



19.0 CONSULTATION

19.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of engagement and consultation activities was to inform stakeholders of the Project EIS process and ensure members of the public and stakeholders are appropriately informed about the project in general and have opportunities to provide feedback to the project team and Coordinator General.

This will be achieved through a comprehensive process which focused on effective and timely information dissemination and engagement with interested and affected stakeholders.

The objectives of the consultation program are to:

- to develop communication strategies and clear and effective messages for stakeholders that will:
 - meet the communication needs of landowners, stakeholders and members of the public which will assist in developing an understanding of the proposed project and the need for the project.
 - meet the overall needs of Powerlink.
 - position Powerlink as a responsible, fair, open, effective and honest organisation with key stakeholders and positively strengthen Powerlink's reputation with stakeholders.
- to work with internal Powerlink teams and with Powerlink representatives to coordinate consistent delivery of message to stakeholders and facilitate effective stakeholder feedback to Powerlink;
- to achieve balanced media coverage of the project; and
- to proactively manage potential communication risk areas to reduce the potential for communication based issues that could result in adverse stakeholder reaction to Powerlink's proposed activities in the area.

19.2 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The overall commitment to the goals and objectives in undertaking community engagement activities will provide a solid framework for building long-term relationships with key stakeholders.

In November 2008 a Stakeholder Communication Strategy was developed to guide consultation activities throughout the development of the EIS. The strategy outlines the stakeholders, objectives and the consultation methodology to be adopted.

Throughout the EIS process, engagement activities were, and continue to be, undertaken and a central database is regularly updated to reflect information sent and received to and from stakeholders. The database is also regularly updated to include new stakeholders as needed.

19.3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for the project was a staged approach based on project progress. Major activities within these consultation stages included newsletter distribution and two website (Conics project consultation website and Powerlink's website) where all newsletters and guides could be access by any interested persons.



The staged approach allowed the project team to meet regularly with stakeholders and the community throughout the EIS process and ensure information was relayed in a timely and ordered manner.

19.4 STAKEHOLDERS

19.4.1 Stakeholder Identification

The following definitions of interested and affected persons are as defined by the Queensland *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, Section 38 and Section 41 (3)(b) and were used to define the stakeholder groups throughout the consultation process.

An **interested person** means an unincorporated community or environmental body with a financial or non-financial interest in the region in which the Project is proposed.

An **affected person** means a person or party who is for the purposes of operational land or adjoining land is:

- a registered proprietor;
- a person recorded in the Land Act 1994 register (as the registered hold of that interest);
- for land subject to a mining claim, mineral development licence or mining lease, the holder of, or an applicant for, the tenement;
- for land subject to a relevant resource authority, the holder of the resource authority;
- an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander trustee of land;
- an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander grantee of the land;
- Local government for land held under lease; or
- State government for unallocated state land, reserve land for which there is no trustee, national park, forest reserve, conservation part for which there is no trustee, State forest, timber reserve, State controlled road or fish habitat area.

TABLE 19.1 PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

AFFECTED PERSON/S	INTERESTED PERSON/S	SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS
Landowners within the identified study corridor	Brigalow Jimbour Floodplains Group	Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM)
Western Downs Regional Council	Chinchilla Landcare Group	Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR)
Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM)	Condamine Alliance	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation – Primary Industries and Fisheries (DEEDI)
Barunggam People		

19.4.2 Landowners

The majority of tenancy surrounding current Powerlink infrastructure in the region, including the Braemar to Tarong transmission line, is long-standing, family owned farms involving general or broad acre farming, range grazing and improved pastures. Community spirit is generally strong, reflecting the longevity of family farming operations.



Landholders potentially affected by the new easement between Western Downs and the QNI include the owners of approximately 20 parcels of land in the study area. Powerlink has existing relationships with the majority of these landowners.

19.4.3 Federal, State and Local Government Consultation

A number of engagement methods were used to inform Federal, State and Local government authorities throughout the consultation period. Methods included briefings (available on request), meetings, phone conversations and regular newsletter mail-outs.

Federal, State and Local government included in this consultation process included the following:

Local Government

- Western Downs Regional Council.

State Government

- Department of Communities – Queensland Fire and Rescue Service;
- Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation – Primary Industries and Fisheries (DEEDI);
- Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM);
- Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP); and
- Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR).

Federal Government

- Department of Environment, Water and Heritage.

19.5 ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES AND MESSAGES

19.5.1 Key Messages

Key project messages aimed to support the delivery of consistent messaging were disseminated using common terminology expressions and presented all facts in an easy to understand format. Responses to stakeholder requests, messages and information about the project were tailored to each community to provide localised responses.

The key messages for the project were:

- In order to strengthen the high voltage transmission network in South West Queensland, and to reinforce supply into South East Queensland, Powerlink proposes to construct two new substations, one near Kogan (to be called Western Downs Substation), the other at Halys (near Kingaroy) and a new 275kV transmission line to connect these.
- It is proposed that 80 per cent of the new 275kV powerline be located on existing double-width easements located between Powerlink's Braemar and Tarong Substations (alongside an existing transmission line). Locating the new line on these existing double-width easements will help minimise potential impacts on landholders, the environment and the wider local community.



