keep you informed as we progress.

Please enjoy this latest edition of the Project Update.

Vikram Dhiman
CopperString Project Director



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.

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Farewell from Tom Dockray

As the project continues to transition to QIC, I have stepped down from my role as Project Director. The project is in capable hands with Vikram Dhiman who has been with the organisation for two decades, my Deputy for this past 18 months and with the project since it was acquired in 2023.

I will always have a passion for this project and for the region it calls home. I want to thank all of the communities from Townsville to Mount Isa for your continued support over these last three years.

I am proud to have led the team through some of the project's pivotal major milestones including the official start of construction in July 2024 with our copper shovels in hand. This moment was more than a decade in the making and one that we shared with the leaders who backed this project from its inception. A career highlight for myself personally.

My team uplifted and enhanced the project's design maturity which enabled detailed construction planning to get underway. We solved constructability issues relating to difficult terrain with a corridor realignment at each end. We achieved advanced project approvals and we completed construction of the 400+ bed workforce accommodation facility in Hughenden.

I will continue to work alongside Vikram and the team until the end of March to ensure a smooth and well-supported handover. Thank you again and I look forward to seeing you all again soon.



Hughenden Hub Update

Flinders Substation approved to proceed

The CopperString project's Hughenden Hub is one step closer to construction after receiving Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID) approval for the Flinders Substation on 23 December 2025.

The substation will feed new energy generation across the Flinders Shire into the project's Eastern Link (Hughenden to Townsville), connecting to the National Electricity Market.

Flinders Substation is located six kilometres south of Hughenden on Kennedy Developmental Road and includes the construction of a temporary concrete batching plant within the substation footprint and a new water bore adjacent to the substation.

On-the-ground works are set to commence later this year.

Market engagement for bulk earthworks and civils at the Flinders Substation commenced late-2025 and Powerlink is now preparing to issue an Invitation to Tender early March 2026.

Visit powerlink.com.au/copperstring for more information about the project and planning approvals, including the MID process.





 Hughenden workforce accommodation facility

Eastern Link workforce accommodation EOI process

In late 2025, the project team conducted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to help identify potential locations for workforce accommodation facilities (WAFs) along the project's Eastern Link. These temporary WAFs will house project personnel and are expected to be required for up to five years, including 12 months for construction. Multiple WAFs will be required to deliver the Eastern Link and may include accommodation facilities, health and wellbeing services, laundry facilities, car parking, workshops, and more.

Between 22 September and 24 October 2025, landholders were invited to nominate properties for investigation by the project team, to determine potential suitable locations. Information sessions were held in Charters Towers to assist landholders in the submission process. The EOI identified several options, and these are undergoing further assessment.

All applicants will be updated on the outcome of their submission as part of the final assessment process. We thank landholders within the community for their cooperation and engagement in helping us find the best locations for the Eastern Link WAFs.



Fencing and water infrastructure relocation at Flinders Substation site

In October 2025, local contractor, Coward Contracting, was awarded the fencing package which included 3.5km total rural fencing and 2.5km waterpipe and troughs.

These works will enable the commencement of the bulk earthworks at the substation site later this year.



\$50 million CopperString Community Benefits Fund

Earlier this month, we welcomed the Queensland Treasurer and Energy Minister, David Janetzki to Townsville and along the project corridor. The Treasurer talked about the \$50 million CopperString Community Benefits Fund which will support legacy projects across seven Local Government Areas from Mount Isa to Townsville.

The fund will see priority housing, water and local infrastructure projects delivered in Townsville, Charters Towers, the Flinders Shire, Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry and Mount Isa.

As part of the fund, \$4.285 million is set aside for critical local infrastructure projects supporting the Flinders Substation and Hughenden Hub, as well as an initial \$1 million to support detailed design and cost analysis for critical water and sewerage infrastructure.



Image source: Townsville Enterprise

Treasurer Janetzki said -

“We included a record investment in this year’s Budget to ensure affordable, reliable and sustainable energy through the delivery of this project.

“This is real money to build the transmission line and real investment in the economic growth of our State.”



CopperString Experience Centre

Celebrating 6,000 visitors

Since opening the doors in September 2024, the CopperString Experience Centre has welcomed its 6,000th visitor.

From school groups and families to community members, tourists and industry guests, thank you everyone who has come to learn, explore and connect with the CopperString project.

School holiday program

We’re proud of our school holiday program. Each school holidays the team put together experiences for children to learn about the project and the energy industry in a creative way.

We give them an insight into future careers and why the CopperString project is integral to the prosperity of North and North West Queensland. Over the December/January school holidays, we were thrilled to welcome more than 200 visitors to the CopperString Experience Centre.

Visit copperstringexperience.com.au to learn more.





Delivering for community and industry

Where we've been recently...

