

MEETING MINUTES

HumeLink Combined Community Consultative Group Meeting: 2 August 2023

Time	5:00pm – 7:00 pm
Date	02/08/2023
Attendees	<p>Chair: Brendan Blakeley</p> <p>Secretariat: Beatrice Hobson</p> <p>Transgrid CCG members: Naomi Rowe, Jeremy Roberts, Tammy Sinclair, Michael Johnson</p> <p>Transgrid project member attendees: Sumaya Osman, Jack McGovern, Katia Reviakina</p> <p>Community members: Andrea Strong, Rene Lunardello, Rebecca Tobin, Ian Robson, Paul Sturgess, Pippa Quilty, Jessica Reynolds, Daniel Brear, Phil Clements, Russell Erwin, William Kingwill, Clr Rod Kendall, Clr Adrian Cameron, Peter Lawson, Hansie Armour</p> <p>A number of observers were in attendance</p>
Apologies	<p>Catriona McAuliffe (NSW Farmers), Clr Pam Kensit (Upper Lachlan Shire Council), Clr Sue Hanrahan (Wagga Wagga Shire Council), Clr Julia Ham (Yass Valley Council), Clr Kim Turner (Yass Valley Council), Jessica Campbell, Andrew Hamilton, Serena Hardwick, Lee Kingma, Cheryl Penrith</p>
Meeting location	Yass High School Hall
Meeting materials	Presentation
Purpose of meeting	Meeting 13

Item	Discussion Summary
Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The meeting commenced at 5:03pm. - The Chair welcomed all and gave an Acknowledgement of Country. - The Chair noted apologies. - The Chair thanked the CCG members and observers for attending and outlined the agenda for the meeting. - The Chair asked that CCG members introduce themselves.
Minutes and CCG Action Register	<p>The Chair asked Michael to give an update on the responses to the outstanding actions from previous meetings.</p> <p>Michael introduced himself as Program Director for Stakeholder Relations for Major Projects. He noted that the responses to actions had been sent out to members prior to the meeting and noted that in the interests of time he would only step through a few key actions. (See Transgrid's action register attached for actions and responses).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>A CCG member asked what energy and resources are being put into the consideration of undergrounding.</i> - Jeremy noted that Transgrid are participating in the inquiry into undergrounding.

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- *A CCG member noted that they have asked Transgrid many times to be involved in discussions with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) because they do not believe Transgrid is advocating for them. They noted that from what Transgrid had said in the inquiry they did not feel that Transgrid was genuine in putting the case for undergrounding or passing on community feedback about undergrounding.*
- *Another CCG member commented that they believed Transgrid was misleading at the undergrounding inquiry. They commented that Transgrid provided information stating that a 50 metre wide trench would be needed for undergrounding. The CCG member noted that in the undergrounding study which was conducted, it was determined that a 1.3 metre wide and 1.25 metre deep trench could be used. The CCG member noted that it is frustrating as significant time was spent working with Transgrid on the undergrounding study and now it feels as though the information is being ignored. The CCG member also noted that Transgrid has spoken about soil sterilisation and heat issues from undergrounding however international studies show this is not the case.*
- *The CCG member also noted that Transgrid raised at the inquiry the constraint with renewables connecting into HumeLink. The CCG member noted that this constraint was not raised in the undergrounding study and previously no mention has been made of the need for renewables along the route to be able to directly link into Humelink. The CCG member noted that they feel as though when Transgrid realise they have misrepresented the cost of undergrounding to overhead, they find another reason for not undergrounding. The CCG member noted that Humelink is an ideal HVDC solution, it can connect Snowy 2.0 in doing so will free up the existing 330kV line for the renewables to connect into.*
- *Jeremy responded that Transgrid participated in the inquiry and provided their stance on the technical requirements. He noted that the information presented was based on information that shows that 38-50 metres is the trenching requirements for cables of that size. He continued that with a 500kV transmission line, you need multiple cables. He noted that when you build the transmission line, you are building it for future capacity and connections. He continued that if it is underground, the ability to connect into it becomes very difficult and cost prohibitive. He noted that the soil sterilisation response came from information that demonstrates that because you have to trench the land and put in backfilled thermal resistive soil, the top-soil that you can use is reduced.*
- *A CCG member asked whether Jeremy believed the information that was being said.*
- *Jeremy responded that he did and that he has previous experience with undergrounding 330kV cables.*
- *A CCG member commented that they and several others had been involved with the Steering Committee discussing the undergrounding study for the past 13 months and noted that Transgrid have not listened to what is in the report. They noted that Transgrid has done undergrounding before for the Powering Sydney's Future project, they asked how big the trench was for that project.*
- *Jeremy noted that that project was for a 300kV line which only required a single cable. He commented that he believed it was about 15 metres*

