



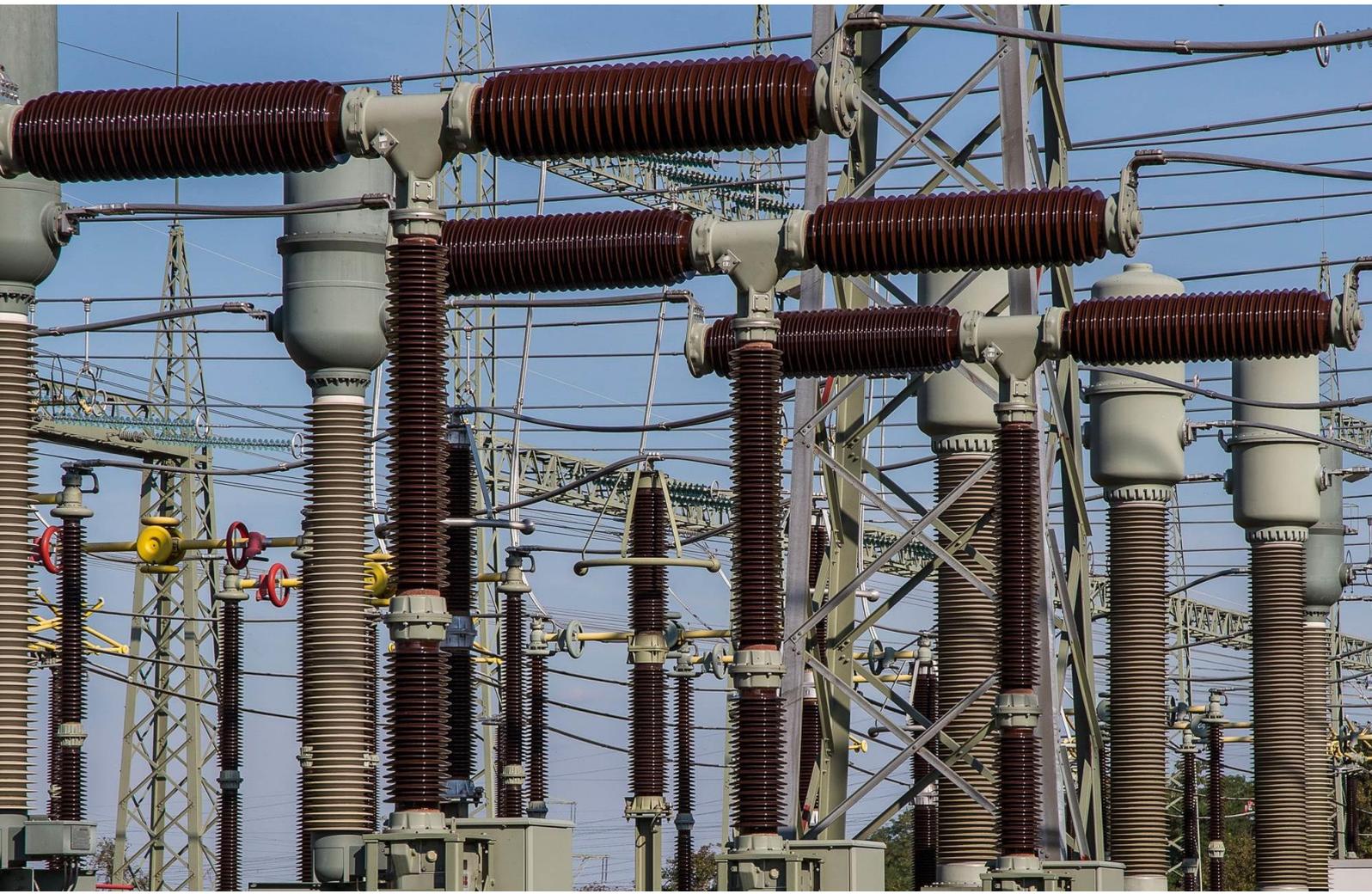
Gawara Baya Wind Farm Connection Project

Ministerial Infrastructure Designation
– Minor Amendment Proposal Report

PREPARED FOR
Powerlink Queensland

DATE
27 January 2026

REFERENCE
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Gawara Baya Wind Farm Connection Project

Ministerial Infrastructure Designation – Minor Amendment Proposal

Report

0749662



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
ERM	Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd
ha	Hectare
MGR	Minister's Guidelines and Rules, version 3.0, 22 July 2024
MID	Ministerial Infrastructure Designation
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
MSES	Matters of State Environmental Significance
NC Act	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>
Planning Act	<i>Planning Act 2016</i>
Planning Scheme	Hinchinbrook Shire Planning Scheme 2017
RE	Regional Ecosystem
SPP	State Planning Policy, July 2017
The Project	Powerlink's Gawara Baya Wind Farm Connection Project
Wind farm	Gawara Baya Wind Farm

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This Minor Amendment Proposal Report (Proposal Report) has been prepared by Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd (ERM), on behalf of Powerlink Queensland (Powerlink). The Proposal Report includes an assessment of the Project in accordance with Minister's Guidelines and Rules, v3.0 (MGR), in particular, chapter 7, part 3, and schedule 3, and is accompanied by various documents as appendices.

The purpose of the Proposal Report is to support the Honourable Jarrod Bleijie, Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, and Minister for Industrial Relations consider a proposed minor amendment to an existing Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID) to the Genex Kidston Connection Project (MID-1021-0548).

The minor amendment to the MID is sought to facilitate a connection to the adjacent Gawara Baya Wind Farm (wind farm) (the Project).

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Powerlink was engaged by Genex Power Limited (Genex) to deliver a 275kV electricity transmission line and two associated substations, including the Guybal Munjan Substation, to connect Genex's renewable energy generation project at Kidston to the national electricity market (Genex Kidston Connection Project).

Powerlink progressed with Commonwealth and state-level approvals processes under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and *Planning Act 2016* (Planning Act) respectively, with approval under the EPBC Act granted in October 2022 following assessment by preliminary documentation. The former Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning made the above-referenced MID on 24 June 2022. The MID is related to the land described in **Table 1-1** and roads listed in **Table 1-2**, and is herein referred to as the "Subject Land."

Independent of Genex's project, Windlab Developments Pty Ltd (Windlab) seeks to establish a connection to Powerlink's transmission grid, via the Guybal Munjan Substation, for their State and Federally approved wind farm. To facilitate this connection, Powerlink seeks to extend their existing substation to the west and construct six poles from the extension to the wind farm's transmission tower immediately to the west of the property boundary and Knuckledown Road reserve.

Following an endorsement request to the Minister for a minor amendment, on 18 August 2025, the Genex Kidston Connection Project (Gawara Baya) was endorsed to follow the MID minor amendment process.

The Project was referred to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for a controlled action decision under the EPBC Act (reference number 2025/10246), with a decision on 8 September 2025 noting the Project did not constitute a controlled action.

