

Central Queensland Projects Social Impact Assessment Summary

SEPTEMBER 2026

Summary of social impacts and management measures.



Acknowledgement

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.

INTRODUCTION

About the assessment

In 2025, Powerlink commissioned a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for three proposed transmission projects in Central Queensland. The SIA identifies potential impacts and benefits so practical measures can avoid, reduce or manage impacts while enhancing opportunities and benefits for local communities.

The SIA was conducted by SIA specialists *Worley Consulting* to deliver an independent assessment of the potential social impacts associated with the projects.

THE THREE PROJECTS

Gladstone Project

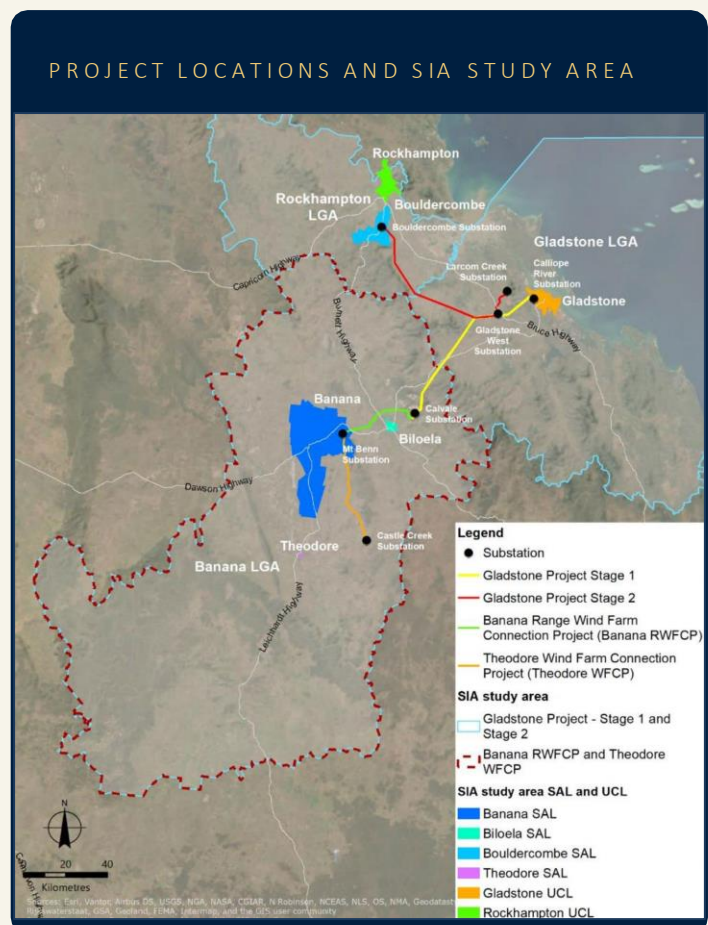
Reinforces the network from Calvale and Bouldercombe to Gladstone (Stage 1 and Stage 2).

Banana Range Wind Farm Connection

Connects new wind generation near Banana to the grid.

Theodore Wind Farm Connection

Connects new wind generation near Theodore to the grid.



To learn more about Powerlink projects in Central Queensland, visit the [Central Queensland Community Hub](https://engage.powerlink.com.au/central-queensland) at engage.powerlink.com.au/central-queensland.

How the SIA was done

Following the *Queensland SIA Guideline (2025)*, the assessment combined technical studies with community and stakeholder engagement.

A CYCLICAL, ITERATIVE PROCESS

The SIA considered how the proposed projects may affect communities during construction and operation. It looked at possible benefits and social impacts that may be associated with the proposed projects during construction and operation.

The assessment drew on community and stakeholder feedback, technical studies, project information and regional data to identify potential social impacts, opportunities and management measures.



WHO WE ENGAGED

240+

ENGAGEMENT INTERACTIONS

Jun–Dec 2025, through information sessions, meetings, interviews and an online survey.

