

Comment – Energy Queensland Limited

Comment

This submission outlines Energy Queensland's commitment to improving utility connection processes, the introduction of a Developer Charter to fast-track approvals, and our commitment to unlocking productivity, particularly in the housing and industrial development space while ensuring our focus on reliable and affordable power is front and centre.

August 28 August 2025



Angela Moody
Productivity Commissioner and Chair
Queensland Productivity Commission

Submitted via: Construction productivity online submission form

Dear Ms Moody,

Energy Queensland's response to Interim Report

Energy Queensland Limited (Energy Queensland) welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Interim Report of the Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) on its construction sector productivity inquiry (Inquiry).

This submission is provided by Energy Queensland, on behalf of its related entities, including:

- distribution network service providers (DNSPs), Energex Limited (Energex) and Ergon Energy Corporation Limited (Ergon Energy Network)
- regional service delivery retailer, Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd, and
- affiliated contestable business and its subsidiaries, including Metering Dynamics Pty Ltd trading as Yurika Metering.

Energy Queensland is Australia's largest, wholly government-owned electricity company. Our network businesses, Ergon Energy Network and Energex distribute electricity to approximately 2.35 million connected network customers across a 1.7 million km² service area from South-East Queensland to the coastal, rural and remote communities of outback Queensland and the Torres Strait. Combined network assets include 210,000 km of overhead and underground powerlines, 1.7 million power poles and 33 isolated power systems.

Our retailer, Ergon Energy Queensland, sells electricity to more than 770,000 retail customers throughout regional Queensland. This makes Ergon Energy Queensland the fourth largest retailer in the National Electricity Market.

Energy Queensland collaborates with a diverse range of partners including property developers, builders, electrical contractors, solar installers/suppliers, local government councils and State and Commonwealth government departments.

Executive Summary

Energy Queensland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Queensland Productivity Commission's Interim Report on construction sector productivity. As Australia's largest government-owned electricity company, we play a critical role in enabling Queensland's growth through reliable, timely, and efficient energy services.

This submission outlines our commitment to improving utility connection processes, including a targeted 30 to 45 per cent reduction in subdivision connection timeframes and the introduction of a Developer Charter to fast-track approvals. Energy Queensland is committed to unlocking productivity, particularly in the housing and industrial development space while ensuring our focus on reliable and affordable power is front and centre. We address stakeholder concerns around Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) impacts, reaffirming our commitment to safety, consistency, and constructive engagement in future negotiations.

Energy Queensland remains committed to working collaboratively with government, industry, and communities to support productivity, innovation, and sustainable development across Queensland.

Utility Connections and Coordination

Energy Queensland acknowledges the Productivity Commission's findings regarding the need for improved coordination and timeliness in utility connections. In the 2024/25 financial year, our distribution networks, Energex and Ergon Energy Network, managed more than 55,000 connection applications for new electricity services across Queensland. Of these, 88 per cent had supply readily available, while 12 per cent required network augmentation. The increasing complexity and volume of customer projects, particularly from commercial and industrial customers, continue to drive significant network connection activity across the state.

We recognise that reliable and timely access to electricity is vital for economic growth and community development. Energy Queensland is committed to making it easier for customers to connect, with a sustained focus on continuous improvement. For example, 95% of basic connections are completed within five business days, and for more complex negotiated connections, the average time from application to offer is currently 62 business days in South-East Queensland (Energex) and 58 business days in regional Queensland (Ergon Energy), both within the 65-business day timeframe specified under the National Energy Customer Framework (NECF).

We acknowledge feedback from local governments and developers regarding delays and are actively working to streamline our processes. This includes our review earlier this year of our Accredited Service Provider (ASP) framework, enhancing project coordination, and collaborating with stakeholders to address bottlenecks. We support regular engagement with local councils to monitor connection timeframes and identify further opportunities for improvement.

Through its network subsidiaries, Energy Queensland has been actively listening and responding to its customers and industry bodies regarding workloads, initiatives in train to improve connection timeframes to meet developer expectations, and ways to improve the customer and industry experience.

Energy Queensland has and continues to engage with industry bodies such as the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA), including directly between the Chief Executives, as well as the Property Council of Australia, Master Electricians and the National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA).

These industry bodies are also members of our Energy Queensland Customer Council that meet on a regular basis to discuss key industry issues and collaborate at a strategic level. Energy Queensland is also working with the Property Council on a Utilities Working Group to bring the sector together to drive coordination and efficiency of works programs.

Energy Queensland has established a specialised team to provide further support to property developers from across Australia deliver homes for Queenslanders. This team will help simplify processes, reduce costs and shorten connection timeframes for subdivision connections.

Energy Queensland is committing to at least a 30 to 45 per cent improvement in connection timeframe processes across Ergon Energy Network and Energex for subdivisions connections.

In response to feedback from the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) and Property Council of Australia, Energy Queensland will be introducing new processes and support mechanisms to improve connection approvals and design work timeframes. Energy Queensland has a MoU with the UDIA and this month began a project to work collaboratively on a “journey mapping” exercise to further uncover pain points for developers with a view to deliver an action plan to resolve issues in the electricity connections space while also working with third parties such as Local Governments on related challenges.

Energy Queensland has put in place a Developer Charter to support faster connections. Energy Queensland will prioritise developer projects as Priority Connection Projects to fast-track approvals and design work in areas where there are major works and limited network capacity.