Since this endorsement, Powerlink's ongoing planning for the Project has necessitated a change to the Project layout to avoid and manage potential impacts to cultural heritage. A summary of the changes is provided in **Appendix A**.

TABLE 1-1 LAND PARCELS DESIGNATED

Lot on plan (part of)	Tenure	LGA
591 on SP302249	Freehold	Hinchinbrook Shire
26 on WU4	Freehold	Hinchinbrook Shire
100 on SP281848	Freehold	Hinchinbrook Shire
3198 on PH2177	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
3 on WU48	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
6 on WU50	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
1 on OC64	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
5234 on SP275834	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
1 on CLK23	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
5 on CLK23	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
11 on CLK26	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
501 SP232789	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
547 on SP242570	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional
3 on CLK34	Leasehold	Charters Towers Regional Etheridge Shire
4 on SP348502 (formerly 4 on CD35)	Leasehold	Etheridge Shire
1 on CD25	Freehold	Etheridge Shire
1 on PER6688	Leasehold	Etheridge Shire
3 on CD12	Leasehold	Etheridge Shire
14 on LH8	Leasehold	Etheridge Shire Charters Towers Regional
182 on PH995	Leasehold	Etheridge Shire
66 on SP304951	Freehold	Etheridge Shire
44 on USL33	Unallocated State Land	Etheridge Shire
11 on SP345756 (formerly 1 on SP289310)	Freehold	Etheridge Shire
12 on SP345756 (formerly 2 on SP289310)	Freehold	Etheridge Shire

TABLE 1-2 ROADS FORMING PART OF DESIGNATION

Road	Road
Furber Road	Kangaroo Hills Road
Unknown Road 1	Kallanda Road
Greenvale Valley Road	Ewan Mount Fox Road
Unknown Road 2	Kennedy Development Road

Road	Road
Craiglee Road	Gregory Development Road
Gadara Road	Gilberton Road
Lava Plains Mount Fox Road	Proposed Road

2. SITE CONTEXT

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION AND EXISTING USE

The Project Area depicted in **Figure 2-1** and defined as per **Table 2-1** is affecting only a small area of the existing MID (i.e., Lot 591 on SP302249 and part of the Knuckledown Road reserve). The connection to the wind farm has been shown within this figure on the western boundary (Lot 3198 on SP344602).

The Project Area is approximately 110 km north-west of Townsville and 40 km south-west of Ingham, Queensland. It is located within the Rural Zone overlaid as a solar energy development precinct under the Hinchinbrook Planning Scheme with the dominant land use in the area characterised as pastoral or grazing land for livestock production (predominantly cattle). The Charters Towers Regional Local Government Area borders the Project Area along the south and western boundary and is also zoned as Rural (Lot 3198 on SP344602).

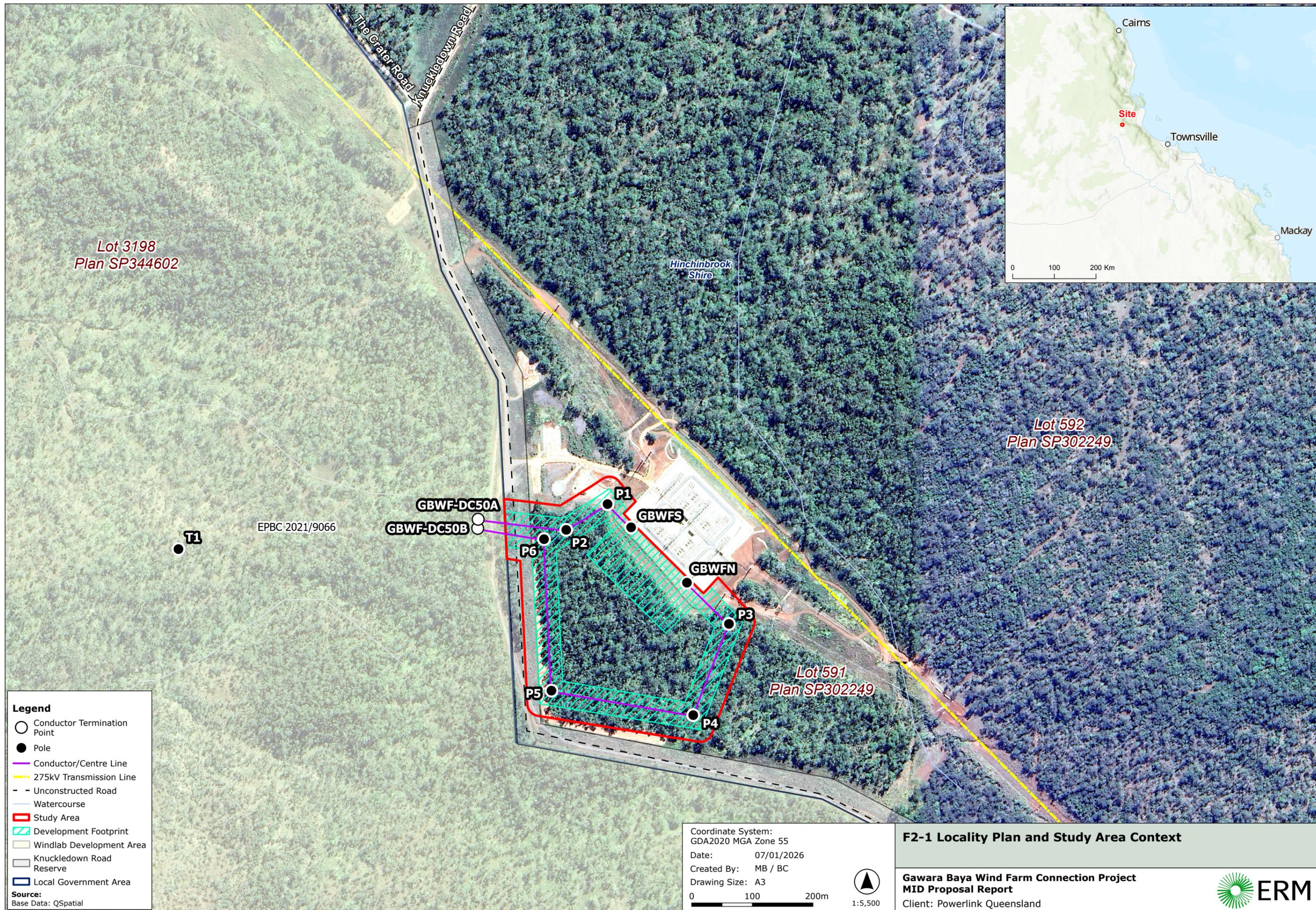
The Project Area and the adjacent localities are classed as Strategic Environmental Area – Designated Precincts (Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES) category B regulated vegetation) under the State Planning Policy (SPP). The Girringun Forest Reserve is located within 20 km in the north-west of the Project Area.