- The double-width easements were acquired in the late 1990's to ensure the State's future electricity infrastructure needs could be met. Acquiring these easements in advance has also helped provide certainty to the local community about future land use planning.
- Powerlink has commenced a project to identify and acquire new easements (approximately 25km in length) for southern section of the new 275kV transmission line between the new Western Downs substation site and a connection point on the existing Braemar to Tarong double-width easements.
- Powerlink is undertaking a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), including community consultation for both the proposed substation and 275kV transmission line. The EIA will include the production of separate Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for both the substation and transmission line components of the project. The EIS will identify any potential economic, social and environmental impacts of the proposed project, and recommend strategies to manage/ mitigate any potential impacts.
- Specialist independent environmental consultants will be engaged to undertake the EIA. The draft EIS for the substation is expected to be released for public comment in late 2009. The draft EIS for the transmission line is expected to be released for public comment in early 2010.
- Powerlink will consult with affected landowners and local stakeholders through the EIA process to seek their feedback on the project and proposed location of the 275kV transmission line and substation/
- A potential site for the proposed new substation has been identified near Kogan Creek Power Station. The suitability of this site will be examined as part of the EIA process.
- Based on current demand forecasts, the new 275kV transmission line and substation are expected to be required by summer 2012.
- No final decision regarding the project will be made until a comprehensive EIA process and associated consultation have been completed.

19.5.2 Engagement and Consultation Activities

Consultation activities focused on informing the community and stakeholders about the project and collecting feedback. An overview of the activities is provided below.

19.5.2.1 Draft Terms of Reference Stakeholder Workshop

A workshop was held in Toowoomba with stakeholders on 25 September 2009 regarding the Draft Terms of Reference (TOR). Specifically, the purpose of the workshop was to provide an overview of the project and the Draft TOR and obtain feedback regarding the draft TOR.

Organisations that were invited to attend the workshop were:

- Western Downs Regional Council
- Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM);
- Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR);
- Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation – Primary Industries and Fisheries (DEEDI);
- Brigalow Jimbour Floodplains Group;
- Chinchilla Landcare Group; and
- Condamine Alliance.



The organisations that attended the workshop were Western Downs Regional Council, DERM and DTMR. Workshop attendees were invited to provide written feedback regarding the Draft TOR.

19.5.2.2 Initial Landowner Contact & Face to Face Meetings

In November 2009 and April 2010, affected land owners were contacted regarding the project and to arrange a meeting with the landowners to discuss the project, the EIA process and compensation process.

19.5.2.3 Public Notices

Advertisements were placed in local newspapers which are circulated within the project catchment, to inform the public about the project. Future public information sessions on the project will be advertised through the local media.

19.5.2.4 Community Contact Points

A freecall number (1800 211 744) and project email (westerndowns@conics.com.au) have established from the outset of the consultation process to provide a free service via which stakeholders can contact the consultation team to provide feedback, make a complaint, ask a question or to request information.

Powerlink also have a freecall number (1800 635 369) and email (website.enquiries@powerlink.com.au) which were provided as a secondary community contact point.

To date, these contact points have not been utilised by stakeholders in relation to this phase of the project.

19.5.2.5 Website

Information about the draft EIS will be made available on both Conics' project consultation website – www.westerndowns.yolasite.com – and Powerlink's website under "Projects in My Area > Southern". Site visitors were able to access:

- the draft EIS;
- project newsletter/s;
- the guide for landowners;
- the guide on how to make a submission;
- the project terms of reference; and
- contact details for the project.

19.5.2.6 Project Newsletters

An integral part of the stakeholder engagement strategy was the distribution of the project newsletters. A project newsletter was distributed in November 2009, coinciding with Phase 1 of this Project, being the Western Downs Substation project. The newsletter provided information to residences and the community about the Project, specifically:

- information about the project
- a map of the study corridor, illustrating affected properties
- information about the consultation program



- information about the EIA, the study corridor and project timeframes
- frequently asked questions
- Powerlink contact details

Concurrent to the project newsletter, a guide for landowners was also provided in November 2009. The guide aimed to assist landowners in understanding the processes that will be involved in identifying and acquiring the new easement, specifically:

- the status of the project;
- the EIA process;
- compensation for landowners; and
- Conics' contact details.

19.6 OUTCOMES FROM ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

The following is an overview of the outcomes from engagement and consultation activities undertaken as part of the consultation program. In summary, the data which is described in this Section of the report is based on the following engagement and consultation activities undertaken to date:

- draft TOR stakeholder workshop;
- initial phone conversations with affected landowners; and
- face to face affected landowner meetings.

19.6.1 Draft TOR Stakeholder Workshop

A workshop was held in Toowoomba with stakeholders on 25 September 2009 regarding the draft Terms of Reference (TOR). Formal submissions on the Draft TOR were made following this meeting and comments received have been included, where applicable, in the final TOR.

19.6.2 Initial Landowner Contact & Face to Face Meetings

In November 2009 and April 2010, affected land owners were contacted regarding the project and to arrange a meeting with landowners to discuss the project, the EIA process and compensation process as well as access to their property in order to undertake field studies. Landowners included parties which reside on their properties as well as absentee landowners.

Initial feedback from affected land owners varied considerably and key issues and concerns that were raised included:

- appreciation of the phone call to landowners;
- anxiousness regarding the project (e.g. eager to receive more information regarding the project);
- concern regarding the devaluation of their properties;
- preliminary feedback regarding the location of the transmission line in regards to existing agricultural operations or infrastructure;
- believe that landowners will have no say in the location of the transmission line;
- concern regarding the width of the study corridor (3km); and



- concern regarding negative implications to landowners' health (e.g. believe that the transmission line may bring on cancer in landowners)

In addition to above, a number of land owners indicated that based on the information provided to date, they were not concerned about the project.

19.7 CONCLUSIONS

Powerlink and Conics have undertaken consultation with stakeholders and landowners to ensure that potentially affected members of the community are fully aware of the project and can provide input to the process. Route selection of the study alignment has been undertaken in consultation with the owners to determine the route that when environmental, social and costs are considered, gives the most balanced outcome.