

HumeLink Snowy Valley Community Consultative Group: 3rd Meeting

Time	5 - 7pm
Date	16/02/2022
Attendees	<p>Chair: Brian Elton</p> <p>Secretariat: Ella Burgess</p> <p>Transgrid: Elli Baker, Craig Stellan, Tim Edwards, Naomi Rowe, Daniel Burn, Matthew Armstrong</p> <p>Community members: Lee Kingma, Rebecca Tobin, Phil Clements, Pippa Quilty, Daniel Brear, Matthew Lucas</p> <p>Deputy Landowner and Community Advocate (Observer): Barbara El-Gamal</p> <p>Amplitude Consultants: Les Brand (attended part meeting)</p> <p>Observers: Deb Pobjie, (Transgrid)</p>
Apologies	Matthew Suter, Clr Julia Ham, Jonathon Caffery, Jessica Campbell, Rod Stowe, Luke Penrith, Brett Redman
Meeting location	Tumut Golf Club
Meeting materials	Presentation
Purpose of meeting	Meeting 3

Item	Agenda Topic	Discussion Summary	To note
1	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The meeting began at 5:04pm. - The Chair welcomed all and gave an Acknowledgement to Country. - Introductions and involvement in the project from the representatives of the Transgrid HumeLink project team. - Introductions, background from community, landowner and organisation Community Consultative Group (CCG) members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elli Baker is the new HumeLink Project Director. - Craig Stellan, Transgrid Executive Manager Works Delivery attended in place of Brett Redman, Transgrid CEO. - Naomi Rowe is the new HumeLink Community Engagement Lead. - Apologies: Brett Redman, new Transgrid CEO due to COVID,

			<p>Clr Rod Kendall, Michael Keys, Rod Stowe, Luke Penrith.</p>
2	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No comments made on the previous minutes. <p><i>The minutes were previously adopted.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matters arising were noted as being discussed in the agenda for the meeting. 	
3	<p>HumeLink Project Update</p>	<p>Elli gave an overview of the HumeLink project update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See slide 5 of the presentation for a timeline of the HumeLink project. - At the end of 2021 Transgrid completed the Regulatory Investment Test – Transmission (RIT-T). Option 3C was identified as the preferred option with the highest net market benefit. - It was noted that there are sections of the route corridor that remain yet to be finalised. - The project team has been strengthened with a number of new additions in recent months. - The EIS Scoping Report has been published. The Department of Planning will now prepare the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). Transgrid expects the SEARs to be issued in approximately four weeks. The SEARS set down the range of technical studies required to be undertaken and impacts required to be assessed for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including community and stakeholder engagement requirements. - In February Transgrid sent letters to some landowners confirming their being in/out of the preferred 200m study corridor after finalisation of the narrowing of the corridor in some sections from 1km to 200m. By mid-2022, the remainder of the preferred 200m study corridor is expected to be communicated to affected landowners. - 161 letters have been sent to 108 impacted properties over the last week. The letters indicated whether or not the properties were impacted by the final corridor or not. It was noted Transgrid only sent letters to properties in which they were certain are impacted by the 200m corridor. As the complete 200m corridor has not been defined, this has left a lot of landowners in the area anxious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See the link to the Scoping Report - The Scoping Report informs both the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - The SEARs specify what issues must be addressed by the proponent within the EIS. - EIS and SEARs to go on agenda for the next meeting to be reviewed by the CCG. - Transgrid to provide the CCG with a diagram explaining the relationship between planning and regulatory approvals and how they work together. -

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- In early 2023 the EIS is expected to go on Public Exhibition.

The Chair called for questions.

- Community CCG members asked about the timeline associated with the ISP and how construction would be staged.
- Elli answered that the draft 2022 ISP was published by AEMO in December 2021 and Transgrid's submission from February 2022 has been made public. AEMO will make the final 2022 ISP public in June 2022. Elli noted that AEMO is obligated to assess all the submissions and ensure the issues raised are considered. Elli explained that the main point of Transgrid's submission is that the project be delivered in the most efficient way for the consumer. It was noted that when the project is staged there are inefficiencies that are passed onto the consumer.
- Community CCG members noted that there was no reference to Option 2F or the Undergrounding Study in the Scoping Report. It was noted that there seem to be a number of parallel processes that are causing concern about the validity of the undergrounding study.
- Community CCG members requested to see evidence of the various interactions that have been referenced in the Scoping Report.
- Community CCG members commented that the language coming from Transgrid infers to the community that the undergrounding study is still just a "tick box" exercise.
- Tim explained that Option 2F and the Undergrounding Study are still progressing and moving forward, however due to project delivery timeframes (energisation by 2026), the current preferred route needs to continue to be progressed while 2F/Undergrounding are being explored. This does not prejudice the outcomes of the undergrounding study / Option 2F should they be found in whole or part feasible. The findings of the undergrounding study / Option 2F will be fed into the project development process and future project deliverables.
- Tim noted that Transgrid need to provide two timeline diagrams of what will happen if the project remains on course and what will happen if the undergrounding study or Option 2F are deemed feasible.