The existing use on Lot 591 on SP302249 is electricity infrastructure, namely the Guybal Munjan Substation and associated transmission lines and towers for connection. Existing laydown areas and access tracks associated with construction of the substation are also features on this land parcel. Surrounding areas are largely utilised for rural uses, including cattle grazing.

TABLE 2-1 APPLICATION DETAILS

MID Minor Amendment Proposal	
Site Details	
Real Property Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lot 591 on SP302249 Part of Knuckledown Road reserve (unconstructed road)
Address	Knuckledown Road, Mount Fox, QLD 4850
Tenure	Freehold
Landowner	Powerlink Queensland
Project Area	11.8 hectares (ha ¹)
Development Footprint	5.5 ha
Local Government	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
Planning Scheme	Hinchinbrook Shire Planning Scheme 2017
Zone	Rural
Easements	ACP805060

¹ For the purposes of this assessment, total hectare calculations are rounded to one decimal place.



Lot 3198
Plan SP344602

Hinchinbrook
Shire

Lot 592
Plan SP302249

Lot 591
Plan SP302249

EPBC 2021/9066

Legend

- Conductor Termination Point
- Pole
- Conductor/Centre Line
- 275kV Transmission Line
- - Unconstructed Road
- Watercourse
- ▭ Study Area
- ▨ Development Footprint
- ▨ Windlab Development Area
- ▭ Knuckledown Road Reserve
- ▭ Local Government Area

Source:
Base Data: QSpatial

Coordinate System:
GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

Date: 07/01/2026

Created By: MB / BC

Drawing Size: A3

0 100 200m

1:5,500

F2-1 Locality Plan and Study Area Context

Gawara Baya Wind Farm Connection Project
MID Proposal Report

Client: Powerlink Queensland



3. APPROVALS CONTEXT

3.1 PLANNING ACT 2016

3.1.1 MINISTERIAL INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGNATION

On 24 June 2022, the former Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Steven Miles, made the decision to designate the Subject Land for 'electricity operating works' to facilitate the construction of the Genex Kidston Connection Project (MID-1021-0548). The MID allowed for the delivery of a 275kV electricity transmission line and two associated substations (Kidston and Mount Fox also known as Guybal Munjan) to connect the Genex renewable energy generation project at Kidston to the national electricity grid. A copy of the Decision Notice and Plan of Designation is provided as **Appendix B**.

3.1.1.1 MINOR AMENDMENT PROPOSAL ENDORSEMENT REQUEST

To support the Project, ERM on behalf of Powerlink, undertook pre-lodgement engagement with the Infrastructure Designations Team in the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP) between April and July 2025. Following that process, a formal request to the Minister seeking endorsement to proceed with a proposed minor amendment to the MID, was lodged on 10 July 2025.

On 18 August 2025, advice from DSDIP was received notifying that the Genex Kidston Connection Project (Gawara Baya) had been endorsed for the MID minor amendment process.

3.2 ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT 1999

The Genex Kidston Connection Project was approved under the EPBC Act in October 2022.

Given the proposed addition of infrastructure, a referral to the DCCEEW for determination on whether the Project constitutes a controlled action was progressed in August 2025 (reference number 2025/10246). On 8 September 2025, notification was received from DCCEEW advising that the Project did not constitute a controlled action. A copy of the decision notice is provided in **Appendix C**.

As a result of ongoing planning for the Project, an amendment to the layout was required to avoid and manage potential impacts to a cultural heritage find. As such, Powerlink is proposing to undertake a self-assessment to ensure the revised alignment is suitably considered by DCCEEW. For noting, the assessment of the revised alignment does not introduce additional impacts to MNES beyond those already assessed and has a reduction in overall impact. Nonetheless, Powerlink will undertake an EPBC Act self-assessment to confirm the revised alignment is consistent with the 'not a controlled action' decision on the referral containing the original layout.

4. PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks a minor amendment to the existing MID (MID-1021-0548) described as per **Table 4-1** below. The proposed minor amendment will facilitate the connection of Windlab's wind farm to the national energy grid via Powerlink's transmission infrastructure. The proposed use and outcomes sought are consistent with the original designation and purpose of the Subject Land. It is expected the plan of designation will be modified to accommodate the additional infrastructure as presented in **Figure 2-1** at the eastern end of the existing designation.

TABLE 4-1 SUMMARY OF DESIGNATION

MID Designation Details	
Decision	MID made under Section 38 of the Planning Act
Date of Decision	24 June 2022
Type of Infrastructure	Planning Regulation 2017, Schedule 5, Part 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 7: electricity operation works.
MID Reference	MID-1021-0548

4.1 TYPE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed minor amendment involves the development of additional 'electricity operating works' infrastructure.

4.2 NATURE, SCALE AND INTENSITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed minor amendment will increase the development footprint in the Project Area due to the proposed substation extension and construction of two 275kV single line circuits on six transmission poles. The Project's development footprint comprises 5.5 ha and includes temporary construction laydown yards and site offices, access tracks, pole construction and volumetric considerations related to transmission lines, and the expansion of the existing substation.

4.2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

The design of the Project has undergone multiple iterations to avoid and minimise impacts to environmentally and culturally sensitive areas. The original design had a development footprint of approximately 7.6 ha, however, due to multiple design revisions, the development footprint has been reduced to 5.5 ha.

4.2.1.1 TRANSMISSION LINE DESIGN

To minimise the impacts of the transmission line component of the Project, the Proponent implemented design refinements to reduce required clearance width and pole locations that would avoid clearing sensitive habitat as much as possible and manage potential impacts to cultural heritage.

Clearance width

The Proponent's asset management standards dictate a clearance width of 60 metres for a single circuit 275kV transmission line. The proponent undertook a design refinement activity to determine if the standard clearance width could be reduced whilst maintaining safe electrical operation of the asset. Internal design specialists reviewed elements such as structure type, structure height and insulator arrangement. Additionally, specialist consideration of the location and site context was undertaken to assess the bush fire risk posed to the asset. This review determined that a 40 m clear-to-sky clearance width, with future allowance to assess and treat individual marginal trees that grow to pose a risk to the safe operation of the asset, was deemed acceptable. This design change reduced the overall impact of the transmission line by a third.