- Landholders and residents
- Business and agriculture
- Health and community services
- Traditional Owners and First Nations
- Council, government and industry
- Education, training and environment

IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES

The following five SIA key matters are covered in this document, in addition to cumulative impacts and community and social investment:

- Community and stakeholder engagement
- Health and community wellbeing
- Housing and accommodation
- Local business and industry procurement
- Workforce management

In short

What the SIA found and what we're doing about it.

1 Local business and procurement	THE FINDING Opportunities open for local, regional and First Nations suppliers, but smaller businesses may need support to compete.	OUR RESPONSE Require participation plans, build local and First Nations capability, use set-asides and shorter payment terms.
2 Housing and accommodation	THE FINDING The most material risk. Low rental vacancy and affordability pressure mean modest added demand can affect vulnerable households.	OUR RESPONSE Develop a Workforce Accommodation Strategy, prioritise purpose-built accommodation, minimise private-rental reliance.
3 Workforce management	THE FINDING Projects support jobs and skills, but competition for labour may affect small business, agriculture and essential services.	OUR RESPONSE Prioritise local, Indigenous and diverse employment, support training, and promote wellbeing with organisations such as Mates in Energy.
4 Health and community wellbeing	THE FINDING Construction may pressure health and emergency services and affect amenity through traffic, noise, dust and visual change.	OUR RESPONSE Work with stakeholders and communities to manage amenity, traffic and safety, service demand, protect cultural heritage values and support community wellbeing..
5 Community and engagement	THE FINDING Communities report consultation fatigue and want clear, consistent, local information and to see feedback shape decisions.	OUR RESPONSE Deliver engagement plans and a local liaison, use multiple channels, and monitor feedback to adapt engagement.
6 Cumulative impacts	THE FINDING Impacts arise where these projects overlap with other transmission, renewable and resource developments, adding housing and service pressure.	OUR RESPONSE Coordinate with councils, proponents and government on housing, workforce and services, and monitor and adapt as needed.
7 Community and social investment	THE FINDING Communities value strategic, long-term investment aligned with local priorities, with benefits reaching those closest to the projects.	OUR RESPONSE Deliver legacy initiatives under the Community Benefits and Social Value Framework; partner regionally on housing, skills and wellbeing.

Local business and industry procurement

Supporting local businesses and industry



WHAT THE SIA FOUND

- **Opportunity** Our projects will bring construction opportunities for local, regional and First Nations businesses to provide goods and services.
- **Interest** Strong interest from local, regional and First Nations businesses.
- **Small business risk** Smaller businesses may not benefit if procurement processes are difficult to access or not tailored to local conditions.
- **Agricultural risk** Potential effects on agricultural operations where infrastructure intersects landholdings.

WHAT WE'LL DO

Proactive procurement to enable meaningful participation

	Plan	Deliver local and First Nations participation plans, plus an Australian Industry Participation Plan on Stage 1.
	Engage early	Engage early with local and First Nations businesses, industry, councils and chambers to promote opportunities.
	Build capability	Build local and First Nations capability through workshops, mentoring, tender feedback and training.
	Clear pathways	Make access to procurement easier through supplier guides, briefings, clear information about accessing opportunities.
	Local supplier access	Use measures such as unbundling, set-aside opportunities, 14-day payment terms, and local and First Nations business and recruitment prioritisation where capability and value for money exist.
	Engage landholders	Engage with landholders to manage risks to land productivity.

Housing and accommodation

Avoiding pressure on local communities



WHAT THE SIA FOUND

- **Key Impact** Housing and accommodation is the biggest social risk the SIA identified
- **Existing pressures** Very low rental vacancy rates, limited housing supply, and affordability pressures are present.
- **Cumulative** Workforces from many projects are increasing housing demand in the region, which may affect housing availability and affordability.
- **Inequity** Renters, low-income and single parent households, and essential workers would be most affected by any small increase in housing demand.
- **Industry effects** Short-term accommodation demand may reduce availability for tourism and business travel.

