

November 2024



# 2027-32 Revenue Proposal Reference Group (RPRG)

## Terms of Reference



## Purpose

The Revenue Proposal Reference Group (RPRG) is established to provide customer-centric input into Powerlink's 2027-32 Revenue Proposal. The group will focus on ensuring the proposal reflects long-term consumer interests, enhances network efficiency, and meets regulatory requirements.

The RPRG aims to ensure early, continuous and genuine engagement in the development of the revenue proposal, contributing to the affordability, reliability, and sustainability of the transmission network, per the [National Energy Objective \(NEO\)](#).

## Objectives

- Enable in-depth and timely discussion on key elements of the Revenue Proposal, including reviewing customer and stakeholder views on the reasonableness of Powerlink's proposed positions.
- Ensure customer and stakeholder perspectives are accurately identified and integrated into the proposal, with clear consideration of their feedback throughout the process.
- Report insights to the broader Customer Panel to facilitate further consideration of stakeholder concerns.
- Build understanding of Powerlink's business operations, revenue requirements, and long-term network strategies.
- Identify areas requiring further research or analysis to ensure the Revenue Proposal is robust and well-justified.

## Membership

The RPRG will comprise of the following.

**Customer representatives:** A minimum of five (5) and a maximum of seven (7) members from our Customer Panel.

**Observers:** a maximum of three (3) additional observers may be invited, as identified by Powerlink and/or Customer Panel members for the purpose of building the capabilities of customer representatives in the revenue determination process.

**Powerlink representatives:** members responsible for network regulation and revenue reset processes, including:

- Director Revenue Reset (Chair)
- GM Communications, Customer & Engagement (Facilitator)
- General Manager Network Regulation
- Relevant members of the Powerlink Revenue Reset team

**Invited stakeholders:**

- Representatives from the Australian Energy Regulator (AER)
- Members of the AER's Consumer Challenge Panel (CCP)
- Powerlink Board Directors
- All other Customer Panel members

It is not expected that the above stakeholders attend every meeting. Attendance is at their discretion based on topics to be discussed.

## Third Party Involvement

### AER Consumer Challenge Panel (CCP)

Members of the AER Consumer Challenge Panel (CCP) will be invited to attend and observe meetings. Attendance will be at the discretion of the AER CCP Chair, who will decide which meetings are attended and by whom. The involvement of the AER CCP is welcomed, as they provide a valuable role in the revenue determination process. The AER CCP's objective is to advise the AER on:

- Whether network businesses' proposals are in the **long-term interests of consumers**
- The **effectiveness of engagement** activities with their customers and how this is reflected in the development of their Revenue Proposal.

### AER Representatives

AER representatives will also be invited to attend meetings, with attendance coordinated by the relevant AER Director overseeing Powerlink's revenue determination process. AER attendees will provide technical and regulatory input where appropriate.

The views expressed by AER representatives are intended to provide initial input and are non-binding on the AER Board. Powerlink will also engage regularly with the AER outside of the RPRG, ensuring a continuous dialogue throughout the revenue determination process.

## Role

The RPRG will serve in an advisory capacity, with members engaged at the appropriate level of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum (see Appendix 1), aligning with the genuine engagement principles set out in the AER Better Resets Handbook (2024). The group's role is to provide input and feedback, rather than to act as a negotiating party on the Revenue Proposal. The goal is to ensure that customer views are effectively incorporated into the proposal, leading to broad agreement with the full Customer Panel following input from the RPRG.

The RPRG will focus on ensuring:

- **Genuine engagement** is embedded throughout the process, with consumers being consulted, involved, and collaborated with, at the right stages to influence outcomes, as per the AER's guidelines.
- **Meaningful contributions** are made towards key elements of the Revenue Proposal, ensuring the proposal reflects long-term consumer interests, including priorities related to affordability, reliability, and sustainability.