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- The Chair noted that the major concern is that the two processes will have to intersect sooner or later.
 - Craig noted that the Scoping Report requires alternative studies to be done. He noted to some extent the process is designed to be iterative to accommodate for Option 2F or Undergrounding if they become feasible.
 - CCG community members asked how far the ISP looks into the future and if it predicts other future power generation assets. It was noted that the community does not want to replicate this same process down the track. Concern was expressed for local business owners in the area.
 - Craig answered that AEMO are tasked with attempting to create an energy vision for the next 10 years, however as with anything it is subjective. AEMO creates four test case scenarios to determine the projects they commit to. Testing is done via a cost analysis in terms of demand versus supply. Based off these findings, AEMO then develops an optimal pathway that is reviewed every two years. In the latest ISP the vision is to ultimately create an energy super highway from Queensland to Tasmania at 5600KV. This will require less money being spent on storage. The task of the optimal pathway is then to work out the timing.
 - Tim noted that if you try to overbuild an area, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) would deem that you are trying to cater for too much and the impact on the local area would be too great. The regulatory regime constrains future proofing to a dollar amount that will be tolerated by the consumer.
 - Craig commented that AEMO have stated in every scenario HumeLink will be needed, the task is in finessing the timing so as not to impact on the cost.
 - Community CCG members commented that if Transgrid came to the community and landowners initially and told them the project was going underground, no landowner would object. Landowners do not want to have HumeLink running through their properties. Bushfire risk is a huge concern for local landowners. The cost associated with the consequences of bushfires far outweigh potential costs of undergrounding.
 - Craig noted that if undergrounding comes out as the most feasible option, then it will happen. Transgrid wants to get the best outcome for

everyone. Craig noted that he understands the benefits of undergrounding, the challenge lies in making it cost effective and Transgrid does not make the funding decisions.

- The Chair noted that it is for this reason developing an accurate brief for the undergrounding study has been so important.
- Community CCG members on the Steering Committee noted that whilst going through the process and reviewing WSP and GHD's proposals, it has become clear that there have already been undergrounding studies completed that have not been shared with the community.
- Tim noted that references in WSP and GHD's submissions to undergrounding were to prove their experience. It was noted that those references were outside the footprint of HumeLink.
- The Chair noted that Transgrid must be upfront and transparent about their answers when it comes to questions such as these.
- Community CCG members commented that this happens often, Transgrid answer questions in a technical manner that is often not understood so does not appear to be transparent.
- Community CCG members asked if the brief for the undergrounding study considers going both above and below ground.
- A community CCG member on the Steering Committee noted that Option 2F proposed above ground on public land and below ground on private land.
- The Chair noted that the undergrounding brief challenges the selected consultant to see if undergrounding is feasible in whole or part, the location of feasibility and the cost.
- Community CCG members asked if the line was put underground, what percentage of it above ground would you consider it to cost more?
- Craig commented that if it is within 10- 15% more expensive, it is a conversation to be had with the government. Transgrid advocate on behalf of all stakeholders to achieve an optimal outcome.
- The Chair noted that this is why the cost cannot yet be outlined, because no one actually knows. The undergrounding study is about telling people what the cost differentiator is.
- Community CCG members noted that AEMO has outlined a gauge. The project cost has risen

		<p>from \$1.6 billion to \$3 billion and completely blown estimations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Craig noted if Transgrid can build the network for \$3.3 billion, they will. - Elli commented that is assuming a particular cost benefit. If the network is built as AC, cables can be plugged in at any point, whilst HVDC converts all electronic assets to HV and back again. If you want to break into the converter, you must implement a converter. 	
4	<p>Undergrounding Feasibility Report</p>	<p>Presentation slide 7</p> <p>Dan provided an update on the Undergrounding Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alongside the Steering Committee, Transgrid has gone through the process determining what was requested in the Request for Quote (RFQ). - Transgrid approached three consultants and received offers from GHD and WSP. With guidance from the Steering Committee and Amplitude Consultants, GHD was the chosen consultant. Both offers were broadly very good, however GHD's experience surrounding HVDC was better than what WSP proposed. There is one item associated with environmental studies that they are working with GHD to include in their study. - Les noted that there has been a lot of work completed by both Amplitude and the Steering Committee to reach this point. Les noted that GHD will produce the right options through the study. - Les explained that in the selection of the consultant, it was noted the team put forward by GHD had some significant HVDC experience, which was bolstered by the inclusion of Stantec – a reputable company associated with HVDC. - Tim noted that mid April is the target date for GHD to complete the Undergrounding Study. - The Chair thanked those on the Steering Committee and Amplitude Consultants for their ongoing and committed work towards the Undergrounding Study. It was noted that the Steering Committee significantly improved the RFQ. - A community CCG member also on the Steering Committee commented that the process has worked well and noted that Amplitude's advice to the community members was particularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There will be an Inception Workshop between the Steering Committee and GHD on Friday 25 February at 1pm.

valuable, otherwise the community would have been steam rolled.

