

Customer Panel Meeting Summary

Attendees	Names and titles
Panel Members	Chris Gillitt, Farm Business Resilience Project Manager, QLD Canegrowers Christy Englezakis, Development State Leader – Queensland, Neoen Don Woodrow, Market Policy Manager, CS Energy Dr John Gardner, Research Scientist, CSIRO (<i>proxy for Dr Stephen Snow</i>) Dr Tracey Dodd, Senior Lecturer, School of Management, Adelaide University Gavin Dufty, National Director Energy, Policy and Research, St Vincent de Paul Society Katie-Anne Mulder, CEO, Queensland Renewable Energy Council Leanne Caelers, Executive Director, Frameworks & Engagement Policy, Energy, QLD Treasury Leisa Dowling, CEO, Gladstone Regional Council Mark Grenning, Consumer Advocate Nardia Yeates, Commercial Infrastructure and Energy Leader, Aurizon Robyn Robinson, Director, Council on the Ageing QLD Samrat Mukherjee, Asset Commercial Lead, Shell QGC (<i>proxy for Evashnee Chetty</i>) Sisira Weeratunga, General Manager Grid Planning, Energy Queensland Stephanie McKechnie, Energy Engagement & Education Advisor, QLD Farmers' Federation
Powerlink Members	Daniel Andersen, General Manager Energy Markets - Energy Futures Eleonore Bridier, Customer Engagement Specialist (Convenor) Gerard Reilly, GM Communications, Customer & Engagement (Chair) Ian Lowry, Executive General Manager Major Projects Jacqui Bridge, Executive General Manager Network Investment Jenny Harris, General Manager Network Regulation - Energy Futures Natasha Browne, General Manager Business Development Roger Smith, Director Revenue Reset Wendy Miller, Customer Strategist
Special Guests	Darryl Rowell, Chief Financial Officer, Powerlink Dr Seán Mc Goldrick, Chief Executive, Powerlink Peta Tilse, Board Director, Powerlink
Other Powerlink Guests	Brooke Saunders, General Manager Governance, Powerlink Dana Boxall, General Manager Community & Delivery Services (workshop), Powerlink Emma Rogers, General Manager Strategic Network Operations, Powerlink Jessica Purdy, Customer Engagement Specialist, Powerlink Samantha Rennie, Director CopperString Project Transition, Powerlink Sarah Huang, EGM Delivery and Technical Solutions, Powerlink
Invited Observers	Ben Fu, AER Observer Michael Brothers, AER Observer
Apologies	Andrew Richards, CEO, Energy Users Association of Australia Chris Hazzard, Social Justice Committee Member, St Vincent de Paul Society Evashnee Chetty, Commercial Operations Advisor, Shell Ian Christmas, Engineering Lead, Grid Connection and Technical, Edify Energy Matt Tapsall, Policy Director, Queensland Resources Council Dr Stephen Snow, Research Scientist, CSIRO

AGENDA

CUSTOMER PANEL MEETING AGENDA

Time	Duration	Item	Presenters/s	Papers	Level
12:00PM	60	CE accountability session and discussion	Dr. Seán Mc Goldrick	Customer and Community Performance Report	
1:00PM	15	Comfort break and photos			
1:15PM	5	Overview of agenda	Gerard Reilly		
1:20PM	5	Update on Uniting Energy Support Program	Wendy Miller		
1:25PM	20	Central Queensland Program Update	Ian Lowry		
1:45PM	20	Business and regulated financial performance update	Darryl Rowell		
2:05PM	70	Workshop and break	Wendy Miller Eleonore Bridier	Customer Panel Workbook for Members	
3:15PM	30	Update on our Revenue Proposal	Roger Smith		
3:45PM	15	Wrap up	Gerard Reilly		
4:00PM	Close				

Level		Description
Educate		We build stakeholder understanding of the regulatory framework, technical concepts, decision-making process and opportunities for participation.
Inform		We provide balanced, accurate and timely information to help people understand an issue, decision, project, process or activity.
Consult		We seek feedback on a proposal, issue, option, plan or decision.
Involve		We work directly with stakeholders to understand issues, concerns, aspirations and opportunities throughout a process.
Collaborate		We work with stakeholders to develop options, solutions or recommendations where there is appropriate scope to do so.
Empower		Where appropriate, we will support stakeholders to make or lead decisions within Powerlink's role, obligations and authority.

