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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | OCTOBER 2024

Theodore Wind Farm Connection Project

These Frequently Asked Questions have been developed to provide landholders with further information about Powerlink's Theodore Wind Farm Connection Project.

About the Theodore Wind Farm Connection Project

WHAT IS THE THEODORE WIND FARM CONNECTION PROJECT? (POWERLINK'S PROJECT)

The Theodore Wind Farm Connection Project is a proposed double circuit 275kV transmission line that will connect the Theodore Wind Farm to Powerlink's transmission network. It involves planning and building a new 55km transmission line from the wind farm site (about 20km east of Theodore) to a proposed substation at Mt Benn near Banana.

The proposed substation forms part of the Banana Range Wind Connection Project – currently in the planning and approvals phase.

WHAT IS POWERLINK'S ROLE?

Powerlink is a Government Owned Corporation that owns, develops, operates and maintains the high voltage electricity transmission network in Queensland. We provide electricity transmission services, including connecting large electricity generators (such as wind and solar farms), to the transmission network. Helping the energy system transition to a lower carbon future is a key focus for Powerlink.

Powerlink manages the connections process by which renewable energy projects can connect to the electrical grid under the National Electricity Regulator (NER).

Powerlink have been engaged by RWE Renewables Australia (RWE) to progress work to connect their proposed Theodore Wind Farm to the transmission network. The project is in the planning phase.

WHAT APPROVALS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE CONNECTION PROJECT?

The Theodore Wind Farm Connection Project is subject to separate planning approval from the wind farm.

Powerlink will progress the planning approvals for the project through the Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID) process. This process is managed by the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works (DHLGPPW) with input from other government agencies. Powerlink may also need to seek environmental approval from the Australian Government under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE PROJECT?

Following release of the Draft Corridor Selection Report (Draft CSR) in October 2024, Powerlink will consider all feedback received on the report. We expect to release a Final Corridor Selection Report in early 2025 which will outline submissions received on the Draft CSR and how those submissions have been considered. The Final CSR will also share a final decision on the recommended corridor for the proposed transmission line.

Field studies and engagement with directly impacted landholders, Traditional Owner groups, the community and other stakeholders will continue into 2025, together with the preparation of an Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) which will be prepared as part of the formal MID approval process. There will be a formal community consultation period on the findings of the EAR in 2025.

WHEN IS CONSTRUCTION EXPECTED TO OCCUR?

Subject to approvals, construction is expected to commence in 2026 and be completed in late 2027.

About the Theodore Wind Farm (RWE's project)

The Theodore Wind Farm is a renewable energy development proposed by RWE. It is planned to incorporate a wind farm with up to 170 wind turbines, a battery storage facility and may also include a solar farm within the project boundary.

WHAT IS THE LATEST UPDATE ABOUT THE THEODORE WIND FARM?

The Theodore Wind Farm is currently in the planning stage with state and federal governments. The wind farm is proposed to have up to 170 turbines and retain the existing cattle grazing land use. The Theodore Wind Farm is targeting 2027 for initial operations. For more details on the Theodore Wind Farm activities, please visit theodorewindfarm.com.au

Transmission corridor selection process

WHAT AREA WAS CONSIDERED TO POTENTIALLY HOST THE TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE?

As part of their initial project planning activities, RWE undertook preliminary desktop analysis and investigations into transmission corridor alternatives from a landholder, environment and constructability perspective, leading to a preferred corridor.

In 2024, RWE engaged Powerlink to progress work to connect their proposed Theodore Wind Farm to the electricity grid. To consolidate work previously completed by RWE on the project and progress this work to the next stage, Powerlink has now completed and released a Draft CSR.

WHAT IS A DRAFT CSR?

A Draft Corridor Selection Report provides information publicly, about the project, the corridor selection process to assess and undertake to identify a corridor and to seek the finalisation of these studies resulting in a final corridor selected and published in the Final Corridor Selection Report. Planning and legislative frameworks,

along with technical and spatial analysis, have factored into the corridor selection process. Three objectives have been used to inform the approach to corridor selection being; social, environment and economic which entail:

- Social – To consider the use of land and community livelihood within and adjacent to corridor options.
- Environment – To consider a balanced approach to corridor selection with the least practicable impact on environment and heritage values.
- Economic – To consider construction and operational factors such as cost at a preliminary level, given the scale of the project.

The output of this assessment is a Draft CSR.

WHY WAS THE RECOMMENDED CORRIDOR SELECTED?

