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Community feedback report

Future electricity supply options in Leigh Creek and Hawker

October 2026



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Summary

ElectraNet conducted community information sessions in Leigh Creek and Hawker as part of the consultation phase for assessing future electricity supply options for the region. The sessions explained why the existing Davenport-Neuroodla-Leigh Creek transmission line is being reviewed, outlined the three options currently being assessed, and provided an opportunity for community members to ask questions and share feedback. No preferred option has been selected.

Overall, participants were engaged, asked detailed questions and demonstrated a strong desire to understand both the technical and community implications of each option.

While views varied, feedback largely focused on ensuring any future solution delivers:

- Reliable electricity supply
- Affordable outcomes for customers
- Support for future regional growth
- Local employment and economic opportunities
- Environmental sustainability
- Transparent decision-making and ongoing engagement

Several attendees acknowledged the need to address ageing infrastructure and appreciated the opportunity to engage directly with ElectraNet and SA Power Networks representatives.

However, there was also strong interest in understanding the long-term implications of removing transmission infrastructure and what this could mean for future development in the region.

About this report

This report summarises feedback provided by people who attended the Leigh Creek and Hawker community information sessions. It is not intended to represent the views of every community member. Feedback was recorded through questions, comments and discussions during the sessions, with similar issues grouped into common themes. The findings will be considered alongside submissions and further technical, economic and regulatory assessment.

Leigh Creek community information session

14 October 2026

Overview

Discussions in Leigh Creek focused on understanding the options under consideration, particularly stand-alone power systems (SAPS), and the practical implications for electricity reliability, future costs and local community benefits.
Discussion reflected a strong interest in understanding the challenges associated with maintaining ageing transmission infrastructure and acknowledged the need for long-term planning. Reliability and affordability emerged as two of the most important considerations.

What we heard

Reliability remains the highest priority
Participants consistently indicated that reliability must remain the primary consideration in any future electricity supply arrangement.

Key discussion points included:

- Whether SAPS solutions could provide equivalent reliability to the existing network.
- Concerns about outages and maintaining supply during extreme weather events.
- Questions about backup generation and emergency power arrangements.
- Interest in understanding how reliability would be measured and regulated.

Many attendees stated that reliability should not be compromised in pursuit of lower costs.

Cost and value for money
Attendees sought greater clarity about the cost implications of the various options.
Questions included:

- Which option provides the greatest long-term value.
- Whether SAPS represents a lower-cost solution.
- Whether future electricity prices would change.
- The cost of replacing batteries over time.
- Whether upfront savings may result in increased costs later.

Participants frequently emphasised the need for clear, transparent comparisons between options.

Local economic and social benefits
A significant theme throughout the session was ensuring local communities benefit from any future investment.

Attendees asked:

- How local contractors could be involved.
- Whether local employment opportunities would be created.

- What training opportunities might arise.
- How the project could contribute to the local economy.
- Whether community-owned or shared-benefit models could be considered.

There was strong support for solutions that deliver lasting community benefits rather than simply replacing infrastructure.

Future technology and renewable energy opportunities
There was considerable interest in renewable energy technologies and future energy solutions. Participants discussed:

- Solar and battery systems.
- The location of future solar and battery infrastructure.
- Geothermal opportunities.
- Biofuel and alternative backup generation options.
- The potential for future technology improvements to be incorporated over time.

Questions were also raised about where excess generation from solar systems would go and whether communities could benefit from energy exports.

Understanding SAPS and infrastructure implications
Many questions focused on what a SAPS solution would actually look like.

Discussion topics included:

- Potential locations for SAPS infrastructure.
- How customers would continue to be supplied.
- Whether distribution networks would remain.
- What would happen to the existing transmission infrastructure.
- How decommissioning would occur.
- Whether this approach has been used successfully elsewhere in Australia.

There was also interest in understanding whether a SAPS solution could limit future development opportunities.

Community involvement and communication
Attendees wanted assurance that consultation would continue throughout the assessment process.

Discussion included:

- When decisions would be made.
- How feedback would influence the outcome.
- Requests for regular updates.
- Access to printed information and reports.
- The importance of locally relevant communication channels.
  Several attendees suggested greater use of local newspapers, notice boards,

community organisations and printed materials rather than relying solely on online communication.

Additional feedback and observations

Additional comments raised during the session included:

- Questions about maintenance of existing infrastructure until a future decision is made.
- Concerns regarding diesel fuel supply security.
- Interest in the timing of future works.
- The importance of demonstrating prudent and efficient investment decisions.
- Requests for ElectraNet to return to the community with future updates.

Attendees were also supportive of hard-copy information being available for those with limited internet access.

