

Revenue Proposal Reference Group Meeting No.15

Details of Meeting	
Date and time of meeting	16:00 – 17:00, Thursday, 16 July 2026
Location	Powerlink Offices, Virginia
Attendees	Organisation
RPRG members – customer representatives	
Chris Hazzard	St Vincent de Paul Society
Katie-Anne Mulder (online)	Queensland Renewable Energy Council (QREC)
Mark Grenning (Independent Chair)	Consumer Advocate
Nardia Yeates	Aurizon
Robyn Robinson	Council on the Ageing (COTA)
Stephanie McKechnie	Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF)
RPRG members – Powerlink representatives	
Gerard Reilly	General Manager Communications, Customer and Engagement
Jenny Harris	General Manager Network Regulation
Roger Smith (RPRG Chair)	Director Revenue Reset
Guests and speakers	
Aidan Lawlor	Capex Lead Revenue Reset
Eleonore Bridier (Convenor)	Customer Engagement Specialist
Kara Healey (online)	Opex Analyst Revenue Reset
Martin Pavelka (online)	Finance and Modelling Analyst Revenue Reset
Michelle Beavis	Opex Lead Revenue Reset
Sally Taylor (online)	Manager Pricing and Billing
Simon Hendry (online)	Governance, Assurance and Estimating Coordinator Revenue Reset
Vanessa Morris (online)	Capex Analyst Revenue Reset
Invited stakeholders	
Michael Brothers (online)	Australian Energy Regulator (AER)
Apologies	
Ben Fu (online)	Australian Energy Regulator (AER)
Jacqui Bridge	Executive General Manager Network Investment
Nina Zhuang	Finance & Modelling Lead Revenue Reset

Meeting agenda

- Stakeholder submissions on our Revenue Proposal
- Update on engagement with the AER
- Overview of contingent projects
- Contingent Projects representation options
- Forward looking agenda

Meeting notes

Presentation slides that accompany these notes are published on the [Powerlink Customer Panel webpage](#).

Stakeholder submissions on the Revenue Proposal

Roger Smith, Director Revenue Reset, provided an overview of the six submissions from Aurizon, Australia Pacific LNG (APLNG), the AER Consumer Challenge Panel (CCP34), Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF), Queensland Resources Council (QRC) Rail Working Group and the Revenue Proposal Reference Group (RPRG) received in response to the Revenue Proposal and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) Issues Paper.

He advised that common themes included support for the engagement process, recognition of the quality and transparency of engagement undertaken to date, and expectations that the AER closely examine expenditure forecasts, price impacts and deliverability.

It was noted that stakeholder submissions generally recognised the significance of the proposed expenditure program and reinforced the importance of the AER's assessment of prudence and efficiency. The themes raised aligned closely with areas currently being explored through AER information requests.

Discussion, questions and responses

Members asked about comments in the QRC Rail Working Group submission regarding their repeated requests for information around price impacts. Roger explained that Powerlink had provided customer-specific pricing information to Aurizon where it had been requested. He said Powerlink published indicative price impact information for households and businesses with the Revenue Proposal, but pricing outcomes for directly connected customers depend on individual connection arrangements and therefore require customer-specific analysis. Roger confirmed that in this instance, though members of QRC Rail Working Group are not a direct customer of Powerlink, further information provision had been provided.

Update on engagement with the AER

Roger provided an overview of engagement with the AER since lodgement of the Revenue Proposal. Powerlink advised that information requests and workshops had focused on aspects including contingent projects, replacement capital expenditure, deliverability, cyber and physical security, information technology and operational technology expenditure and step changes. It was noted that the level of questions from the AER was commensurate with the scale of proposed expenditure and aligned closely with themes raised through stakeholder submissions.

While information requests were continuing, Powerlink expected the volume of requests to reduce as the AER progressed development of its Draft Decision.

Discussion, questions and responses

Members sought further insight into how the AER assesses deliverability. Michael Brothers, AER, explained that the question is one for the AER capex team, but that the AER first assesses the prudent and efficient level of capex and then assess deliverability of that.

A member queried whether Powerlink had any updates regarding a potential ex post review. Roger advised Powerlink was awaiting further information on the AER's position.

Overview of contingent projects

Roger provided a recap of the purpose of contingent projects and outlined changes made to the contingent project appendix following engagement with and information requests from the AER as well as publication of the final 2026 Integrated System Plan (ISP).

