



# Landowner consultation overview

HUMELINK

September 2021

# Delivering affordable, clean and reliable electricity to our community

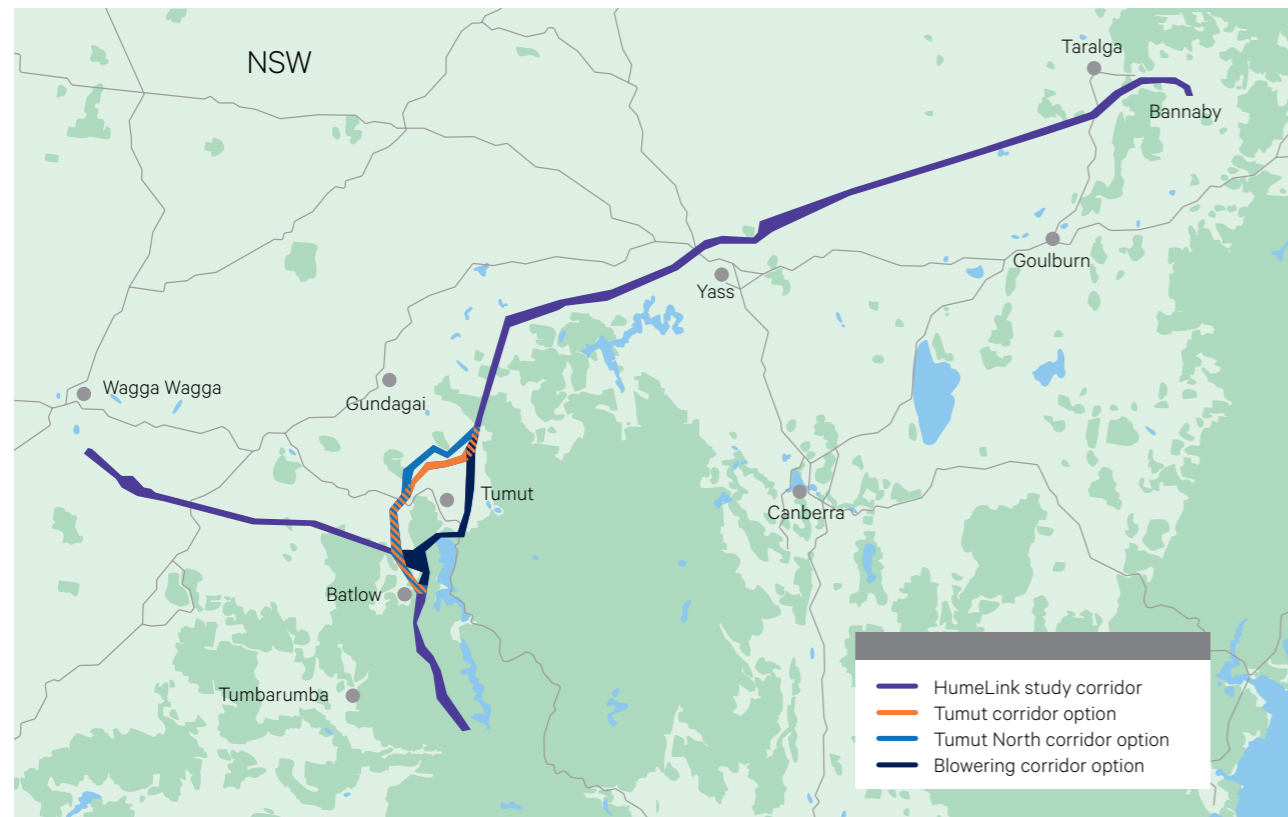
HumeLink is a once in a generation investment in Australia’s energy future which will deliver \$491 million in net benefits. The project will reinforce the backbone of the east coast’s transmission network, delivering a cheaper, more reliable and more sustainable grid.

It will increase the amount of renewable energy that can be delivered to consumers across the National Electricity Market, helping to facilitate the transition to a low carbon future.

Large infrastructure projects, such as HumeLink, are developed and refined over several years. Investigations and more detailed information, including feedback from community and landowners, inform the project development process.