Hawker community information session

15 October 2026

Overview

Discussions in Hawker focussed on future growth, regional development and the implications of potentially moving away from an interconnected transmission solution.
While reliability remained a key concern, there was stronger discussion about economic development, tourism growth and the future aspirations of the region.

What we heard

Future growth and economic development
The most prominent theme in Hawker was concern about the future growth of the region.
Participants asked:

- Whether SAPS solutions would support future tourism growth.
- Whether future electricity demand could be accommodated.
- How larger industrial or commercial developments would be supplied.
- Whether removing transmission infrastructure could limit future opportunities.
- How future generation and innovation could be supported.

Some attendees expressed concern that the region could be disadvantaged if future infrastructure was not capable of supporting growth ambitions.

Reliability and lessons from previous outages
Reliability was heavily influenced by community experiences with previous outages.
Discussion included:

- Impacts of the 2024 power outage.
- Personal and business costs associated with supply interruptions.
- Concerns regarding maintenance of existing assets.
- The reliability of ageing infrastructure.
- How a future supply arrangement would perform during emergencies.

Participants consistently indicated they wanted a future solution that improves reliability outcomes.

Understanding the long-term implications of SAPS
Attendees sought detailed information about how SAPS solutions function and their long-term implications.
Questions focused on:

- Battery lifespan and replacement.
- Backup generation.
- Ongoing operating costs.
- Future upgrades and scalability.
- Whether electricity generated locally could be exported.
- Ownership models and community participation.

There was significant interest in understanding the practical operation of any future SAPS arrangement.

Existing infrastructure and decommissioning

Many attendees wanted greater clarity about what happens if transmission infrastructure is removed.

Questions included:

- How infrastructure removal would occur.
- What assets would remain.
- Future use of existing easements.
- The impact on surrounding communities including Parachilna and Blinman.
- Risks associated with removing existing transmission assets.

Several comments reflected concern about losing infrastructure that has historically supported the region.

Community support and social outcomes

Attendees highlighted the importance of considering broader community outcomes.

Topics included:

- Supporting seniors and vulnerable residents.
- Training opportunities.
- Local contractor participation.
- Community benefit programs.
- Community-owned energy opportunities.
- Ensuring regional communities share in project benefits.

There was a strong desire for local communities to benefit directly from future investment decisions.

Communication and consultation process

A significant amount of feedback focused on how information is shared with the community.

Participants requested:

- Printed copies of consultation material.
- Distribution through local organisations and businesses.
- Information provided through local newspapers and media.
- Use of community noticeboards.
- Greater awareness of engagement opportunities.

Multiple attendees noted that information about the sessions had not reached as many people as it could have. ElectraNet acknowledges this feedback and will broaden the communication channels used for future engagement.

Suggested future communication channels included:

- Hawker Community Development Board
- Local post offices
- Local businesses
- Community noticeboards
- Regional newspapers

- ABC North
- Community and progress associations

Common themes across both communities

While each community had unique interests and concerns, several themes were consistently raised in both Leigh Creek and Hawker.

1. Reliability first
A consistent message across both sessions was that any future solution must maintain or improve reliability.
Communities recognised the challenges associated with ageing infrastructure but wanted confidence that future arrangements will provide dependable electricity supply.

2. Affordability and long-term value
Participants wanted clear comparisons between options and sought reassurance that customer outcomes would remain protected.
People were interested in both upfront costs and whole-of-life costs, including ongoing maintenance and battery replacement.

3. Future growth must be supported
Participants wanted assurance that future electricity infrastructure would support:

- Tourism growth
- Business development
- New investment
- Population growth
- Future customer demand

This was particularly strong in Hawker but also evident in Leigh Creek discussions.

4. Local benefits matter
Participants consistently advocated for:

- Local jobs
- Local contractors
- Training opportunities
- Community benefits
- Regional economic outcomes

Participants wanted infrastructure investment to contribute positively to local communities.

5. Sustainability is Important
Feedback indicated strong interest in environmentally responsible solutions.
This included:

- Use of renewable energy
- Battery storage

- Alternative fuels
- Minimising environmental impacts
- Supporting future energy innovation

6. Clear and ongoing communication is essential
Participants appreciated the opportunity to engage directly with ElectraNet and SA Power Networks but requested continued engagement throughout the assessment process.

There was strong support for:

- Regular updates
- Printed information
- Local communication channels
- Transparent decision-making
- Returning to communities with future findings

Conclusion

The Leigh Creek and Hawker community information sessions provided valuable feedback that will help inform future assessment of electricity supply options for the region.
Participants raised questions and provided feedback about reliability, affordability, future regional growth, long-term infrastructure implications, local benefits and continued engagement. Feedback reflected a range of views rather than a settled position on the options.
ElectraNet acknowledges feedback that future engagement should use a broader range of local communication channels. We will continue to engage with communities as the assessment progresses and further information becomes available.

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