Roger noted that Powerlink had engaged with AER subject matter experts on the wording of triggers to better understand the drivers and align with the AER's interpretation of the Rules. He noted Powerlink's appreciation of the constructive engagement with the AER but emphasised that this did not mean the AER would necessarily accept the proposed contingent projects in its Draft Decision or Final Decision.

It was confirmed that the updated Appendix 4.04 has now been published on the AER website.

Discussion, questions and responses

Discussion focused on the difference between a trigger event being probable and a project outcome being predictable. Participants also discussed the role of the ISP in shaping the revised contingent project appendix. Roger explained that both 'actionable' and 'future' ISP projects have been identified by the Australian Energy Market Operator as expected to deliver net benefits to consumers. If identified as actionable, Powerlink is required to proceed to assessment under the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T).

Members asked whether the AER would consider the revised appendix as part of the Draft Decision. Roger said Powerlink understood it would be considered through the AER's information request process and assessed as part of the Draft Decision.

Contingent project representation options

Roger provided an update on Powerlink's work to identify a clearer way of representing contingent project uncertainty and potential customer impacts. He explained that Powerlink had considered some guiding principles when considering options and that a reasonable approach could be to utilise actionable projects in the final ISP and those contingent projects related to completed RIT-Ts to form an indicative view of what may evolve.

Rather than modelling all seven contingent projects, Powerlink proposed focusing on a smaller subset of projects where there is a stronger basis for illustrative modelling. The proposed subset included two actionable ISP projects and the Central Queensland System Strength contingent project. Roger explained that these projects have either timing and cost assumptions in the ISP or have already been through earlier assessment processes, providing a more credible starting point for modelling potential expenditure and customer price impacts.

Discussion, questions and responses

Members asked why the AER had presented contingent projects that way in the Issues Paper. Michael explained the approach was intended to support consideration of deliverability, not to present a capital expenditure forecast or bill impact estimate. He said "probable" reflected the Rules requirement that contingent project triggers be probable within the regulatory period, not that the expenditure is probable.

Members noted that Powerlink's proposed approach was reasonable and, on this basis, supported further development of the proposed approach, subject to clear explanation of assumptions and limitations. One member also asked for clarity between differences between Powerlink's Revenue Proposal and the outcomes of the 2026 ISP, including any differences in how projects are named. Powerlink agreed to summarise this information and circulate the proposed inclusions and exclusions prior to modelling.

Forward looking agenda

Roger outlined the proposed forward engagement schedule and said engagement would need to remain targeted because of the limited time available between the AER's Draft Decision and Powerlink's Revised Revenue Proposal.

Roger suggested an additional shorter meeting placeholder be scheduled before lodgement, followed by a more detailed meeting after lodgement.

Discussion, questions and responses

Members supported the addition of placeholder meetings before and after lodgement. They also highlighted the need for Powerlink personnel to be available during the compressed December–January submission period due to the timing of the AER public consultation on the Revised Revenue Proposal. Roger confirmed support would be available.

Members also asked whether there had been any material changes in the operating environment. Roger said no material changes had been incorporated into forecasts, though emerging and new changes were being monitored. Jenny Harris also referred to external reviews, including the Energy Networks Regulation Review, noting future obligations may need to be managed through regulatory mechanisms if they arise outside the determination process. These may be noted in Powerlink's Revised Revenue Proposal.

Actions

Item	Action	Responsible person	Due
14.1	AER to provide clarification to the RPRG on the rationale for its presentation of contingent projects in the Issues Paper	Michael Brothers	Complete
14.2	Provide an indicative forward engagement schedule, including calendar placeholders to support member availability	Eleonore Bridier	Complete
14.3	Consider alternative presentation approaches for contingent project costs, including probabilistic or range-based representations	Roger Smith	Complete
15.1	Provide a summary of contingent projects proposed to be included and excluded from illustrative modelling, including key assumptions and terminology changes.	Roger Smith	Complete
15.2	Circulate the proposed contingent project representation and modelling for member feedback.	Roger Smith	Complete
15.3	Schedule additional RPRG meetings before and after lodgement of the Revised Revenue Proposal, with the pre-lodgement meeting proposed to be virtual only.	Eleonore Bridier	Complete