- The Chair noted that Amplitude's role as an independent advisor to the Steering Committee has worked well.
- Community CCG members asked if the undergrounding study will model the benefits eg. transfer more load.
- Tim noted it's not in the scope to model the market benefits that come with an alternative solution. The cost with the benefits will be assumed as the same benefits as overhead.
- Craig noted that if the electrical solution is like for like there is no need to model the benefits.
- Les noted from a technical perspective the scope does include a qualitative comparison if underground and overhead as well as looking at some technical examples of where HVDC is better than AC. There will be side by side comparisons, they just will not be quantified.
- Dan confirmed that the report would cover biodiversity offsets.
- Les noted that one issue with the RIT T process is that the technical benefits are not looked at, which is unfortunate but in this undergrounding report there is the opportunity to quantify that. For this report the project team should put cutting into HVDC aside. The purpose of HVDC is not to replace an AC network like for like, the purpose is to find power and shunting it to a location close to where the load is. The idea is that it will free up other networks to carry more load. Shunting power directly to the load. This is only 200/300 kms at worst case. If you had a solar farm at 150km you would not tell them to hook into the closest AC network.
- Community CCG members asked why HVDC is not considered more if it has all the benefits mentioned above.
- Tim noted that there are mindsets around development, there are 50km of undergrounded network compared to 100s of above ground network in Europe. They are also looking undergrounding AC as a possible comparator. Underground AC has not been ruled out.
- Organisational CCG members asked if the intent of HumeLink is to move power to the usage centre or to build capacity for an expansion of renewable opportunities along the route.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Craig noted that HumeLink's primary purpose is to create part of the superhighway to shunt power one direction or the other. 500 is the highest voltage possible to run in Australia. - Community CCG members asked if renewables can cut in. - Craig noted that there is existing infrastructure for that purpose that is currently constrained, however HVDC does have benefits associated with renewables being able to cut in. - Craig noted the electricity industry is constrained by many rules and regulations. In order to make large scale changes, changes need to be made to rules and regulations in the industry. However, reports such as the undergrounding study can help. - The Chair commented that potentially the most change needed is with the regulator and this can be discussed in the workshops. 	
5	Engagement update	<p>Naomi gave an update of the Draft Engagement Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See slide 9 of the presentation for an overview of the Draft Engagement Strategy (the strategy). - There are four pillars that the strategy has been built on. The strategy also incorporates all 20 recommendations that came out of the Stowe Report. - Each pillar continues to have its own strength and dedicated engagement action plan. The pillars are all connected and rely on the application of each other to be effectively applied. - Social legacy was highlighted as a key area in which the CCG can inform the way in which Transgrid funnels resourcing into long term outcomes for the area. - Transgrid is aware that there is much work to be done and wants to work with the community and the CCG to deliver successful engagement throughout the delivery of the project and well beyond into the future. - The Chair noted that there are two key messages outlined by the CCG during the meeting, 1. Transgrid needs to win social license and 2. the usual kinds of community benefits will not be good enough, broader community benefit and investment is required. Those two 	

key messages sit behind the emphasis for social legacy.

- Community CCG members noted that the majority of issues stem from problems and lack of trust from landowners and less so the broader community. It was commented that with a wind turbine, landowners could be offered \$30,000 per turbine but what Transgrid is offering is not equitable.
- Elli noted that compensation is separate to social legacy. With projects as big as Humelink it is best practise for them to invest in the local area and bring about positive changes and Transgrid are working to catch up with that. If Transgrid gets to the point of construction, there will be a large workforce coming to the area as well as a desire to utilise local talent. Transgrid are determined to leave the area in a better economic situation than when they arrived and this is the social legacy the project team want to decipher during the workshops in April.
- Community CCG members noted that there is a lot of talk about the community but there has been little mention of landowners.
- Elli noted that doing good things for the local community does not take away from the money allocated to local landowners.
- Organisational CCG members commented that the CCG needs to have a clear view of the engagement occurring with landowners. Before wider social legacy can be discussed, it needs to be recognised that the true legacy of the project will lie with the landowners hosting the project.
- The Chair noted that if Transgrid is planning to carry out works on properties, conversations with Transgrid can be had about having works carried out to increase the value of the property.
- Community CCG members noted that energy and electricity bring many economic advantages but so does the existing agriculture that is already in place in the area.
- Community CCG members noted that it is a positive thing Transgrid is looking to leave a social legacy in the community. However, it must be noted those writing to the local MPs and getting involved in the project are local landowners, not the local school who wants \$1,000. Transgrid has had the opportunity to work with local landowners to fix gates etc and not taken it.