Pole locations

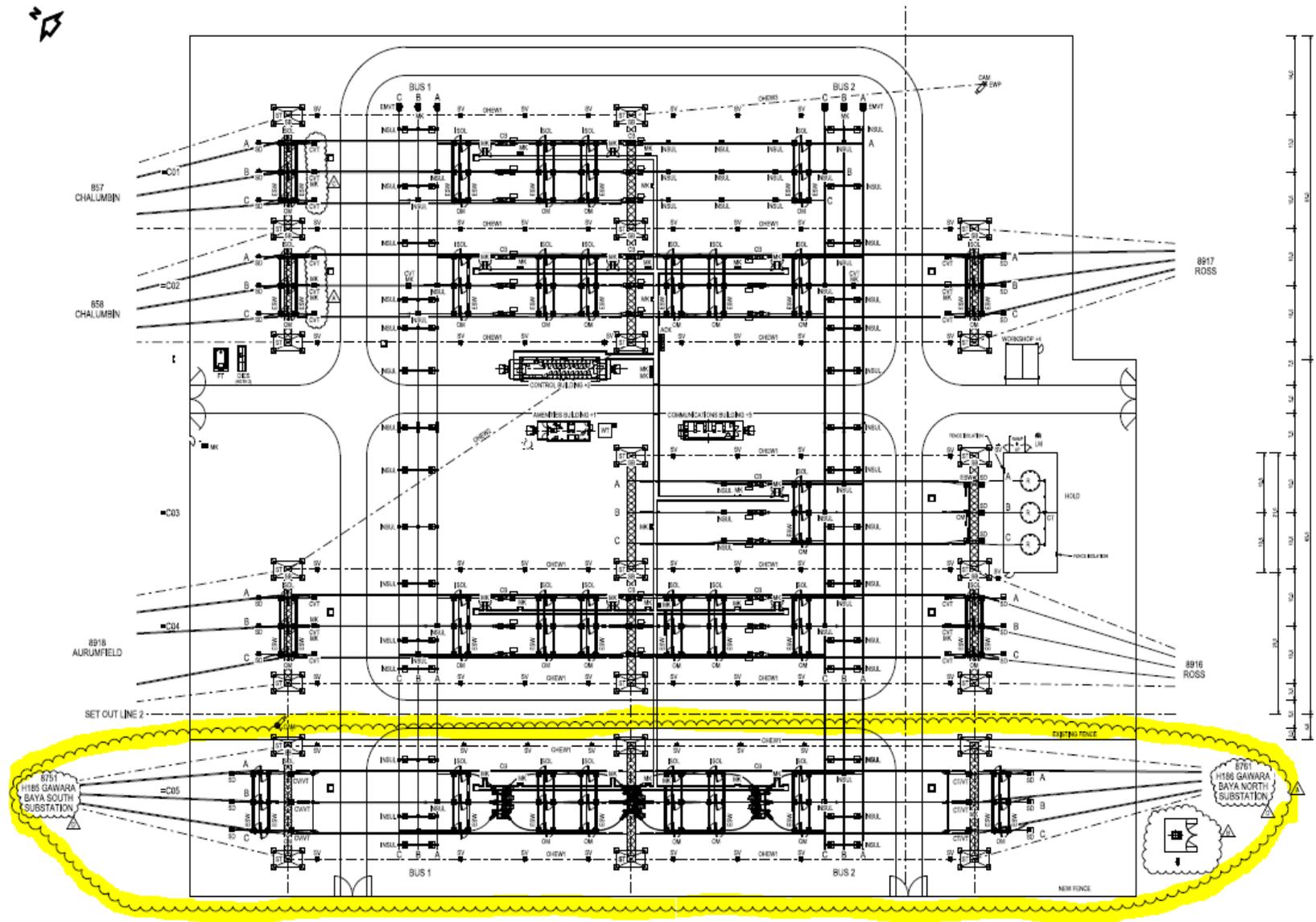
Pole locations have been strategically chosen to avoid clearing sensitive habitat as much as possible and manage potential impacts to culturally sensitive areas, whilst meeting the electrical engineering requirements of the transmission line. Several design refinements have occurred during the planning phase, with the primary aim of maximising use of cleared areas associated with existing infrastructure and firebreaks, especially along the western boundary. The final design utilised Lidar data to further microsite the poles and resulted in a reduction of the overall clearance area.

4.2.1.2 SUBSTATION EXTENSION DESIGN

The Guybal Munjan Substation's locality and existing infrastructure was leveraged when selecting a site to facilitate the connection of Windlab's 400MW wind farm to Powerlink's transmission network. The transmission line connection to Guybal Munjan Substation requires an extension of its existing footprint to accommodate the two new 275kV feeder bays. Refer **Figure 4-1** for a design drawing of the substation layout.

The development footprint is a conservative estimate that allows for these feeder bays, cut batter and an adequate distance from vegetation for the management of bush fire risk to the asset. Topography is the greatest driver for the size of the extension area to the substation. With more data, such as geotechnical, civil design will seek every opportunity to reduce this footprint where possible.

FIGURE 4-1 SUBSTATION LAYOUT



4.3 LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATIONS – MINOR AMENDMENT PROPOSAL

In accordance with Section 36(1) of the Planning Act, the criteria for a designator to be satisfied to make or amend a MID is as follows:

- (a) *The infrastructure will satisfy statutory requirements, or budgetary commitments, for the supply of the infrastructure; or*
- (b) *There is or will be a need for the efficient and timely supply of the infrastructure.*

The proposed minor amendment is required to facilitate the efficient and timely connection of the wind farm to the national energy market. The Project will assist the Australian Government in achieving their renewable energy target which aims to deliver an extra 33,000 gigawatt-hours of electricity from renewable sources every year from 2020 to 2030. Without this connection, the wind farm will be unable to operate and contribute to this target. Additionally, this Project is strongly aligned with the recently released Queensland Energy Roadmap 2025, whereby Powerlink, as a Government-owned Corporation, is supporting private sector investment to deliver sustainable and reliable energy solutions for Queenslanders.

It is therefore considered that the proposed minor amendment achieves the criteria of section (1)(b) of the Planning Act.

Additional criteria for the making or amending of a MID as per section 36(2) – 36(7) are also applicable. **Table 4-2** includes these criteria and ERM's response.

TABLE 4-2 CRITERIA AND RESPONSE

Planning Act reference	Criteria	ERM Response
36(2)	To make or amend a designation, if the designator is the Minister, the Minister must also be satisfied that adequate environmental assessment, including adequate consultation, has been carried out in relation to the development that is the subject of the designation or amendment.	<p>This Proposal Report has been prepared to provide a detailed assessment of the proposed minor amendment. The Proponent has undertaken detailed environmental assessments as part of regulatory requirements. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Referral of the Project under the EPBC Act, informed by a Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) Impact Assessment Report. The referral process included public notification. The process was concluded with a 'not controlled action' decision (refer Appendix C). For noting, this referral was associated with an earlier revision of the Project's layout. Powerlink is updating the MNES Impact Assessment Report and proposing to undertake a self-assessment to ensure they are meeting environmental management obligations under the EPBC Act. Of significance, the current layout has resulted in a reduced development