wide and 2 metres deep however he would need to come back to CCG members with confirmation of the measurements. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.**

- **Action: Transgrid to provide CCG members with the depth and width of trench required for the underground cabling done for the Powering Sydney's Future project.**
- Jeremy also commented that when you do a cable for a 300kV line, every 500 metres you need a joint bay which means the trench must be wider and deeper. He also noted that it is an HVAC line.
- *A CCG member noted that they feel as though Transgrid has been holding onto this information and not telling the community and then bringing it up when it suits them. The CCG member noted that the community is struggling with their mental health. The CCG member noted that Transgrid have stated in these meetings that they are advocating for the community on undergrounding, but there was no evidence of this in the inquiry, instead what was evident was that Transgrid are working against the community for their own overhead agenda, and misrepresenting undergrounding. They noted that it is further widening the gap between the community and Transgrid.*
- *Another CCG member noted that Transgrid had stated that they were committed to working with the community to minimise impacts. They noted that they believe Transgrid is not working with the community and has presented misleading facts about the option of undergrounding. They noted that the information Transgrid is presenting about sterilising soil is inconsistent with the solutions that are being implemented overseas. The CCG member also commented that Transgrid's defence about the tee-in constraints – being that it would be expensive for renewables to feed into a 500kV transmission line – are irrelevant. The CCG member noted it is likely that they will not need to feed into the 500kV line as they will feed into the freed up 330kV line. The CCG member noted that they believe HumeLink is actually an ideal application for the HVDC option. They noted that it is frustrating that Transgrid are arguing against it and misrepresenting the feasibility of this option.*
- *Another CCG member asked Transgrid what agricultural expertise they have at Transgrid in regards to not being able to farm on top of underground transmission lines and referred to Transgrid CEO Brett Redman's comments in the inquiry on agricultural use of land surrounding undergrounding. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- **ACTION: Transgrid to find out what agricultural expertise they have, including the certifications of individuals to determine what agricultural activities can be undertaken above and in proximity to underground lines.**
- *A CCG member commented that they visited some of the areas where the Powering Sydney line was being put underground. They noted that it was occurring in narrow suburban streets and was not very wide at all. They commented that it appeared to be around head height depth and only a couple of metres wide. This is not anywhere near the figure for width put forward at the inquiry or what has been suggested in this CCG meeting.*
- Jeremy noted that he will need to get back to CCG members with the actual measurements for PSF noting it was an AC line.