With about 360km of proposed new transmission lines, HumeLink’s project footprint covers a large area. You have been provided this information as you have property within the proposed study corridor. We will be seeking your feedback and input as the project develops.

We appreciate that most landowners do not want a new transmission line on their property and we are committed to working collaboratively with you and the local community to minimise the impacts wherever feasible.



## Selecting a route for transmission

### Refinement of the corridor is an ongoing process

We start with a broad area up to 5km wide and then slowly narrow the corridor based on ongoing technical assessments and feedback gathered during consultation with landowners and project stakeholders.

We will reach a final 70m wide easement at the end of this process. However, within the study corridor area there are a range of options where the final easement could go and where the towers could be positioned. Landowner feedback on property-specific environmental and cultural considerations, local farming operations, logistics and land use are critical in helping determine the final corridor.

In locations where we may need to build new lines on private land, we will consult directly with the impacted landowners. Landowners hold important information that is often not publicly available and your feedback on the study corridor helps us improve our design.

Every landowner has a dedicated Place Manager and Land Access Officer who they can share feedback with. They will be in regular contact to provide progress updates and other information, seek input and request access for field investigations.

You can also share your local knowledge (publicly or directly with us) by adding comments on the interactive project map at [humelink.mycommunityengine.com](http://humelink.mycommunityengine.com)

### Factors affecting route selection

Throughout the route refinement process we aim to identify and avoid local constraints and consider opportunities. These can be:

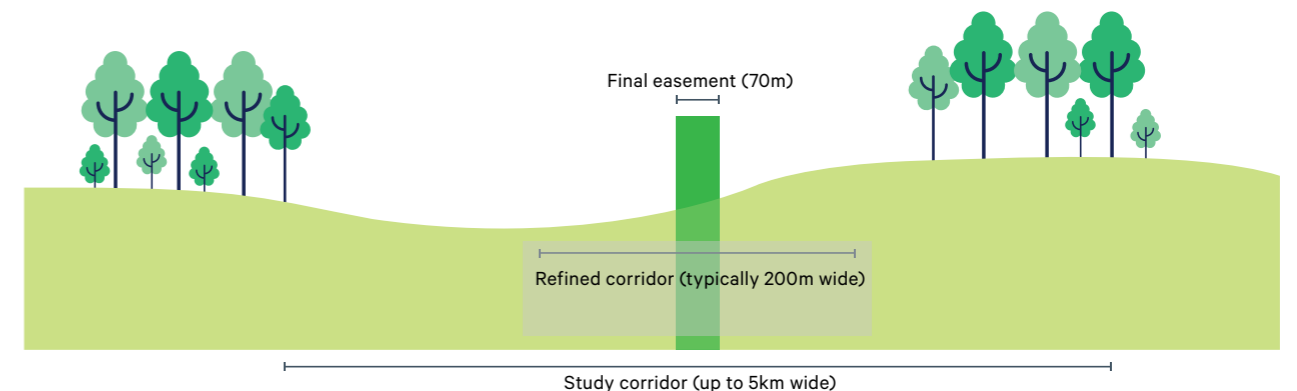
- Social constraints (townships and built up areas, airports, amenity, services, cultural heritage)
- Environmental constraints (biological features like flora and fauna and physical features like soils, hydrology and air quality)
- Land use constraints (existing or planned use of land including agriculture, tourism and industry).

Route refinement considers information holistically because a change in one area can result in consequences elsewhere.

Once we have mapped constraints and opportunities, we gather more detailed information to continue refining route options. We do this by consulting with landowners, community members and Traditional Owner groups to seek local knowledge. We will also conduct surveys and studies to collect environmental, geotechnical, cultural and heritage information.

Throughout this process we consider a range of factors including:

- topography (features of the land, such as hills and creeks)
- environment and conservation areas
- significant cultural heritage sites
- intensive agriculture
- licensed airstrips
- engineering (where and how it can be built) suitable land
- alignment to existing infrastructure including power lines and roads
- hazards such as bushfire and extreme weather.