Planning Act reference	Criteria	ERM Response
		<p>footprint and does not introduce additional impact beyond what was already assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation of a Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES) and Matters of Local Environmental Significance technical report to support the MID amendment process and this Proposal Report (refer Appendix D); and ▪ Preparation of a Species Management Program (high risk of impacts) as per the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (NC Act) and Nature Conservation (Animals) Regulation 2000. <p>Powerlink Queensland will deliver the stakeholder engagement and public consultation activities required in accordance with the Making or Amending a Ministerial Infrastructure Designation Operational Guideline. The following consultation activities have been completed as part of early engagement and to support the EPBC referral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to adjacent landholders; • Written notification to Hinchinbrook Shire Council; and • Written notification to the Member for Hinchinbrook.
36(3)	The Minister may, in guidelines prescribed by regulation, set out the process for the environmental assessment and consultation.	Consultation will be undertaken as part of this Proposal Report in accordance with chapter 7 of the MGR.
36(4)	The Minister is taken to be satisfied of the matters in subsection (2) if the process in the guidelines is followed.	
36(5)	However, the Minister may be satisfied of the matters in another way.	No comment provided.
36(7)	To make or amend a designation, a designator must have regard to -	
36(7)(a)	All planning instruments that relate to the premises; and	All applicable planning instruments that relate to the Project Area are discussed in the following sections.
36(7)(b)	Any assessment benchmarks, other than in planning instruments, that relate to the development that is the subject of the designation or amendment; and	Relevant assessment benchmarks as they apply to this minor amendment proposal have been identified and addressed as part of this Proposal Report.
36(7)(c)	If the premises are in a State development area under the State Development Act – any approved	A review of the SPP Mapping indicates that the Project Area is not located within a State Development Area.

Planning Act reference	Criteria	ERM Response
	development scheme for the premises under that Act; and	
36(7)(ca)	If the premises are in a priority development area, or on Priority Development Area (PDA) associated land for a priority development area, under the <i>Economic Development Act 2012</i> – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Any development scheme for the priority development area under that Act; and ii. Any place renewal framework for a place renewable area in which the premises are located that is in effect under that Act; and 	A review of the SPP Mapping indicates that the Project Area is not located within a PDA, or associated land for a PDA.
36(7)(d)	Any properly made submissions made as part of the consultation carried out under section 37; and	Any submissions received will be appropriately considered, and the proposal amended if required.
36(7)(e)	The written submissions of any local government.	Any submissions received from the local government will be appropriately considered and the proposal amended if required.

4.3.1 REQUIRED MATERIAL

This Proposal Report has been prepared in accordance with the required material for making a minor amendment as per schedule 3 of the MGR. **Table 4-3** below outlines how this report addresses these requirements and includes the material stipulated in schedule 3 of the MGR.

TABLE 4-3 REQUIRED MATERIAL FOR MAKING A MINOR AMENDMENT

MGR Schedule 3 – Required Material	Location in this Proposal Report
1. The boundary of the existing MID and the cadastral description of all land affected by the existing MID.	Section 1.2 and 3.1.1
2. Any amendments to the boundary of this existing MID and the cadastral description of all land affected by the amended MID.	No previous amendments to the existing MID have been made.
3. A site and locality description of the existing MID.	Section 1.2
4. Plans, drawings, elevations, images and perspectives of the proposal that are suitable for assessment.	Section 2.1
5. Any existing uses on the designated premises.	Section 2.1
6. Information about – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Existing uses on adjoining sites; b. The type of uses proposed relative to the Planning Regulation 2017; c. The intended outcomes of any proposed amendment to uses on the site. 	Section 2.1 and 4

MGR Schedule 3 – Required Material	Location in this Proposal Report
7. Acknowledgement of any adverse impacts on surrounding properties and how these impacts are proposed to be managed.	Section 6
8. Acknowledgement of any off-site impacts such as traffic, noise, infrastructure capacity and how these impacts are proposed to be managed.	
9. Acknowledgement of any construction impacts and how these impacts are proposed to be managed.	
10. Any works and land affected outside the MID boundary as a result of the amended MID.	
11. Acknowledgement of relevant state interests and planning instruments and how they relate to the amended MID.	Section 5
12. Plans and technical reports to address any of the matters identified above.	Refer to the appendices at the end of this Proposal Report.

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 PLANNING ACT 2016

The proposed minor amendment to the MID is being undertaken in accordance with chapter 2, part 5, of the Planning Act, having regard to effective environmental assessments, consideration of applicable planning instruments and benchmarks at the state and local level, adequate consultation and consideration of any submissions received.

5.2 EFFECT OF THE DESIGNATION IF MADE

Chapter 3, part 1, division 1, section 44 of the Planning Act specifies the categories of development. Where land is designated for infrastructure, the subsection 6(b) applies and provides that:

development in relation to infrastructure under a designation is –

(i) to the extent the development is building work under the Building Act – the category of development stated for the building work under a regulation; or

(ii) otherwise – accepted development.

As such, if the minor amendment is designated by the Minister, the use of the land for the designated infrastructure would be considered accepted development, with no further development approvals against the applicable planning scheme required.

5.3 STATE INTERESTS

5.3.1 STATE PLANNING POLICY

The SPP identifies the State's interest in land use planning and development. The SPP was released on 3 July 2017 and is a State instrument made under the Planning Act. The SPP contains 17 State interests that are important to protect and enhance through Queensland's continued development. The State interests are arranged under five broad themes, being:

- Liveable communities and housing;
- Economic growth;
- Environment and heritage;
- Safety and resilience to hazards; and
- Infrastructure.

The State interests applicable to this minor amendment proposal are outlined in **Table 5-1** below. A copy of the SPP interactive mapping is provided as **Appendix E**.

TABLE 5-1 APPLICABLE SPP MAPPING

Overlay	SPP Mapping	Project Relevance
Biodiversity		
<p>MSES – Regulated Vegetation (intersecting a watercourse)</p>		<p>The Project Area is identified as being within the 'Biodiversity' layer within Category B Regulated Vegetation dominating the site.</p>
<p>MSES – Regulated Vegetation (Category B)</p>		<p>The proposed extension of the substation and associated infrastructure will be in the central part of the Project Area and will require clearing of some native vegetation. A MSES Assessment Report has been completed for the minor amendment (refer to Appendix D). Further environmental impacts are discussed in Section 6.1.</p>
<p>MSES – Regulated Vegetation (Category R)</p>		

Overlay	SPP Mapping	Project Relevance
Natural Hazards Risk and Resilience		
<p>Flood Hazard Area – Local Government Flood Mapping Area</p>		<p>The Project Area is affected by flood hazard as it relates to the local government flood hazard mapping area and will be further discussed in Section 6.</p> <p>Additionally, the Project Area is largely encumbered by High Potential Bushfire Intensity, with Medium Intensity Bushfire Intensity at its periphery. Although the Project is includes a development footprint of 5.5ha, with a clearing area of 3.71 ha, the existing land use and associated clearing to facilitate its construction have largely lessened bushfire risk.</p>
<p>Bushfire Prone Area</p>		
Energy and Water Supply		
<p>Major Electricity Infrastructure (Powerlink)</p>		<p>The Project Area includes existing Powerlink infrastructure, being the Guybal Munjan Substation and associated transmission infrastructure. The intent of this minor amendment is to extend the existing substation and introduce additional line and pole infrastructure to connect to the wind farm.</p>

5.3.2 STATE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT PROVISIONS

The State Development Assessment Mapping System provides a central representation of available mapping that may assist in identifying relevant assessment or referral triggers under the Planning Regulation 2017. Upon review of the triggers, and under the conventional development assessment pathway, referral to the State Assessment and Referral Agency would have been required for assessment against the State Development Assessment Provisions related to the following:

- Native vegetation clearing – Category A and B extract.