Papers supplied for pre-reading:

- Customer Panel Workbook for Members

Papers supplied for noting:

- RIT-T Report (October 2026)

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and member update

Presenter: Gerard Reilly, General Manager Communications, Customer and Engagement (Chair)

Gerard Reilly welcomed members, proxies, Powerlink Board Director Peta Tilse and special guests. Jacqui Bridge, Executive General Manager Network Investment, announced that she will leave Powerlink in November to take up a new role in Victoria.

Customer and Community Accountability session with the Chief Executive

Presenter: Dr Seán Mc Goldrick, Chief Executive, in conversation with Gerard Reilly and Customer Panel Members

Summary

This closed session gave members an opportunity to question Dr Seán Mc Goldrick directly about Powerlink's customer and community performance, what it has learned and its future priorities. Gerard Reilly opened the conversation, and members then asked their own questions. Members' questions covered seven themes.

Accountability Themes

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) Draft Decision on Powerlink's Revenue Proposal: Members asked questions on the AER Draft Decision on Powerlink's 2027–32 Revenue Proposal. They also asked whether the reductions reflect a broader regulatory trend, and what happens next, including concern around reliability risks if the Final Decision does not reflect the investments required.

Affordability and price certainty: Members asked how Powerlink will manage rising costs, interest rates, and price uncertainty. They also asked how Powerlink will give customers confidence that its decisions are balanced.

Managing costs: Members asked what levers Powerlink has to control capital and operating costs.

Explaining the energy transition: Members raised concerns that many people in regional communities do not understand why the transition is needed. They asked how the reasons for it and its benefits could be explained more clearly.

Policy settings: Members asked how Powerlink handles changing policy positions on energy.

Physical climate related risk: Members asked how Powerlink is preparing the network for more frequent extreme weather.

Jurisdictional comparisons: Members asked how operating transmission in Queensland compares with other states, drawing on Seán's experience elsewhere.

Uniting Energy Support Program

Presenter: Wendy Miller, Customer Strategist

Summary

Wendy Miller provided the annual update on Powerlink's partnership with Uniting, which has run since 2022. Uniting's Energy Support program provides households experiencing energy stress in-depth help with their bills and energy use. To-date it has supported 276 Queensland households, providing them an estimated \$947,679 in avoided energy bill costs and financial relief. The program supports households to understand household energy

usage and access concessions, debt relief and hardship programs and move to better retail offers. Wendy also described benefits provided that aren't quantified, such as keeping a household connected to electricity.

Discussion, questions and responses

A member endorsed the program and the expertise of the Uniting team. It was noted that referrals, not funding, are what currently limit how many Queensland households the program reaches, and members were invited to refer households or organisations to the program.

Central Queensland program update

Presenter: Ian Lowry, Executive General Manager Major Projects

Summary

Ian Lowry provided a regulatory and project delivery update on the Gladstone Project and Central Queensland synchronous condensers.

Powerlink has been issued priority transmission investment (PTI) directions from the Queensland Government, which confirmed the final directed scope of the Gladstone Project. Work on the four synchronous condensers continues, and Powerlink is on track to lodge a contingent project application in December 2026. Prior to lodgement, Powerlink is completing a material change in circumstances process as part of the State-wide system strength RIT-T. A public webinar on 4 November will support engagement on these processes.