The recommended corridor for this connection project is around 1km-wide and 55km long and runs from the proposed Theodore Wind Farm site in the south, to the proposed future Powerlink substation at Mt Benn near Banana. This corridor achieves a balanced impact across social, environment and economic factors, as it:

- is the shortest, most direct route
- includes the least number of properties owned by the fewest landholders, which minimises property-specific impacts
- avoids significant impacts on agriculture, cropping and grazing lands
- is located a considerable distance from existing townships (mainly Banana) and major highways, reducing broad visual amenity impacts
- has potential to co-locate with existing distribution powerlines and other proposed renewable energy projects in the area, creating less impacts and maximising efficiencies.

DID RWE CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE CORRIDORS?

As part of their initial project planning activities, RWE investigated the following corridor alternatives:

- central corridor to the west of Mt Benn
- corridor to the west of Flat Top Mountain.

The decision has been made to not proceed with these alternative corridors due to several factors, including:

- preference to maximise co-location opportunities with infrastructure development
- potential corridor impacts on existing agricultural land uses (including mapped areas of strategic cropping land) and wetland areas
- number of waterway crossings
- number of additional properties impacted
- overall corridor length.

WILL THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDED CORRIDOR BRING ADDITIONAL CORRIDORS?

The Recommended Corridor will ultimately accommodate a double circuit 275kV transmission line within a 60m wide easement. This transmission line is intended to provide higher capacity to allow future connections where required, subject to capacity demands. Importantly, with the introduction of this transmission line, Powerlink does not envisage the need for additional transmission corridors being required south of the proposed Mt Benn Substation.

WHAT TYPE OF LAND IS IN THE RECOMMENDED CORRIDOR?

The recommended corridor is located within the Rural Zone under the Banana Shire Council Planning Scheme 2021.

The placement of the corridor within the rural zoning is more preferential to the placement within residential or open space zoned land because of the social impacts resulting from land acquisition within a residential zoned area and amenity impacts associated with changing open parkland to a substation.

Further, areas used for grazing activities including broadacre cropping are more common further to the west which reflects the flatter topography. As such, the Recommended Corridor is not envisaged to significantly impact current grazing activities and will avoid areas used for cropping purposes.

HOW ELSE CAN IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LAND BE MINIMISED?

The final corridor (around 1km wide) will ultimately be reduced to an easement alignment width of approximately 60m. This provides flexibility for Powerlink to work with landholders to determine an easement alignment that minimises property-specific impacts, in particular farming and business operations.

Project design features

HOW TALL WILL THE NEW TRANSMISSION TOWERS BE?

It is likely the new 275kV transmission towers will be up to 60m high, depending on specific-site conditions. This can include consideration of terrain, topography and land use within the final easement alignment, with shorter towers likely on higher ground and taller towers within lower points of the corridor.

WHAT WILL BE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN TOWERS?

Concrete tower pads (which the towers stand on) will typically be 40m x 40m. The distance, or span, between towers will be around 450m.

DO TRANSMISSION LINE EASEMENTS NEED TO BE CLEARED OF ALL VEGETATION?

Wherever possible, Powerlink does not clear the entire easement but rather minimises vegetation removal to ensure the safe and reliable operation of transmission line.

When designing the line, mitigation measures such as selective tower placement and spanning to decrease the amount of required vegetation clearing will be used, particularly in sensitive environments.

Environment and planning approvals

WHAT PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS ARE REQUIRED?

Powerlink's Theodore Wind Farm Connection Project is subject to separate planning approval to RWE's wind farm project.

Powerlink will seek planning approval from the Queensland Government, under the Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID) process. We may also need to seek environmental approval from the Australian Government under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). We will continue working closely with landholders, Traditional Owners, the wider community and other stakeholders as planning progresses.