## Consultation timeline

### Keeping the focus on landowners

We are committed to robust, transparent and effective community engagement on the HumeLink project. In late 2020, we engaged independent Landowner Advocate and former NSW Commissioner for Fair Trading, Rod Stowe, to assess our practices and provide advice for improvement. The Landowner Advocate produced a report, which is available on our project web page, and Transgrid has committed to implement all twenty recommendations from the review.

As an advocate for landowners and communities, Mr Stowe's review and recommendations provide a framework for how we will work to uphold best practice engagement and to always treat landowners and communities fairly.

### Planning approval milestones



#### Scoping Report Published

Transgrid integrates landowner feedback, survey findings and technical analysis into a Scoping Report for the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE).



#### Environmental Impact Statement Published

Transgrid integrates landowner feedback, survey findings and technical analysis into an EIS for DPIE. Landowners can make formal submissions to DPIE.



#### Planning Approval Granted

The NSW Minister for Planning approves the project with conditions.

The Project may also require Commonwealth approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

### START

1

#### Initial Contact

Landowners within the study corridor will be contacted by their dedicated Place Manager and Land Access Officer to provide project information and a request to meet. This will be followed by a formal notification about the proposed study corridor sent via post.

2

#### Landowner consultation starts

Landowners can comment and provide information on issues relevant to their property and the project. This can be done via the interactive map or by reaching out to your dedicated Place Manager or Land Access Officer. Landowner consultation will continue throughout the project.

3

#### Meetings with landowners

We will seek a meeting with landowners to gather property-specific feedback. Our preference is to meet face-to-face at your property, however safety is our top priority and we may need to meet online until COVID-19 restrictions are eased. We will continue to gather and respond to landowner feedback throughout the project.

4

#### Seek access for field surveys

Landowners will be asked for consent to access their property to conduct environmental investigations, including flora, fauna, cultural heritage and geotechnical investigations. Surveys will not be required on all properties however some may require multiple visits.

5

#### Undertake field surveys

We will liaise closely with landowners whenever access to their property is requested. The survey program is already underway and will continue throughout development of the project.

6

#### Advise landowners of proposed corridor

We will advise landowners if their property falls within the narrowed 200m-wide corridor and an easement is required on their property. We will also advise landowners if their property is no longer within the proposed corridor.

7

#### Start easement negotiations

If an easement is required, we will meet with landowners to negotiate an option agreement based on the 200m-wide corridor. Transgrid will follow the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991* when negotiating with landowners. This includes covering the reasonable costs for landowners to engage an independent valuer and to obtain legal and accounting advice.

8

#### Consult on Environmental Impact Statement

HumeLink will undergo a robust environmental and planning approval process, which includes the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We will continue to be available to meet with landowners to respond to questions and discuss any concerns during this process. There will be the opportunity for landowners to provide formal feedback as part of the EIS process. (See next page for detail)

9

#### Notify landowners of planning approval

Transgrid will advise landowners if the project's EIS is approved by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE).

10

#### Detailed design

If approved, detailed design will be completed which will confirm the final design and location of our lines and towers and of our 70 metre easement. We will continue to work with landowners to further minimise any impacts as we complete this detailed design.

11

#### Finalise easement arrangements

Landowner easement agreements are finalised. The final easement will be 70m wide.

12

#### Construction

Transgrid and its construction contractor (yet to be appointed) would work with each landowner to minimise impacts to both property and operations during the construction phase. This would be documented and agreed to by all parties in a Land Management Plan specific to each property. We may look to also temporarily lease additional areas which would be used during construction.

13

#### Operations

Following construction the project would be commissioned and become operational. HumeLink would form part of Transgrid's transmission network with maintenance activities managed by our local teams. We would continue to work closely with landowners during any planned maintenance activity.

## Planning approval milestones

The planning and approvals process will assess the potential impacts from the project and outline ways we propose to manage them

The planning approval process is comprehensive with several steps. The process acknowledges that State significant infrastructure projects are large and complex, and can have major economic, environmental and social impacts. The assessments also ensure the community has several opportunities to have their say on HumeLink before any final decision is made.

### Scoping report published

Transgrid integrates landowner feedback, survey findings and technical analysis into an initial Scoping Report for DPIE. This will be submitted late-2021.