Ian also shared highlights from the 2026 Central Queensland Transmission Network Forum, including higher attendance, and early results in local supplier participation and community investment. Ian thanked the Customer Panel for its earlier input, which significantly shaped the forum.

Discussion, questions and responses

Scope: Members asked whether the Gladstone Project PTI descope works under the directed scope had been removed or deferred. Ian confirmed that only the Gladstone West to Larcom Creek line was descope from the Gladstone Project PTI, and any future construction of that line would go through the normal regulatory processes when needed.

Community sentiment: Members asked about community sentiment along the corridors. Ian said sentiment is generally neutral to positive. Biosecurity on grazing properties and pressure on local worker accommodation are presently the main issues.

Project cost: Members asked whether the AER had assessed the full project cost as proposed. Ian said the AER [acting as Suitably Qualified Person] undertook a prudence and efficiency review on the full project, and the AER will publish the PTI directed amounts in November.

Regulatory oversight: Roger Smith, Director Revenue Reset, explained that the AER keeps responsibility for applying incentive schemes to PTI projects and will consult publicly on this. Members discussed how the PTI framework allows costs to be reviewed after construction. Powerlink noted it will work with the RPRG to make clear which elements engagement can influence and which are directed under the PTI framework.

Business and regulated financial performance update

Presenter: Darryl Rowell, Chief Financial Officer

Summary

Darryl Rowell gave Powerlink's annual update on expenditure against the 2023–27 regulatory allowance, a commitment Powerlink makes under The Energy Charter. He explained that the current allowance was set in a stable, low-inflation environment. Since then, equipment and construction costs have risen sharply, the network has become more complex to operate, and new system strength and security obligations have been introduced. As a result, expenditure is above allowance. Powerlink bears a share of this overspend, as a penalty, through the AER's regulatory incentive schemes.

Discussion, questions and responses

2025–26 capital expenditure: Members asked how capital expenditure came in below the Revenue Proposal forecast. Darryl said Powerlink has focused tightly on essential scope and near-term needs.

CopperString: Members asked about the efficiency of moving CopperString to Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC). Dr Seán Mc Goldrick, Chief Executive, explained that a transition services agreement is in place. QIC will decide its own delivery model and is not expected to duplicate Powerlink's organisation. It was noted that a specific framework for the project is being developed.

Comparisons: Members said it would be beneficial if Powerlink's results could be compared, on a like-for-like basis, with other transmission network service providers.

Compliance costs: Members asked about the cost of compliance and assurance, including climate reporting. Darryl said the first climate report used a phased, limited-assurance approach. He reflected that the future requirement to measure scope 3 emissions will be harder.

Artificial intelligence (AI): Members asked about efficiencies from AI. Powerlink described pilots that have delivered productivity gains.

Workshop: Customer and community performance report

Presenters: Wendy Miller, Customer Strategist, and Eleonore Bridier, Customer Engagement Specialist

Summary

Wendy Miller explained that the new online report is the latest step in Powerlink's accountability reporting, which has developed over several years with the Customer Panel's feedback and work with the Energy Charter. Two workshop activities were run. Members were grouped by the stakeholder segment they represent. In activity one, members gave feedback on the report. In activity two, they tested proposed criteria for assessing the disclosure quality of Powerlink's customer and community performance report.

Activity one: feedback on the report

Members were asked to identify the strengths, areas for improvement and any gaps in the report.

Transparency

Members praised Powerlink's continued commitment to transparency, reflecting that the content of the report contained meaningful data and information promoting transparency.

Format and navigation

Supportive of the new Customer and Community Performance Report format, particularly its online accessibility, visual presentation, ability to provide both summary and detailed information, and links to supporting evidence. Some examples were given on navigation improvements, such as improving the ability to navigate back to the

report's home page and considering emulating formatting of the report layout to match project engagement pages (regarding right hand side page elements) to user familiarity.