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- Organisational CCG members asked if the compensation packages will be consistent between properties and if the CCG will have any visibility over compensation packages.
 - Elli noted that privacy laws require negotiations to remain private and the CCG will not have an opportunity to review the packages and negotiations had with individual landowners without written permission from the individual landowners.
 - The Chair noted that in the last meeting Transgrid received legal advice that it was possible to apply compensation in other ways rather than a one-off payment.
 - Tim noted that there has been significant work going on in the background surrounding compensation as Transgrid has investigated how this approach can be implemented across its projects company wide. When Transgrid has an update, the CCG will be informed.
 - Community CCG members noted that there are a lot of issues including how the environmental costs are not quantified in the RIT-T. It was asked how landowners share that offset cost and make it easier for landowners to access?
 - Craig commented that the billion dollars is not what Transgrid is going to pay. The billion dollars was a cost estimate using a government calculator. Transgrid has the ability to do biodiversity offsets that are recognised as the impact on the biodiversity to be offset on a landowner's farm. One of the reasons that the REZ's are becoming contestable is because of the interference of the law. A contestable process is a competitive process to provide evidence of what it should cost to implement the project but they haven't included landholder costs. Making it a regulator process, they have to abide by the regulators' costs, but if it is a competitive market the regulator loses oversight. Landholder compensation sits outside of the competitive process. Transgrid is trying to support what they can, but there are rigorous processes in the regulated process.
 - Tim noted that there has been a lot of work going on in the background surrounding compensation.
 - The Chair noted that while individual negotiations cannot be made visible to the CCG there is a role in fleshing out what is possible in terms of compensation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational CCG members commented that offsets in the Snowy Valley area will have a big impact on agricultural productivity. - Organisational CCG members mentioned that without significant advocacy and impacted landholder intervention it would be fair to say that there would have been no exploration of a change to how Transgrid compensates landholders. This was not a Transgrid led discussion. 	
6	Agenda setting for subsequent meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The next meeting will occur in April before Easter. Workshops surrounding the Draft Engagement Strategy will also occur at that time. - It is requested that CCG members attend the next meeting in person if possible to gain the most out of the workshop and meeting. - CCG members requested that improve AV tech is used. - Meetings will occur quarterly thereafter unless there is an extraordinary event. - Future agenda items will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What is possible in terms of tailored outcomes for landowners o More focus on the engagement and the social legacy issues. - Transgrid to commit to answering outstanding questions from CCG members in 2021 by Friday 18 February 2022. 	
7	Meeting close	The meeting closed at 6:58pm.	

Open Actions

Action	Status or comment
Secretariat is to follow up with members on administrative details including signed Code of Conduct Agreements and sharing of contact details	Underway
Transgrid is to consider advice provided by members of the CCG and broaden its engagement process for community members across the region, with attention to project messaging and the business' social license to operate	Underway
Transgrid will send a direct web link to the DPIE SEED portal where this information can be found	Underway
Transgrid is to share an explanation on Network Operational Risks	Underway
If Place Managers or CCG members are aware of landowners who would be interested in the CCG, please pass them on to Brendan Blakeley – Brendan.blakeley@wsp.com	Underway
Transgrid to determine if they can share the STOWE report with the CCG group	Provided in question tracker
Transgrid to institute the \$50 reimbursement for eligible members	Underway
Transgrid to provide CCG members with a diagram presenting how planning and regulatory processes relate	Underway
Transgrid to provide a timeline/diagram of HumeLink progress as it currently stands and a timeline of HumeLink progress if undergrounding or Option 2F are deemed feasible	Underway
HumeLink EIS and SEARs to be circulated to CCG members	Underway

Closed actions

Action	Status or comment
Transgrid to share information with members of the CCG on the difference between single and double circuit towers, what they look like and their size	Complete
The 20 recommendations outlined in Transgrid's commitment to improve engagement are to be circulated for reference to members – link to report is here	Complete
Interactive map for landholders and the community is to be shared with the CCG	Complete
Transgrid to make the contact details for members of their Community Team available to the CCG	Complete
Transgrid to send CCG members the copy for member recruitment	Complete
CCG members to appoint a representative for the Steering Committee and find a technical advisor	Complete
The Chair to call CCG member who needed to be caught up to speed on undergrounding	Complete
Transgrid to commit to answering outstanding questions from CCG members in 2021 by Friday 18 February 2022	Complete

Minutes endorsed by Brian Elton, Chair of the HumeLink CCGs.