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- *A CCG member also noted that they were previously told that it is not possible to tap into the 500kV line. They noted that people were worried about the Visy Mill in Tumut tapping into the line but were categorically told that you cannot tap into a 500kV line and that the power is too strong. They noted Transgrid's shifting position on tapping into the line was confusing and making the community very sceptical.*
- The Chair noted that it is important that we talk about the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as this is happening in four weeks' time and noted that we could get a final statement from Transgrid in response to the questions.
- *A CCG member commented that where they live, the power lines which go from the wind farms to the substation are underground.*
- Jeremy responded that they are 22kV so there is significantly less power in them.
- *A CCG member commented that they have people approach them interested in putting a solar farm on their property. Those people are not interested in 500kV lines, they want 330kV lines.*
- Jeremy responded that there are many reasons why HVDC undergrounding is not suitable, the main one is cost, others include that the time to construct is significant.
- *A CCG member asked if it would take more time to put them underground.*
- Jeremy responded that it would take significantly more time. The current timeline for completion is mid-2026. To underground would mean starting the EIS process again, looking at route mapping again and would add multiple years to the above timeline.
- *A CCG member asked whether Snowy 2.0 will be ready for the mid-2026 timeline.*
- Jeremy responded that the project is also going from Wagga through Bannaby to connect to southern and western NSW.
- *A CCG member noted that Transgrid are being quoted in the media suggesting the renewables from the Hunter Region are connecting into HumeLink which they believe is false.*
- Jeremy responded that from Bannaby substation the line will go around the edge of Sydney and connect into the existing network.
- *The CCG member commented that it will connect into the substation not into HumeLink directly along the route, and the way Transgrid are using this in the media is misleading, it is geographically impossible to be connecting Hunter Renewables into HumeLink along its path.*
- *Another CCG member commented that in the Transgrid HumeLink undergrounding report there was no mention of renewables tapping into HumeLink and no mention of the tee-in constraint. The CCG member continued that in the recently released Transmission Expansion Options report, renewable connections are all below 330kV. Also the Transmission Expansion Options report has HumeLink with a transfer capacity of 2200 megawatts, previously it had a transfer capacity of 2570 megawatts. The CCG member noted that if Snowy 2.0 is operating at full capacity, HumeLink will not be able to transport anything other than Snowy. The CCG member noted that they believe it is incorrect to*

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say that building an HVDC option is somehow going to constrain HumeLink, as it is constrained by the capacity of Snowy 2.0.

- Jeremy noted that he would need to take a close look at the reports mentioned by the CCG member however he noted that at different times and seasons you get different flow. The capacity is dependent on time and season.
- *The CCG member asked Jeremy to confirm that the transfer capacity of HumeLink is now 2200 megawatts. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- **ACTION: The recent Transmission Expansion Options report has HumeLink with a transfer capacity of 2200 megawatts, it was previously 2570 megawatts. Transgrid to confirm the transfer capacity of Humelink.**
- *A CCG member commented that Humelink is reported to now be costing \$4.892 billion which is an increase in cost of 48%. They noted that Brett Redman at the hearing said the cost increase was 30%.*
- Jeremy clarified that it was 30% increase plus inflation. He noted that when you add inflation to the number that was first published you get \$4 billion.
- *A CCG member noted that they consider it a material change in circumstance for the project cost to increase 48% since July 2021.*
- Jeremy responded that they classify it as a 30% increase as the additional amount is for inflation. He noted that the 30% increase they see as in line with the increases in the construction industry. He also noted that the project cost will have to go through a feedback loop with AEMO to determine whether the project still has net benefits.
- *A CCG member noted that in the Project Assessment Conclusions Report (PACR) HumeLink had a net benefit, excluding competition benefits and cost to environment and community of \$39 million. The CCG member noted that they believe cost to electricity consumers would be large, they noted that the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) needs to be reapplied.*
- Jeremy responded that AEMO will do that assessment as part of the feedback loop.
- *A CCG member commented that there is conflicting information from the experts. Transgrid and the independent experts are saying different things. The CCG member noted that with Snowy Hydro 2.0 running two years behind it provides time for the adjustment or revisiting of the transmission options. The CCG member asked about the cost components for the cost of transmission.*
- Jeremy responded that \$4.82 billion is the construction cost including biodiversity offsets, land acquisition, construction activities but does not include the ongoing operational costs and maintenance of the asset. He noted that with Snowy 2.0 being delayed, AEMO has still informed Transgrid that they must continue on the pathway pending HumeLink meeting the funding requirements. He noted that because Snowy is delayed it is imperative that Wagga and Bannaby are linked up in order to get more renewables onto the grid as coal is retiring.
- *A CCG member asked for clarification on whether the renewables can connect into HumeLink.*