WHAT WE'LL DO

Proactive management of our workforce accommodation needs

-  **Plan** Plan workforce accommodation early, including contractor requirements.
-  **Protect local housing** Prioritise workforce accommodation facilities and minimise private rentals.
-  **Recruit locally** Prioritise local recruitment to reduce non-resident workforce demand.
-  **Partner** Partner with Councils and stakeholders to support coordination.
-  **Monitor** Require contractor reporting and apply fair booking, including a minimum three-day cancellation period.

Workforce management

Supporting local jobs and managing our workforces.



WHAT THE SIA FOUND

- Opportunity** Direct and indirect employment opportunities can support local and regional economic growth, skills development and workforce participation.
- Interest** Strong interest in employment and economic benefits.
- Participation risks** Competition for skilled and semi-skilled labour is expected and may limit local participation, along with specialist skill requirements.
- Workforce draw** Workforce draw from small business, agriculture and essential services may affect their viability and operations.
- Wellbeing & conduct** Workforce wellbeing, safety and behaviour are important.

WHAT WE'LL DO

Actively manage workforce demand to minimise disruption

-  **Local and First Nations Support** Maximise opportunities for local and First Nations workers across the project and supply chain through partnerships and early promotion.
-  **Build capability** Through partnerships and programs, support skills development, workforce capability, and long-term employability, including through apprenticeships and traineeships.
-  **Partner** Partner with Councils, industry and other proponents to support monitoring and coordination of workforce management.
-  **Workforce standards and support** Set and support workforce behaviour, wellbeing and safety expectations via codes of conduct and health and wellbeing programs.
-  **Biosecurity and land access protections** Manage biosecurity through weed surveys, defined biosecurity zones and utilise wash-down facilities along the alignment.

Health and community wellbeing

Supporting community wellbeing



WHAT THE SIA FOUND

● Benefits	Long-term energy reliability and economic transition benefits.
● Infrastructure and service risk	Construction workforces may place temporary pressure on health, emergency and social services.
● Inequity	Existing and worsening pressure on social infrastructure and services may affect vulnerable groups more.
● Amenity and safety	The projects will create amenity impacts during construction and operation, and safety impacts will be present during construction.
● Wellbeing risk	Concerns for stress and uncertainty particularly for landholders, affecting community wellbeing.
● Community cohesion risk	Concerns about land values and perceived inequity in compensation between transmission and renewable hosts affect wellbeing.

WHAT WE'LL DO

Implement a wellbeing framework with the support of contractors

	Amenity management	Manage construction amenity impacts through environmental management plans and ongoing engagement.
	Minimise demand	Implement health, safety and emergency response measures and partner to minimise demand on local health and emergency services.
	Road safety	Implement a Traffic Management Plan, road safety measures, workforce transport arrangements and ongoing engagement.
	Behaviour	Promote respectful workforce behaviour through codes of conduct, wellbeing initiatives, and workforce management.
	Connect and respond	Maintain strong engagement and complaints processes.
	Support wellbeing	Support the wellbeing of landholders and Traditional Owners through dedicated relationship management, land access protocols, site-specific measures, and cultural heritage agreements.
	Invest in wellbeing	Invest in wellbeing through grants, health and wellbeing initiatives, and legacy initiatives

Community and stakeholder engagement

Responsive communication and understanding



WHAT THE SIA FOUND

- **Key to confidence** Engagement is critical to managing impacts and maintaining community confidence.
- **Consultation fatigue** There is widespread consultation fatigue arising from many concurrent projects.
- **Information gaps** Communities are concerned about inconsistent information, and uncertainty and confusion about many developments.
- **Landholder concerns** Landholders and near neighbours are concerned about prolonged uncertainty, land access negotiations and compensation.
- **Feedback impact** People want to see how feedback has influenced decisions.