## Reporting

Customer representatives on the RPRG may be required to prepare independent reports at key stages of the revenue determination process. This may include, but is not limited to, reports on the **Draft Revenue Proposal**, the **Initial Revenue Proposal**, and the **Revised Revenue Proposal**. The requirement for and scope of these reports will be determined based on regulatory obligations and the specific issues identified during the engagement process.

## Induction

Powerlink will provide an induction to members to appropriately prepare them for involvement. This induction will occur as a standalone Revenue Determination 101 session in September 2024, and then as required should any new members be onboarded at later stages. Recordings of this session can also be made available.

## Meetings

**Chairing:** Panel meetings will be chaired. The Chair's responsibility is to ensure that all members of the panel have the opportunity to provide their views, be involved and also act in an appropriate manner.

**Frequency:** It is anticipated that meetings will be held every 4-6 weeks, however this will be determined by engagement requirements and the relevant stage of the revenue determination process. Additional sessions (including online) will be organised as needed. Powerlink will provide an indicative calendar of meetings in early 2025 to participants to coordinate involvement.

**Duration:** Typically, 2-3 hours.

**Flexibility:** Powerlink aims to make the best use of RPRG members' time by adjusting meeting schedules based on the needs of discussion. This includes modifying meeting length, combining RPRG and Customer Panel sessions, or postponing meetings when necessary to prepare information. Any changes will be agreed upon with the RPRG.

**Agendas and summaries:** Agendas will be shared five days before each meeting, with meeting summaries and presentation slides distributed afterward to RPRG members and the broader Customer Panel. They will also be made available on the Powerlink website and shared internally to Powerlink employees as appropriate.

**Location and format:** Meetings will be held in person at Powerlink Virginia offices, with virtual attendance facilitated. However, it is expected that RPRG members will attend in person as much as possible.

**Attendance expectations:** Members are expected to attend all meetings. Non-attendance at two or more meetings without valid reason may prompt a review of your membership. Observers are not expected to attend in person.

**Proxies and delegates:** Members are not permitted to send proxies or delegates in their place.

## Tenure and Review

The RPRG will be stood up from March 2025 to May 2026 at a minimum. Reviews will be undertaken at regular intervals:

- **September 2025:** to ensure the RPRG is meeting its intended objectives.
- **March 2026:** following lodgement of the Revenue Proposal. This review will include consideration of whether the RPRG continues post-Revenue Proposal lodgement.
- **May 2027:** following the Final Decision by the AER, to assess the overall performance of the RPRG and identify lessons learnt for future engagement.

## Resignations and vacancies

If a member resigns from their organisation, the Chair will decide if they can continue serving. Resignation from the RPRG does not automatically transfer membership to another representative from your organisation. Vacancies will be filled on an "as needed" basis, following the original recruitment process for the RPRG.

## Conflicts of interest

All RPRG members are expected to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise during their tenure. Conflicts of interest will be recorded in the meeting summaries of RPRG meetings and the appropriate remediation for any conflicts will be determined by the RPRG on a case-by-case basis.

Those working in Government Departments cannot be members of this working group.

## Resources and support

**Sitting fees:** The rate of remuneration is \$300.00 per hour, excluding GST, for Panel Members. These rates will remain fixed for the duration of this reference group's operations.

**Resources:** Powerlink will consider making funding available to the RPRG for relevant and appropriate activities (e.g. commissioning independent research). Any funding requests must be approved by both Powerlink and the Customer Panel.

**Travel costs:** Powerlink will reimburse travel costs for members who need to travel by plane to attend meetings. Observers will not be reimbursed for travel costs. These conditions apply to authorised reimbursements:

- Economy class flights only
- Reasonable accommodation costs (Powerlink can provide recommendations)
- Flight costs and accommodation will be reimbursed for RPRG members only.

Members can organise travel themselves for reimbursement or request Powerlink to arrange travel at least one (1) month in advance of meeting dates. If seeking reimbursement, receipts will need to be submitted as evidence.

**Non-financial support:** we will also provide necessary non-financial support (e.g. education on regulatory, economic, engineering or industry matters) for any individual members or the group.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

#### IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b>	<b>EMPOWER</b>
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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