This separate approval process will not be required as it is to be considered as part of this minor amendment proposal.

5.4 REGIONAL PLANNING

The Project Area is located within the North Queensland Regional Plan 2020 (Regional Plan) area.

Section 2.2 of the Hinchinbrook Shire Planning Scheme does not identify that the Regional Plan has been appropriately integrated into the Planning Scheme. Assessment against the Regional Plan is considered as part of this Proposal Report as part of this Section.

The Regional Plan identifies regional outcomes, policies for achieving regional outcomes, and the State's intent for the future spatial structure of the region. It is noted the Queensland Government is commencing a review of all regional plans to make them contemporary and reflective of emerging policy and investment sectors.

In its current form, the Regional Plan identifies a priority outcome for electricity infrastructure in the region to grow energy generation capabilities through the public and private sector. Particularly, the Regional Plan identifies a priority to increase the capacity of major electricity infrastructure to support growth of the renewable energy sector within the region.

Given that the Proposed Development will allow energy generation in the region to be connected to the substation, the Proposed Development is considered consistent with the intent of the Regional Plan and will contribute to achieving its outcomes.

5.5 HINCHINBROOK SHIRE PLANNING SCHEME 2017

The Hinchinbrook Shire Planning Scheme 2017 (Planning Scheme) provides the framework for managing development in a way that advances the purpose of the Planning Act and meets the needs of the Hinchinbrook Shire region.

The Strategic Plan within the Planning Scheme sets the policy direction for the scheme and forms the basis for ensuring appropriate development occurs in the Planning Scheme area.

5.5.1 PLANNING SCHEME PROVISIONS

Table 5-2 provides a summary of the key Planning Scheme provisions applicable to the site, with **Figure 5-1** providing a zoning map of the Project Area. Of note, while Schedule 5 of the Planning Scheme has not been amended since the Genex Kidston Connection Project was designated, although in a Rural Zone, the land is expected to accommodate the development subject to the designation. As such, the proposed minor amendment to accommodate an expansion of the substation and transmission lines is not out of character for the subject land.

Further assessment relating to bushfire hazard is provided in **Section 6.2**.

TABLE 5-2 PLANNING SCHEME PROVISIONS RELEVANT TO THE PROJECT AREA

Planning Scheme Characteristic	Details
Zone	Rural Zone
Overlays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bushfire Hazard Overlay • Environmental Significance Overlay

FIGURE 5-1 PLANNING SCHEME ZONE



6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This section provides an assessment of the proposed minor amendment to identify:

- Anticipated impacts on the surrounding infrastructure network; and
- Any potential environmental, social and cultural heritage impacts, and how adverse impacts will be managed.

This assessment is accompanied by technical reports included as appendices to this report.

6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

6.1.1 MATTERS OF STATE ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE

An ecological assessment (refer to **Appendix D**) assessed the impacts associated with the proposed minor amendment to MSES and Matters of Local Environmental Significance of the Project Area. As part of the assessment, a thorough desktop investigation was undertaken (informed by updated database searches conducted in December 2025), with a field survey program completed in September 2024 to adequately describe the environmental values within the Project Area.

The assessment concluded that the Project Area consists of the following broad habitat types:

- *Corymbia intermedia* Mature open forest to woodland – largely consistent with the vegetation characteristics of Regional Ecosystem (RE) 7.12.29a, 7.5.4f and 7.5.4a;
- *Corymbia tessellaris* Regrowth open forest to woodland – largely consistent with the vegetation characteristics of RE 7.8.18a. This RE shows signs of modification via cattle grazing and introduced flora species; and
- Cleared Areas associated with existing infrastructure, access track and fire breaks.

Category B Regulated Vegetation is mapped within the Project Area. Of this, 2.8 ha is considered endangered and of concern REs regulated under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*. The majority of the remnant vegetation mapped on site (6 ha) is Least Concern. A summary of disturbance impacts is provided within **Table 6-1**

Mapping of vegetation over the site was ground-truthed during field surveys and found to be generally consistent with on-ground observations. The defined broad habitat types in the Project Area are mostly in moderate condition, with signs of degradation evident due to cattle grazing and the introduction of foreign flora species.

TABLE 6-1 REGIONAL ECOSYSTEMS WITHIN THE PROJECT AREA

Regulated Vegetation	RE	Description	Project Area (ha)	Development Footprint (ha)
Category B – Least Concern	7.12.29a	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> , <i>E. drepanophylla</i> with <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> , <i>A. littoralis</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> , <i>Acacia cincinnata</i> , <i>A. flavescens</i> , <i>Banksia aquilonia</i> and <i>Xanthorrhoea johnsonii</i> . Uplands, on granite and rhyolite. Not a Wetland	6	2.5
Category B – Of Concern	7.5.4f	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open forest and woodland. Deep weathered soils of basalt origin. Not a Wetland	0.2	0.1
	7.5.4a	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> woodland and open forest with <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> , <i>A. littoralis</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> , <i>Acacia flavescens</i> , <i>Banksia aquilonia</i> and <i>Xanthorrhoea johnsonii</i> . Weathered soils and laterite of a remnant surface. Not a Wetland.	2.6	1.1
	7.8.18a	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> , <i>E. granitica</i> open forest to woodland with <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> , <i>A. littoralis</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> , <i>Acacia cincinnata</i> , <i>A. flavescens</i> , <i>Banksia aquilonia</i> and <i>Xanthorrhoea johnsonii</i> . Basalt. Contains Palustrine	0.04*	0.01*
Non-remnant			0	0
Total			8.8	3.7

*Two decimal places used to identify minimal impact to this RE for the purposes of completeness, recognising however, that total area figures are rounded to one decimal place.

No threatened species listed under the NC Act were assessed as known to occur within the Project Area. A total of two listed threatened species were identified as likely to occur, and three assessed as potentially occurring in the Project Area.

The two NC Act listed fauna species considered likely to occur includes:

- White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*); and
- Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*).

A total of three NC Act listed threatened fauna species were assessed as having the potential to occur within the Project Area as follows:

- Glossy black cockatoo (northern) (*Calyptorhynchus lathami erebus*);
- Greater glider (northern) (*Petauroides minor*); and
- Red goshawk (*Erythrotriorchis radiatus*).

Considering the limited quantum of clearing, the disturbed nature of the habitat, and the mitigation measures proposed, the residual impact on protected wildlife habitat is unlikely to be significant under the Queensland Significant Residual Impact Guideline. The project does not meet the functional criteria for a Significant Residual Impact (population decline, fragmentation, disruption of critical sites). Therefore, offsets for protected wildlife habitat are not required.