Standard Secretary's Environment Assessment Requirements (SEARS) issued The SEARS, set by DPIE, outline the requirements we need to follow during the development of the EIS, including any additional consultation requirements.

### Environmental Impact Statement public exhibition

Transgrid integrates landowner feedback, survey findings and technical analysis into a detailed EIS that will be publicly available. The EIS will be on public exhibition, expected in mid-2022, for at least 28 days. During this time landowners can make a formal submission to DPIE about the project.

### Response to submissions

Following the public exhibition of the EIS, Transgrid reviews and responds to the EIS submissions received and prepares a Response to Submissions Report. This will include any changes to the EIS in response to the submissions. This report will be issued to DPIE and will be publicly available.

### Planning approval granted

The NSW Minister for Planning provides the final decision with conditions, which we expect to occur in late-2022. We anticipate approval being granted in late-2022.

## HumeLink project timeline



Timing is approximate and subject to change

## Requesting access for investigations

Surveys are conducted along the corridor to help inform design, with investigations on both public and private land

Surveys include:

- **Ecology surveys** – These surveys are used to confirm existing vegetation types and animal and plant species. The surveys are completed each season and coincide with when certain species are more active or more easily identified, for example when flowering occurs or during breeding season.
- **Geotechnical investigations** – We will need to understand local ground conditions to help inform tower design and placement. Soil and rock samples will be collected from around 300 separate locations using methods such as borehole drilling and cone penetration tests.
- **Cultural heritage studies** – These surveys help identify or confirm sites or items which have heritage significance. This may include built structures, gravesites or sacred sites relevant to Aboriginal people or those who have since settled in the area. These surveys are typically carried out on foot.

### What happens if access to my land is required?

If we need to access to your property, we will seek your permission and ask you to sign a Consent to Enter form. This allows you to set conditions of entry, suitable times and restrictions on investigations.

Before undertaking any surveys on your property, your Land Access Officer will work with you to understand your requirements. You will be provided a map which indicates the area of your property that will be surveyed and investigations will only be conducted within this area. We will always contact you prior to entry to your property to confirm you agree for the surveys to go ahead and to provide an opportunity for you to advise us if conditions have changed.

### What happens if the route crosses my land?

We appreciate that landowners located along the corridor want certainty as soon as possible about whether they will have an easement and associated infrastructure on their property.

Before the end of 2021, we will be talking to many landowners about the narrowed 200m-wide corridor and for those with an existing transmission line on their property, we will be sharing current design preferences for which side of the new transmission line for HumeLink could parallel.

For landowners within the new corridors between Westwood and Gilmore, and through Tumut, we will continue ongoing active investigation and consultation into 2022 to gather input and feedback from landowners.

Being inside the preferred 200m-wide corridor means we are actively investigating your property for a transmission line easement.

This does not mean that a decision has been reached on the final location of the transmission line. Rather, ongoing technical assessments and feedback gathered during this consultation are still required to help inform and confirm the final decision.

We will contact all affected landowners to discuss the process for acquiring an easement. Our property acquisition discussions will commence based on the 200m-wide corridor.

### What is an easement?

An easement is a 'right of way' on which Transgrid can build and maintain lines and towers on private land. The final easement for HumeLink will be 70m wide.

### What is the Consent to Enter document?

The Consent to Enter is an informal document which records a landowner's conditions of entry for survey activities, such as ecological or cultural heritage investigations. It allows us to understand farm businesses better so we can minimise disturbance during these works.

The Consent to Enter does not provide us with blanket approval to undertake works on your property. It is important to remember that you can withdraw or amend your Consent to Enter at any time.

**Please let us know if you have concerns about our behaviour when we are in the field.**

### Our commitment to you

Transgrid has clear behavioural expectations for all field-based employees and contractors. They must:

- adhere to conditions of entry
- carry identification
- follow biosecurity requirements
- no smoking or littering
- leave gates as found
- no disturbing livestock, crops or farm work
- drive slowly and minimise dust
- drive only on access tracks and formed crossings
- tell the landowner if they see a problem (e.g. injured stock, empty water troughs)
- restore disturbed areas once the survey is complete.