Ergon Energy Network will also support developers by doing electrical work in regional Queensland where they are not able to source Accredited Service Providers in a timely manner.

As an example of working closely with industry to improve the connection of developments and raised in your interim report, Energy Queensland has had on-going engagement with the UDIA, Property Council of Australia, Master Builders Queensland, and Master Electrician Australia regarding the connection of terrace housing developments to the electricity distribution network.

There have been challenges in relation to the relevant standards however, following collaboration with the Electrical Safety Office (ESO), Energy Queensland commissioned specialist consultants to conduct an independent review on how terrace housing should be electrically supplied safely when the premises are on separate freehold lots but share conductive structural linkages.

As a result of further discussions with the ESO regarding the outcomes of the independent review, agreement has been reached, in early August 2025, which will allow Energy Queensland to progress relaxation of the enforcement of the single Multiple Earthed Neutral (MEN) requirement for buildings that are not physically separated but are contained on separate freehold titles. This has been welcomed by the building industry.

In reaching this outcome, the ESO acknowledged that the wording of AS/NZS 3000 could benefit from clarification. EQL will continue to work closely with the ESO and the AS/NZS 3000 Committee to explore potential updates to the standard.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) Impacts

The Productivity Commission's interim report references stakeholder concerns regarding the impact of Energy Queensland's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) on contestable works and construction costs. The provisions of Schedule 9 Clause 1.8(b) of the Energy Queensland Union Collective Agreement 2024 will continue to apply to contractors and subcontractors under the ASP framework for the life of the current agreement, which expires on 29 February 2028. These provisions have long governed contestable works and were clarified in the latest agreement to ensure consistency and safety.

It is important to note that the requirement for external accredited contractors to apply EBA rates to works transferred to Energex or Ergon Energy is not new and has been in place for many years. The most recent EBA clarified the definition of 'core work' to ensure consistency across both networks, in response to feedback about the application of the framework and to address identified inconsistencies and safety issues.

Energy Queensland is aware of stakeholder claims regarding increased costs for contestable works and are committed to engaging constructively with industry and government to ensure our frameworks support both safety and productivity. Any proposals for change will be considered as part of the next EBA negotiation process.

Procurement and Tendering Practices

Energy Queensland recognises the Commission's recommendation to focus procurement on value for money and to simplify processes where possible. Our procurement frameworks are designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and the delivery of best value for Queenslanders. We have well-established structures in place and are actively engaging with government to clarify expectations for major projects and the alignment of our EBA with these requirements.

We support ongoing dialogue with government and industry to ensure procurement policies remain fit for purpose and do not create unnecessary barriers to development, competition or innovation.

Regulatory Consistency and Alignment

Energy Queensland supports efforts to harmonise regulatory requirements and align with national standards where appropriate. We are actively participating in policy and regulatory reform working groups to ensure our internal strategies are aligned with external policy developments and to remain proactive in responding to regulatory change.

Energy Queensland acknowledges the importance of regulatory consistency, particularly in areas such as planning approvals, building codes, and utility connection standards. Our engagement with the Local Government Red Tape Reduction Taskforce and the development of a Local Government Customer Charter are examples of our commitment to reducing regulatory burden and improving outcomes for customers and stakeholders.

Energy Queensland is currently developing a Local Government Charter in collaboration with the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ). The proposed Charter looks to formalise Energy Queensland's commitment to collaborate with Local Governments across Queensland; regional, rural, and metropolitan; to deliver better community outcomes. It aims to streamline planning, infrastructure, and service delivery to support sustainable growth, resilience, and liveability. Its intent is to foster early and transparent engagement between councils and Energy Queensland, ensuring that infrastructure planning, service delivery, and community development are aligned. By outlining shared responsibilities in areas such as vegetation management, infrastructure upgrades, planning integration, and disaster resilience, the Charter will provide a structured framework for cooperation that supports Queensland's evolving energy and community needs.

Establishing this Charter may bring significant benefits to development across Queensland. It aspires to streamline processes, reduce duplication, and enhance coordination between local and state-level initiatives. Councils will gain clearer guidance, improved access to data, and a stronger voice in shaping energy infrastructure that supports housing supply, economic growth, and climate resilience. Ultimately, the Charter seeks to empower communities by ensuring that energy planning is integrated with local priorities, delivering infrastructure that is future-ready, visually integrated, and responsive to the needs of Queenslanders.

Workforce and Skills

Energy Queensland is committed to developing a highly skilled workforce to support Queensland's energy transition and the delivery of major infrastructure projects. In 2025, we on-boarded 136 new apprentices, and we continue to invest in training and development to ensure our people have the right skills to deliver our integrated works program.

We support initiatives to improve apprenticeship attraction and completion rates, and we are working with government and industry partners to address skills shortages and promote careers in the construction and energy sectors.

Stakeholder Engagement and Continuous Improvement

Energy Queensland values ongoing engagement with stakeholders, including government, industry, and the community. We have established regular forums and working groups to monitor performance, share feedback, and drive continuous improvement across our operations

We welcome the opportunity to provide further information to the Productivity Commission and to participate in future consultations to ensure our frameworks and practices continue to support productivity, innovation, and the delivery of reliable, affordable energy for Queenslanders.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission please contact Energy Queensland's EGM Regulation, Risk & Strategy Benn Barr on [REDACTED] or via [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Peter Scott
Chief Executive Officer
Energy Queensland