1.0 INTRODUCTION

Conics Pty Ltd has been commissioned by Powerlink Queensland to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including an Environmental Management Plan (EMP), for the proposed Western Downs Substation (the Project), in the Kogan district of Western Downs Regional Council (WDRC) (Figure 1.1).

Powerlink proposes to establish and construct a 275kV/500kV substation in the vicinity of the Kogan Creek Power Station on the Darling Downs near Chinchilla. This "Western Downs Substation" will initially be operated as a 275,000 volts switchyard and be connected via a new transmission line between Kogan Creek Power Station and the Braemar Substation. Following establishment, the substation will then be connected to the proposed Halys Substation in the Tarong region via a new transmission line. This line is proposed to be built on partially vacant easements from the Warra to Halys area. The identification of a suitable corridor/ route, and the environmental assessment of the connection between the Western Downs Substation and this vacant easement will be the subject of a separate study.

1.1 PROJECT TITLE

The project has been identified as the Western Downs Substation Establishment and Connection project.

1.2 PROJECT PROPONENT

Powerlink owns, develops, operates and maintains Queensland's high voltage transmission network that extends 1,700 km from north of Cairns to the New South Wales border. As a Transmission Network Service Provider in the National Electricity Market, and holder of a Transmission Licence in Queensland, Powerlink is required to develop its network to meet the security and reliability standards of the National Electricity Rules, the Queensland Electricity Act 1994 (the Electricity Act), and the terms of its Transmission Licence. In addition to these strong legal obligations, the Australian Energy Regulator has implemented network reliability benchmarks for Powerlink, whereby failure to meet those benchmarks results in financial penalties.

Of particular relevance is Powerlink's Transmission Licence, which requires Powerlink to develop the network in a timely manner to meet future forecast demands, such that the forecast peak demand can be met, even with the most critical network element out of service. This is known as the N-1 network planning criterion.

Contact details for the proponent are:
Powerlink Queensland
33 Harold Street, Virginia,
PO Box 1193, Virginia, Queensland, 4014, Australia
Telephone: (07) 38602111, Facsimile: (07) 38602100
Website: www.powerlink.com.au

Powerlink Queensland is the registered business name of the Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited, ABN 82 078 849 233.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The scope of this EIS is to investigate potential environmental and social impacts of the proposed substation, as well as undertake community consultation (in conjunction with Powerlink), in accordance with the Terms of

Reference (TOR) (Appendix A) and the *Electricity Act 1994*. A TOR checklist is included in Appendix B to ensure all TOR items are addressed in the EIS.

Specifically, this EIS:

- Identifies the environmental (including social and economic) values of the Project site;
- Assesses the potential impact of the Project on these values; and
- Provides recommendations to mitigate any potential impacts resulting from the Project.

It is noted however, that some aspects of the EIS (e.g. the social environment) have a wider potential impact and, as such, require a broader assessment; therefore the scope for such issues is based on the Project Locality area. It should be noted that Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is being assessed separately by Powerlink and therefore does not form part of this EIS.

1.3.1 Objectives of the EIS

The objectives of the EIS are as follows:

- A description of the relevant aspects of the existing social, economic, nature and built environment;
- To provide information on the proposal and development process to the community and decision makers;
- To comprehensively identify and evaluate all relevant issues associated with the proposal;
- To identify all potential environmental impacts (across the short, medium and long term) of the development;
- To recommend construction, operational, maintenance and decommissioning measure required to minimise or compensate for adverse impacts and enhanced benefits;
- To consult with the community and relevant stakeholders in the process of identifying, assessing and responding to the impacts of the proposal;
- To identify all necessary licences, planning and environmental approvals including approval requirements pursuant to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, Sustainable Planning Act 2009, Environmental Protection Act 1994, Vegetation Management Act 1999*, and other legislation;
- To provide recommendations on the need for and contents of any environmental management plans and / or operational plans to mitigate adverse effects; and
- To provide an input to the decision-making process, assisting with the determination of whether to accept or modify the proposal, approve it with conditions or carry out further studies.

Powerlink
Western Downs EIA
Location Map
Figure 1.1

330kV

275kV

Power Station

Substation

Easements

Cadastre

N
W
E
S

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000 Meters

Scale 1 : 180 000
Datum / Projection: GDA94 MGA Zone 56

terranean mapping technologies

CONICS

28 September 2009

09-3084-016