### About us

Transgrid operates and manages the high voltage network in NSW and the ACT. Our safe, reliable and efficient high-voltage grid connects electricity generators to one in three Australians. A better-connected network will enable consumers to access more affordable electricity.

HumeLink is one of the state's largest energy infrastructure projects, with about 360km of proposed new transition lines, and new or upgraded infrastructure at three substation locations. The project will increase the amount of electricity that can be delivered to customers in NSW, the ACT and across the National Electricity Market.

It is a project of national significance which will:

- create local jobs and economic activity in regional NSW
- connect renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, to the network
- unlock the full capacity of the expanded Snowy Hydro Scheme
- help support Australia's emissions reduction targets
- provide reliable and affordable electricity to customers.

HumeLink is a priority project for the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and the Federal and NSW Governments.

### Landowner compensation and support

#### Will I be compensated if my land is used?

Yes. Transgrid must pay easement compensation under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*.

- Easement compensation is a one-off payment based on a negotiation with landowners which is guided by a valuation report completed by a qualified valuer.
- Under the Act, Transgrid must pay landowners' reasonable costs associated with negotiating an easement. This could include fees such as legal, accounting, independent valuers, mortgagee's consent and NSW Land Registry fees.
- We encourage you, the landowner, to seek independent advice and use valuation firms with experience in easement compensation assessment. All reasonable costs associated with easement acquisition will be paid by Transgrid.

#### Can I still use my land within the easement?

Yes. A range of activities can continue within transmission easements, provided certain conditions are met to ensure safe clearance from transmission lines.

Farming activities such as grazing and cropping can continue under transmission lines and within the easement area, subject to height restrictions. Planting or cultivation of trees and shrubs can also continue provided the mature plant is less than four metres in height.

Machinery and heavy equipment up to 4.3m high can be used within the easement area. There are however some limitations to activities such as irrigation, aerial spraying and fuel storage.

#### Free support service for landowners

We appreciate that for many the idea of a large tower and transmission line being built on your property may cause stress, anxiety or anger. We also know that some landowners may want to talk to someone independent outside of Transgrid to discuss these concerns.

To offer support throughout this process, we have engaged an external service provider, Assure Programs' counsellors, to provide counselling to interested landowners.

Like doctors, Assure Programs counsellors are bound by a professional Code of Ethics preventing the disclosure of personal information without written consent. Their team of psychologists are professionally qualified with a minimum of five years' post-registration experience.

There is no cost to landowners in accessing this confidential service.

**Access to the service is available now.  
Dial 1800 808 374 to make an appointment.**



## How to contact us



**Telephone:** 1800 317 367



**Email:** [humelink@Transgrid.com.au](mailto:humelink@Transgrid.com.au)



**Post:** HumeLink Community Engagement Team  
PO Box A1000, Sydney South NSW 1235

## Concerns or complaints

- 1 If you have questions, concerns or are not satisfied with our team's actions, you can contact your Place Manager or the HumeLink Community Engagement Team using the contact details provided above.
- 2 If you are not satisfied with our response, you can escalate your concerns to Transgrid's Complaints Resolution Team at [complaints@Transgrid.com.au](mailto:complaints@Transgrid.com.au).

## External dispute resolution

- 3 All our customers have the right to contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) at any time for independent advice and assistance. EWON receives, investigates and resolves customer complaints and disputes.

EWON's contact details:



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW  
Free, fair and independent

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON)  
Freecall: 1800 246 545  
Freefax: 1800 812 291  
Online: [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)  
Mail: Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234

## Useful links

- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment: [www.dpie.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au)
- Australian Energy Regulator: [www.aer.gov.au](http://www.aer.gov.au)
- Australian Energy Market Operator's Integrated System Plan: [www.aemo.com.au](http://www.aemo.com.au)
- NSW Transmission Infrastructure Strategy: [www.energy.nsw.gov.au](http://www.energy.nsw.gov.au)
- Snowy Scheme expansion: [www.snowyhydro.com.au/](http://www.snowyhydro.com.au/)