Community consultation

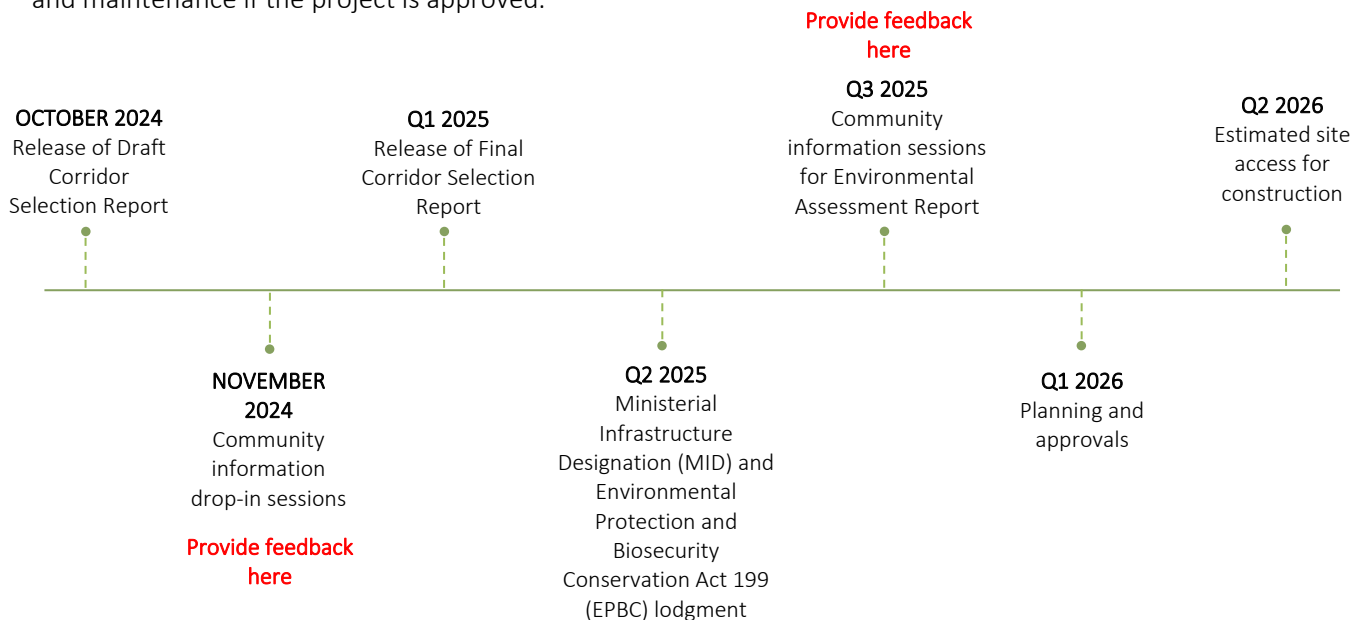
WHAT ARE THE CONSULTATION TIMEFRAMES?

We invite your feedback on the Draft CSR by 5pm Friday 29 November 2024. Local community information drop-in sessions will be held from Thursday 14 November to Saturday 16 November 2024.

Following the release of Draft CSR, Powerlink will look to release a Final Corridor Selection Report in early 2025.

Field studies and engagement with directly impacted landholders, Traditional Owner Groups, the community and other stakeholders will also commence. An Environment Assessment Report (EAR) will be prepared as part of the MID process where landholders, Traditional Owner Groups, the community and other stakeholders will be invited to provide further feedback.

Powerlink will continue to engage regularly throughout the planning and approvals phase, and into construction and maintenance if the project is approved.



HOW CAN I PROVIDE FEEDBACK?

We welcome your feedback and questions anytime on the Theodore Wind Farm Connection Project. If you would like to share input specifically on the Draft CSR, please do so by 5pm Friday 29 November 2024, by:

- attending a community information drop-in session at local venues.
- visiting our project web page and completing a feedback form on www.powerlink.com.au/theodore
- emailing our project team theodore@powerlink.com.au
- phoning 07 3898 4919 (Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 5pm).

Landholders along the recommended corridor are also welcome to contact their Landholder Relations Advisor to ask questions or provide feedback.

Bernie Jefferies
Landholder Relations Advisor
07 3898 4919
theodore@powerlink.com.au

WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE UPCOMING COMMUNITY INFORMATION DROP-IN SESSIONS?

We encourage you to speak with our project team at these local venues to ask questions about the project and provide your feedback on the Draft CSR. Please come any time.

- Thursday, 14 November: 3.30pm – 6.30pm at Supper Room, Biloela Civic Centre, 96 Rainbow Street, Biloela
- Friday, 15 November: 3.30pm – 6.30pm at Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association, Theodore Community Room, 60 The Boulevard, Theodore
- Saturday, 16 November: 10am – 2pm at Sutherland Hall, 32 Bowen Street, Banana.

HOW CAN I SUBSCRIBE TO PROJECT EMAIL UPDATES?

If you would like to receive project updates via email, please email theodore@powerlink.com.au with your name, email address and 'Theodore Update' in the subject line.



FURTHER INFORMATION

For enquiries about the Theodore Wind Farm Connection Project, please call 07 3898 4919 (Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 5pm) and ask for Landholder Relations or email theodore@powerlink.com.au.

About Powerlink Queensland

Powerlink Queensland is a Government Owned Corporation that owns, develops, operates and maintains the transmission network in Queensland. We connect Queenslanders to a world-class energy future, providing electricity to more than five million Queenslanders and 253,000 businesses.

We are also responsible for connecting large-scale renewable energy developments, including wind and solar, and providing electricity to large industrial customers in the rail, mining and LNG sectors. Find out more about Powerlink, visit powerlink.com.au or scan the QR code.