As per the Queensland Significant Residual Impact Guideline an action is likely to have a Significant Residual Impact on endangered or of concern REs if the action results in:

- a) *clearing of more than 5 ha of 'endangered' or 'of concern' RE vegetation;*
- b) *clearing that results in an overall area (not confined to property boundaries) of 'endangered' or 'of concern' RE vegetation of less than 5 ha; OR*
- c) *clearing that results in the physical separation of 'endangered' and 'of concern' RE communities within and on adjoining sites.*

As per the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, all REs present are classified as mid-dense structure category. It is important to note that clearing, for non-linear infrastructure, which exceeds 0.50 ha in a mid-dense structural category RE or clearing for linear infrastructure greater than 10 m in width is a trigger for Significant Residual Impact assessment. It is expected that no significant residual impact will occur from this activity, and therefore no offsetting required under the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*.

6.1.2 MATTERS OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE

An MNES Impact Assessment Report was prepared to support the lodgement of an EPBC referral. As part of this assessment, a desktop and field-based assessment (September 2024) was undertaken to describe the ecological values of the Project Area and identify potential impacts to MNES. In December 2025, desktop searches were undertaken to reassess species for the Likelihood of Occurrence (LoO) due to proposed changes to the Project layout.

Desktop investigations identified 64 MNES species protected under the EPBC Act with potential to occur in the Project Area. Together with the field survey event, the LoO assessment determined no species are considered known to occur within the Project Area due to an absence of historical records and no observations recorded during the surveys. No EPBC Act listed threatened ecological communities or flora species were recorded within the Project Area, with sufficient survey effort carried out to detect their presence.

Three listed threatened or migratory fauna species were identified as likely to occur in the Project Area being:

- Fork-tailed swift (*Apus pacificus*) – migratory;
- White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – vulnerable and endangered; and
- Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) – endangered.

An additional two listed threatened fauna species were assessed as having the potential to occur in the Project Area, as either vagrant species or due to the presence of some habitat elements, but not all required to support ecological functions, including:

- Red goshawk (*Erythrorchis radiatus*) – endangered; and
- Northern greater glider (*Petauroides minor*) – vulnerable.

The assessment identified the following potential impacts for these species:

- No direct impacts to fork-tailed swift habitat as it is considered an aerial foraging species, with no terrestrial habitat within the Project Area;
- No direct impacts to white-throated needletail as it is considered an aerial foraging species, with no terrestrial habitat within the Project Area;
- 3.6 ha of potential koala foraging and breeding habitat and 0.2 ha of potential dispersal habitat;
- 3.6 ha of potential northern greater glider denning and breeding habitat and 0.2 ha of potential dispersal habitat; and
- 3.7 ha of potential red goshawk foraging habitat.

The Project is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on these identified MNES primarily due to the small Development Footprint impacting on potential habitat for koala and northern greater glider.

The Project was referred for approval under the EPBC Act (albeit with an earlier revision of the Project layout that had a larger Development Footprint and as such, greater impact area) and received a "Not a Controlled Action" decision in September 2025. Powerlink is revising the MNES Impact Assessment Report to account for the amended Project layout the subject of this Proposal Report and proposes to undertake a self-assessment to meet its environmental responsibilities under the EPBC Act and demonstrate the referral decision for the original layout remains relevant.

6.2 BUSHFIRE

The Project Area is identified under SPP mapping as being within an area of high potential bushfire intensity, with medium potential bushfire intensity identified for the perimeter of the site. Existing bushfire mitigation strategies are in place for the existing substation, with vegetation clearing implemented to establish firebreaks between remnant vegetation and the substation facility. Furthermore, additional vegetation clearing will be undertaken to facilitate the construction of the substation extension and transmission lines. The removal of this vegetation will mitigate bushfire risk by reducing fuel load in the vicinity of the electrical infrastructure.

6.3 FLOODING

Under the SPP mapping, the Project Area is identified as being affected by flood hazard as it relates to the local government flood hazard mapping. Upon review of the Hinchinbrook Shire Council interactive mapping services, including their flood awareness system, the site is not encumbered by any potential flood hazard.

Additionally, and as per the initial work associated with MID-1021-0548, the Guybal Munjan Substation lies outside any flood extents previously modelled, with the infrastructure well-above modelled flood levels.

As such, flood risk to the Project is considered minimal.

6.4 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Under the existing MID approval, Powerlink has established Cultural Heritage Management Agreements (CHMA) with the relevant Native Title parties in accordance with the *Aboriginal*

Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and manages any Aboriginal cultural heritage risks through the implementation of these agreements.

The previously established CHMAs include the agreed methodology for the identification and management of cultural heritage sites and values within and in the vicinity of the previous MID, which includes the Project Area.

As part of its responsibilities under the CHMAs, and in response to associated survey work, Powerlink has revised the Project layout to avoid and manage potential impacts to cultural heritage. The adjusted alignment has been informed by consultation with the Native Title party.

6.5 SOCIAL IMPACTS

The Project Area for the proposed minor amendment is sparsely populated, with three rural residential properties present approximately 1 km north of the Project Area. Aside from these properties, the closest population centre is Ingham, located approximately 40km north-east of the proposed development.

Social impacts have previously been considered as part of the existing MID for the Genex Kidston Connection Project (refer to **Appendix F**). From this assessment, the socio-economic study area of Hinchinbrook Shire Council holds the most relevance for this report. Key stakeholders identified for the assessment include:

- Landholders;
- Federal government;
- State government;
- Local government;
- Peak bodies;
- Industry; and
- Heritage bodies.

As similarly stated within the assessment for the original MID, given the rural location of the Project Area, the Project is not anticipated to create a significant impact on the community. Construction for the Project will be temporary, with any impacts to be managed by the nominated contractor through a Construction Management Plan. Furthermore, elements of the community profile are not anticipated to be noticeably impacted as the construction phase and its accompanying workforce will be temporary.

During the operational phase of the project, the existing workforce employed to maintain the substation will also oversee maintenance of the substation extension. No additional impacts are anticipated as part of the proposed extension.