- Townsville Industry Breakfast (Townsville)
- Supplier Capability Development Program workshops (Hughenden, Richmond, Cloncurry, Julia Creek and Mount Isa)
- CopperString Regional Reference Group meeting (Cloncurry)
- Meeting of the Mines (Cloncurry)
- Beat the Heat Festival (Cloncurry)
- Hughenden Country Universities Centre (CUC) official opening (Hughenden)
- Townsville Chamber AGM (Townsville)
- Hughenden Community Street Party (Hughenden)
- Julia Creek Combined Sporting Association Big Weekend (Julia Creek)
- North Queensland Women's Leadership Forum (Townsville)
- Meet the Buyer (Charters Towers)
- Charters Towers Regional Council Quarterly Business Breakfast (Charters Towers)
- SES 50th Anniversary Celebration (Townsville)
- North Queensland Tourism Awards (Townsville)
- Townsville Grammar School Environment Expo (Townsville)



Sponsorships confirmed along the alignment

Powerlink is proud to confirm the following local sponsorships as part of the CopperString project:

- Foodbank Queensland's School Breakfast Program
- Charters Towers Business Awards
- Hughenden Festival of Outback Skies

Sponsorship applications

Community groups and events are encouraged to apply for sponsorship via the CopperString project website.

CopperString has and always will be a community project. Our sponsorship application form and guidelines are on our website.

Visit powerlink.com.au/copperstring to apply.

Supplier Capability Development Program

Powerlink's Supplier Capability Development Program was designed to help businesses build the capability and confidence to target a wide range of supply opportunities with local councils, Queensland Government, the agricultural sector, large businesses in the region and major projects both current and planned, including CopperString.

We have completed four workshops over various sessions across Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Julia Creek, Richmond and Hughenden.

- Workshop 1 – Be visible and compliant
- Workshop 2 – Tendering
- Workshop 3 – Meeting buyer requirements
- Workshop 4 – Contract management

A total of 159 individual suppliers attended one or more workshops, a 9% increase since August 2025, indicating continued growth in program reach.

Supplier feedback highlights the program's impact:

- 95% reported improved knowledge and skills
- 95% would recommend the program
- 100% found the content relevant

Overall, attendance and feedback results show strong regional engagement, growing supplier capability and clear interest from businesses preparing for future project opportunities.

For more information about local participation or the project's Australian Industry Participation Plan contact Sam Scandlyn, Local Economic Participation Specialist, via sam.scandlyn@powerlink.com.au or 07 3898 4439.





Community Grants awarded along CopperString corridor

Powerlink's Community Grants provide small grants for one-off short-term community projects and activities that align with Powerlink's commitment to sustainable communities and economic development.

In mid-2025, Powerlink launched round three of the grants program which was made available to 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs) including Mount Isa, Cloncurry, McKinlay, Flinders, Charters Towers and Townsville along the CopperString alignment.

Thank you to all groups who submitted applications and congratulations to those successful recipients.

For more information on the Powerlink Community Grants program email communitygrants@powerlink.com.au.

Townsville

- Townsville Men's Shed Inc.
- Townsville and District Rugby League Referee Association
- Saints Netball Club Inc
- Community Information Centre Townsville Inc
- Townsville Dragon Boat Club Inc.

Charters Towers

- Pentland Progress Association Inc
- Charters Towers Rugby League Limited
- Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association- PCYC Charters Towers
- Blackheath and Thornburgh Parents and Friends Association

Flinders

- Flinders Hack & Pony Club Inc
- Hughenden Show Society
- St Francis Catholic School Family and Community Engagement Group
- Flinders Tennis Club

Richmond

- Richmond Tennis Club
- Richmond Junior Rugby League Football Club Inc
- Selectability
- Richmond Athletics North West Queensland

McKinlay

- Julia Creek Combined Sporting Association
- Julia Creek Primary P and C Association

Cloncurry

- Cloncurry Stockman's Challenge and Campdraft Assoc Inc

Mount Isa

- Share the Dignity
- CUC Mount Isa Ltd
- Parkside United Junior Football Club Inc.



Powerlink's CopperString achievements and milestones

CopperString is the largest ever economic development project undertaken in North and North West Queensland, driven by more than a decade of advocacy from regional leaders.

Since acquiring CopperString in March 2023, Powerlink has been proud to advance the project and deliver significant milestones.

- **March 2023:** Powerlink took ownership of CopperString from CuString
- **October 2023:** Queensland Government announced \$1.3 billion funding package for Powerlink to advance the CopperString project
- **2023 – 2024:** Detailed design, early works and additional statutory approvals for CopperString
- **July 2024:** Construction commences at the Hughenden WAF
- **July 2024:** Supplier Capability Development Program is launched
- **September 2024:** CopperString Experience Centre opens
- **September 2024:** Construction commences at the Richmond WAF
- **August 2025:** Powerlink's CopperString project wins the Raising Regions Award at the Townsville Chamber Business Awards
- **October 2025:** Queensland Energy Roadmap released and the transition of CopperString from Powerlink to QIC is announced
- **October - November 2025:** Early works completed at the Flinders Substation site
- **November 2025:** Construction complete at the Hughenden WAF
- **December 2025:** Flinders Substation receives Ministerial Infrastructure Designation approval
- **March 2026:** Flinders Substation earthworks Invitation to Tender progressed with commencement planned for mid-2026



Further information

Powerlink is committed to ongoing genuine and timely engagement to ensure we deliver positive outcomes for landholders, stakeholders, the environment and local communities where our transmission infrastructure is located.

To learn more about CopperString, contact the project team on 1800 635 369 or email copperstring@powerlink.com.au.



Use the QR code to access our project webpage or visit powerlink.com.au/copperstring