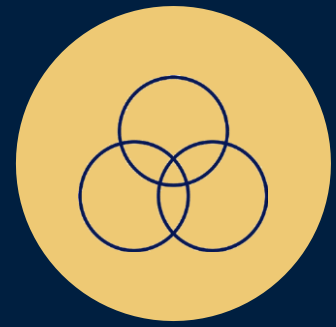
WHAT WE'LL DO

Build community confidence through meaningful engagement

	Partner	Coordinate with councils and other proponents to reduce consultation fatigue.
	Build trust	Build trust through planned, transparent, accessible, and regular engagement, including feedback mechanisms.
	Build understanding	Build understanding through clear and accurate communication about project activities, land access, compensation and impacts.
	Tailored approach	Maintain local points of contact to provide accessible and responsible engagement tailored to local preferences.
	Meaningful engagement	Engage meaningfully with key stakeholders including landholders, Traditional Owners, councils, community groups, and service providers.
	Monitor effectiveness	Maintain complaints and grievance processes and monitor feedback to adapt engagement.

Cumulative impacts

Responding to our contribution to the combined effect of many projects.



WHAT THE SIA FOUND

● Key Risk	Impacts arise where these projects overlap with other transmission, renewable and resource developments.
● Housing and accommodation	Housing and accommodation pressure is the clearest cumulative risk from combined workforce demand.
● Competition	Multiple projects can create competition for skilled labour, contractors and local suppliers.
● Infrastructure and service pressure	Combined construction adds pressure on roads and on health, emergency and community services.
● Consultation fatigue	Consultation fatigue grows when communities engage with many concurrent projects.

WHAT WE'LL DO

Proactive management to minimise our contribution to cumulative impacts

	Partner	Coordinate with councils, other proponents and government on housing, workforce and services.
	Plan	Reduce pressure on housing and services through workforce accommodation planning and local service engagement.
	Deliver benefits	Maximise local benefits by facilitating local and First Nations participation through procurement and capability building, local jobs training and skills development.
	Manage impacts	Manage amenity, traffic, health, and wellbeing impacts through Social Impact Management Plans.
	Monitor and adapt	Track cumulative impacts, listen to feedback, report transparently, and adjust responses as needed.

Community and social investment

Investing in lasting benefits for the communities that host our infrastructure



WHAT THE SIA FOUND

- **Local priority** Communities value investment aligned with local priorities and regional development plans.
- **Lasting legacy** Stakeholders prefer strategic, long-term investment over one-off or symbolic contributions.
- **Regional scale** Coordinating investment regionally delivers larger initiatives and avoids duplicated effort.
- **Local benefits** Interest centres on local jobs, training, housing, and wellbeing, including mental health.
- **Most affected** Communities closest to the project expect to share most in the benefits it delivers.

OUR INVESTMENT FOCUS

Creating lasting regional benefit

-  **Invest** Deliver community and legacy initiatives under our Community Benefits and Social Value Framework.
-  **Partner** Work with councils, chambers of commerce and other proponents to co-design regional initiatives.

Priority Areas

Initiatives to consider

-  **Housing and accommodation** Support housing supply, including workforce accommodation that can adapt to community housing afterwards.
-  **Education, training and workforce development** Invest in training facilities, scholarships and apprenticeships to upskill local and Indigenous people.
-  **Community health and wellbeing** Support mental health, wellbeing and community facility initiatives with councils and local providers.

What happens next

The SIA is not a one-off document — it informs ongoing management, engagement and reporting.

01

IMPLEMENT SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT PLANS

Implement Social Impact Management Plans with responsibilities, timing and monitoring.

02

PARTNER EARLY

Share project information early with councils and stakeholders and partner to minimise impacts.

03

MONITOR IMPACTS

Track housing, workforce, procurement, service pressure, complaints and feedback.

04

ADAPT ACTIONS

Update responses as project details, cumulative pressures and feedback change.

Impacts are expected to reduce through management measures - ongoing monitoring and adaptive management remain essential.