6.6 VISUAL AMENITY

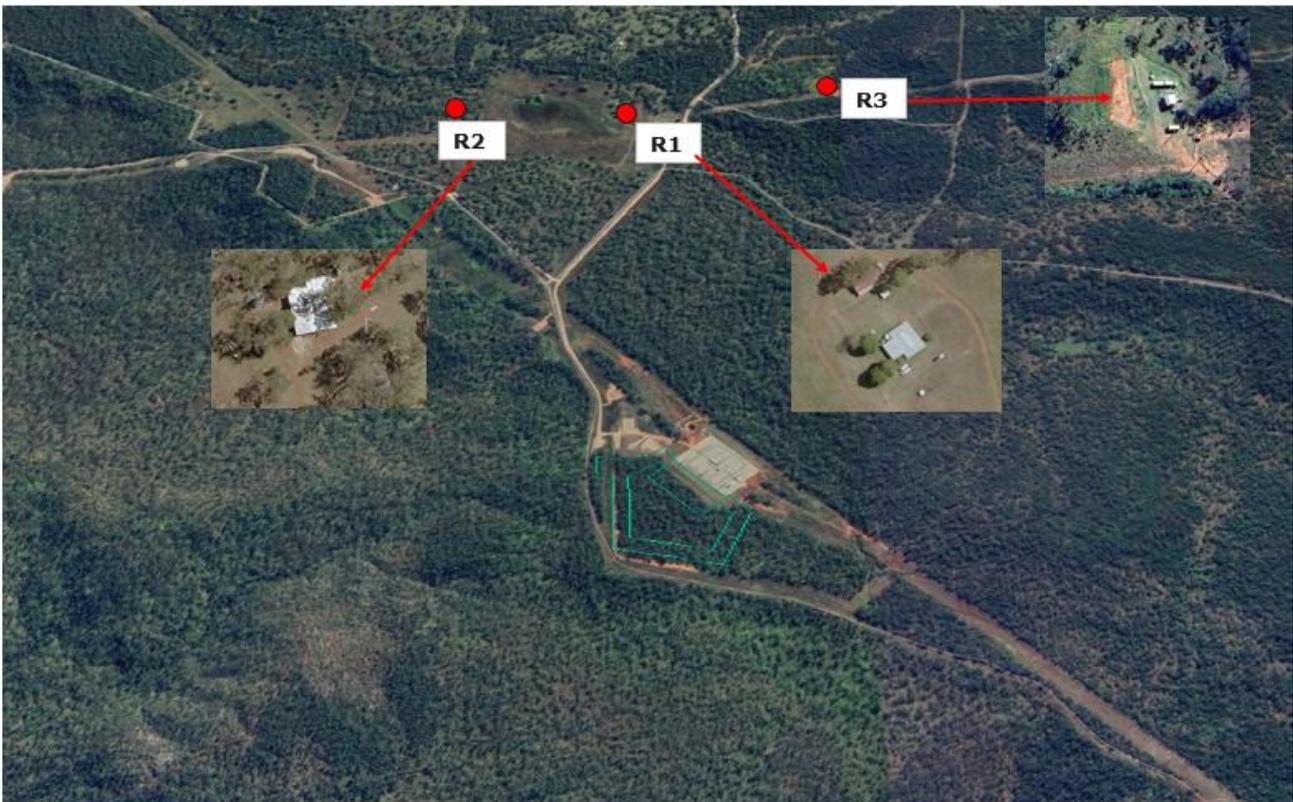
The Project Area is not in an area identified as containing high scenic value. Furthermore, the strategic co-location of the development with the existing substation will be in keeping with the visual landscape, as the extension of the facility and inclusion of the transmission line are not excessive in size and commensurate with the purpose of the designation and adjacent wind farm.

6.7 NOISE

A noise impact assessment has not been undertaken for the proposed minor amendment due to the size and scale of the Project and its significant distance from sensitive receptors. As the substation expansion will not include the addition of new transformers or cooling fans, additional operational impacts are considered unlikely. Whilst some Corona discharge may occur, the sound output varies differently in wet and dry weather conditions. Dust, line surface inconsistencies, line voltage, humidity and rain are other factors that influence the noise generated. Given the separation distance of more than 1.4 km (refer to **Figure 6-1**) to the nearest receptors and the noise data provided, Corona discharge will not be an issue.

Construction noise at the substation expansion and the transmission line poles will be audible. However, they can be managed through a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP).

FIGURE 6-1 SENSITIVE RECEPTORS WITHIN 2KM OF THE PROJECT AREA



6.8 INFRASTRUCTURE

6.8.1 ROAD

To support this minor amendment proposal, a traffic statement letter was commissioned to provide a high-level assessment of anticipated traffic impacts resulting from construction activities (refer **Appendix G**). The resultant assessment confirms that the Project has little to no impact beyond what was anticipated for the original Genex Kidston Connection Project.

Traffic management (including details of construction access and parking) during construction phases will be carried out in accordance with a Construction Traffic Management Plan. Furthermore, car parking requirements during operations for maintenance are expected to be appropriately met by existing car parking provisions at the substation facility.

6.8.2 WATER AND WASTEWATER

The Project Area has limited access to reticulated water and sewage supplies. Any requirements for these services during construction will be managed by the Contractor in accordance with a Construction Management Plan.

7. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

7.1 AFFECTED PARTIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Powerlink Queensland will manage the stakeholder engagement and public consultation activities required in accordance with the Making or Amending a Ministerial Infrastructure Designation Operational Guideline

The following affected parties and stakeholders have been identified for the proposed minor amendment:

- Treasurer and Minister for Energy Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Member for Hinchinbrook
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council;
- Windlab Developments Pty Ltd; and
- Adjacent landholders.

Powerlink is committed to engaging with affected stakeholders as the Project progresses.

8. CONCLUSION

This Proposal Report has been prepared by ERM on behalf of Powerlink in support of a minor amendment to an existing MID to facilitate the connection of Windlab's Gawara Baya Wind Farm Project to the transmission network.

Following an assessment of the proposed minor amendment, the following has been identified:

- Impacts to Category B Regulated Vegetation are anticipated as part of clearing activities;
- No adverse impact from noise emissions is anticipated during operation. Any noise created during construction can be appropriately managed through a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan;
- The Project will not result in any adverse visual impact; and
- The traffic impacts associated with construction of the Project have been assessed as being lower than the Genex Kidston Connection Project and can suitably be addressed and managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

The proposed amendment to the MID is considered minor as it will not substantially change the existing designation or introduce additional impacts that have not previously been considered. Whilst additional impacts to regulated vegetation will occur, the assessments completed as part of this report have determined these to be minimal and able to be sufficiently managed.

Furthermore, given the location of the Project, impacts to the surrounding community are not anticipated.

The Proposal Report demonstrates that the proposed changes to the MID that comprise the Project are not substantially different, are commensurate with the intent of the original designation and align with the State's Energy Roadmap 2025.

Following endorsement from the Minister to proceed with this minor amendment proposal, we request the Minister's favourable consideration of an amendment to MID-1021-0548 subject to reasonable and relevant requirements.



APPENDIX A

PROJECT CHANGES – ENDORSEMENT
REQUEST TO PROPOSAL REPORT



APPENDIX B

MID-1021-0548 DECISION NOTICE AND
PLAN OF DESIGNATION



APPENDIX C EBPC ACT REFERRAL DECISION NOTICE



APPENDIX D MSES/MLES TECHNICAL REPORT



APPENDIX E SPP INTERACTIVE MAPPING



APPENDIX F

GENEX KIDSTON CONNECTION
PROJECT – SOCIAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT EXCERPT



APPENDIX G TRAFFIC STATEMENT LETTER



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