



Submission No. 042
17 January 2014
11.1.14

Our Ref: A1827492

17 January 2014

State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

By Email: sdiic@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee,

**Powerlink Submission
Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Thank you for the opportunity to provide submissions in relation to the *Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013 (the RPI Bill)*.
- 1.2. This submission is made on behalf of Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited trading as Powerlink Queensland (**Powerlink**).
- 1.3. Powerlink is a government owned corporation that owns, develops, operates and maintains Queensland's high voltage electricity transmission network, which transports electricity in bulk from power generators to the regional distribution networks (owned by Energex, Ergon Energy and Essential Energy) which then supply around two million electricity customers.
- 1.4. Powerlink's high voltage transmission network extends from north of Cairns to the New South Wales Border, a distance of approximately 1700km and covering vast areas, including those that would be "areas of regional interest" as defined in the RPI Bill.
- 1.5. Whilst Powerlink expects that the RPI Bill is not intended to regulate the development and/or maintenance of its network, Powerlink notes that the Bill is to apply to regulated activities, which are to be prescribed in yet to be released regulations.
- 1.6. Powerlink also notes that the RPI Bill is intended to replace the *Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011 (Qld)*. The construction or maintenance of a transmission grid or supply network under the *Electricity Act 1994* is currently exempt from that Act.

33 Harold Street, Virginia
PO Box 1193, Virginia, Queensland 4014, Australia
Telephone: (07) 3860 2111 Facsimile: (07) 3860 2100
Website: www.powerlink.com.au

1.7. As a provider of community infrastructure, it is important to Powerlink that the introduction of new legislation does not compromise the effective and efficient delivery and/or security of electricity transmission services.

2. Key submissions

2.1. In summary, Powerlink's key submissions are:-

- a) Regulated Activities – the scope for inclusion of an activity within the definition of regulated activity is broad. Powerlink seeks confirmation that electricity infrastructure and/or community infrastructure is not intended to be included as a regulated activity.
- b) Repeal of the *Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011* (Qld) (**SCL Act**) – Powerlink seeks confirmation that the proposed RPI Act will not apply to the construction or maintenance of a transmission grid or supply network under the *Electricity Act 1994*, thereby maintaining the position that exists under section 6(1)(c) of the SCL Act. Alternatively, Powerlink requests the current exemption be included in the proposed RPI Act.

2.2. Further details regarding the above submissions are outlined below.

3. Regulated Activities

- 3.1. Powerlink has not been able to confirm with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning that electricity infrastructure and/or community infrastructure is not intended to be included as a regulated activity.
- 3.2. If such activities were to be included this would impose an additional area of regulation, increase costs and uncertainty, and result in inefficiencies for the delivery and maintenance of electricity and/or community infrastructure.
- 3.3. In addition, it is Powerlink's view that the avoidance, mitigation and management of any impacts from its infrastructure in areas of regional interest is properly addressed through the community infrastructure designation process (which includes the preparation of an EIS) and the consideration and integration of state interests (which includes energy and water) in planning schemes.

4. Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011 Exemption

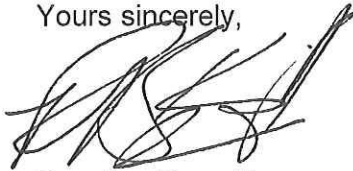
- 4.1. The SCL Act does not apply to the construction or maintenance of a transmission grid or supply network under the *Electricity Act 1994* (see section 6(1)(c)).
- 4.2. The RPI Bill intends to repeal the SCL Act and does not contain an exemption similar to the one that currently exists for electricity infrastructure under the SCL Act.
- 4.3. Powerlink seeks confirmation that the proposed RPI Act will not apply to the construction or maintenance of a transmission grid or supply network under the *Electricity Act 1994*, thereby maintaining the position that exists under section 6(1)(c) of the SCL Act. Alternatively, Powerlink requests the current exemption be included in the proposed RPI Act.

5. Further consultation

5.1. Powerlink welcomes the opportunity to elaborate on any aspect of this submission.

5.2. Please contact Brandon Kingwill, Land Management Team Leader on (07) 3860 2193 or by email, bkingwill@powerlink.com.au if you would like to discuss any aspects of this submission or require further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BK', written over a faint, illegible background.

Brandon Kingwill
Land Management Team Leader