Interpretation and context

The strongest theme across all stakeholder groups was a desire for better definition and interpretation of performance information. Members sought more context to help explain what results mean, whether performance is improving over time, how results relate to each other (e.g. trust and satisfaction) and how results compare with similar organisations or other bases of comparison.

Targets, trends and affordability

Members saw value in targets, trend information and comparison points that help assess performance and assess it over time.

Demonstrating influence

Discussion that the report could usefully include more evidence of how customer and community input influences Powerlink decisions. Members suggested using practical examples to demonstrate how customer feedback has influenced outcomes. Members also suggested creating an additional features box and page that can showcase recent activities or updates like the CQ transmission network forum and which can change over time.

Timestamp / downloadable point-in-time report, together with online format

Having a time-stamped downloadable version of the report / aspects of the report was raised as useful by some members, in addition to the online format. This would be useful to those members who want to have a document they can cross-reference in their own organisational materials e.g. as example of best practice or as point-in-time reporting material.

Activity two: evaluating disclosure quality

Members reviewed proposed dimensions for evaluating disclosure quality.

There was broad support for retaining these dimensions as the foundation of future report evaluations. The discussion focused less on whether the dimensions were appropriate and more on what elements they reflected and how they could be demonstrated in practice.

Some suggestions were made to elevate 'transparent' to the proposed credibility dimension and to expand the accessible dimension to include 'comparable'.

What members emphasised

Members indicated that high-quality disclosure should:

- be easy to navigate, understand and use for the intended audiences
- provide sufficient context, including trends, targets and supporting evidence
- present achievements and challenges in a balanced and transparent way
- demonstrate how customer and community input has informed decisions and outcomes.
- Provide data over time horizons that effectively evidence performance e.g. 3-5 year analysis

Additional considerations

Members also discussed consistency of reporting over time, comparability of results, transparency regarding assumptions and limitations, timely reporting and the use of practical examples or case studies. These were generally viewed as important supporting features rather than additional evaluation criteria.

Powerlink will use this feedback to develop a small number of questions for inclusion in the Customer Panel's annual evaluation survey.

Update on our Revenue Proposal

Presenter: Roger Smith, Director Revenue Reset

Summary

Roger Smith summarised the AER Draft Decision. It reduces forecast regulated capital expenditure by 54.4 percent and forecast regulated operating expenditure by 14.7 percent compared with Powerlink's proposal. The capital reductions are mainly in replacement, strategic easements and non-network property. The operating reductions are mainly due to a different base year. Revenue is broadly similar because of updated economic factors.

Roger said all transmission network service providers face similar cost pressures. He noted that 62 percent of forecast capital expenditure was supported by options analysis, and that the AER found Powerlink's engagement genuine.

Roger noted that Powerlink will meet the AER the following week and update the RPRG afterwards. Key dates include:

- AER pre-determination conference: 22 October 2026
- Lodgement of the Revised Revenue Proposal: 2 December 2026
- Submissions close: 19 January 2027
- Final Decision expected: end of April 2027

Members were strongly encouraged to take part in the public consultation directly or through the RPRG submission.

Discussion, questions and responses

Members asked about the size of some proposals compared with each provider's existing asset base. Roger noted the information was presented for indicative purposes only and the importance of comparing like with like rather than drawing broad conclusions from the data.

Wrap up

Presenter: Gerard Reilly, General Manager Communications, Customer and Engagement (Chair)

Gerard Reilly reminded members to complete the annual evaluation survey. He noted that invitations to the Brisbane Transmission Network Forum on 26 November will be sent in mid-October.

ACTIONS

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	STATUS
Provide link to register for webinar on the system strength Material Change of Circumstances and Contingent Project Application processes	Powerlink	Complete
Provide link to register for AER predetermination conference	Powerlink	Complete
Members to complete the annual evaluation survey by 11 November 2026	Members	
Members unable to attend meeting to provide optional feedback on this meeting summary, section 'Workshop: Customer and community performance report.'	Members	