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- Jeremy noted that this depends on the time of day as renewables run at different times. The solar is used to pump the hydro which then discharges power into the transmission lines and through to the city. He noted that it can be tapped into depending on the requirements. He commented that we are having to rebuild the network, it has previously been very stable with coal, the transmission lines are needed to reconfigure the flows within the network as the places where energy is generated are changed.
- *A CCG member noted that there have been fundamental changes in Transgrid's language including the change in rhetoric from the notion that HumeLink was being developed to allow for the capacity of Snowy 2.0 to be unlocked to the idea that it is now being developed for the Wagga to Bannaby component and to bring on South West REZ. The CCG member noted that with these fundamental changes to the capacity of the system, we need to look at other fundamental changes such as the possibility of undergrounding.*
- Jeremy acknowledged the CCG members comment but noted that Transgrid are bound by costs. He commented that the regulator requires Transgrid to find the most cost effective way to deliver what they have been asked to do for the consumer. He noted that they are also driven by the time component for the market operator who is looking at securing capacity within the network as coal is retired. Jeremy noted that more renewable energy creates more competition in the market which is better for the consumer's bill.
- *A CCG member noted that Transgrid are thinking about the construction costs rather than the social and environmental costs.*
- Jeremy responded that the environmental costs are considered in the biodiversity offset costs. He noted that Transgrid assess the costs on the environment related to construction. He continued that Transgrid must pass the market requirements of the feedback loop to see whether the project will be worthwhile. If it is not deemed as having a cost benefit, it will be delayed until it is seen as efficient to build.
- *A CCG member commented that Transgrid are paying a sum to offset the environmental issue but there will still be environmental destruction and this destruction is never made up for with an offset. Undergrounding would reduce the environmental footprint.*
- Jeremy noted that there are still environmental impacts with undergrounding. Transgrid will work to minimise these where possible.
- *The CCG member commented that the undergrounding impact is lesser than overhead. The CCG member acknowledged that Transgrid would not agree with it being a lesser impact, as they heard at the inquiry. The CCG member continued that the consumer is paying for the costs of HumeLink.*
- Jeremy agreed that it comes back to the consumer bill at the end.
- *A CCG member commented that the government is paying for HumeLink, Transgrid is constructing it and community members are being devastated by the impact and Transgrid gets the profits for 80-100 years. The CCG member suggested that Transgrid put some money in and put it underground.*

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- Jeremy commented that Transgrid do have a regulated return by the regulator.
- *The CCG member asked what the amount is that Transgrid get paid for the maintenance of the HumeLink easement. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- *Another CCG member commented that it is a problem that Transgrid is a regulated monopoly. The CCG member noted that from their understanding Transgrid gets a 7% return on capital. They noted that HumeLink when finished will be 40% of Transgrid's income. The CCG member commented that the community needs a change to the Australian Energy Regulator.*
- The Chair noted that this is a comment for the politicians and the regulator.
- *A CCG member commented that Transgrid should be advocating to the politicians on behalf of community members.*
- *Another CCG member noted that when you build a home you do not just look at the cost of the home, the cheapest option does not necessarily deliver the best result and does not benefit the next generation. The CCG member noted that doing it cheaply and quickly is not the answer as communities will be living with impacts for at least 80 years.*
- *Another CCG member agreed and noted that not all costs are taken into account with planning HumeLink and transmission generally. The CCG member noted that community and environmental costs should be incorporated into the costs of transmission. The CCG member noted that construction cost is a one off cost but the cost to the environment and communities is enduring for 80-100 years. The CCG member commented that when Transgrid say they are required to move forward with the cheapest option, the Australian energy regulator said in the inquiry that if the proponent comes to them after consultation with the community and says that undergrounding is a way forward, the regulator will look at it. The CCG member commented that the consultation with the community must have failed as Transgrid have not put this to the regulator.*
- *The CCG member continued that Transgrid are misrepresenting to the government the feasibility of putting the lines underground. Including stating that the land disturbance for underground is a 50 metre wide trench which is inconsistent with the undergrounding study. The CCG member commented that Transgrid had said that in addition to Snowy Hydro 2.0 there is a link into Wagga and renewables so it is still pressing to deliver HumeLink in 2026, the CCG member asked to see the modelling. They noted that at the last CCG meeting they asked to see the modelling of the net benefit of HumeLink if Snowy was delayed 3 years, 5 years and 10 years and Transgrid said it was addressed in the Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR). The CCG member commented that if you look at the PADR and take into consideration the biodiversity offset costs, it is no longer a net benefit but a net cost of \$600 million. If you look at the modelling there is no net benefit but rather a net cost with HumeLink without Snowy 2.0. The CCG member also asked what percentage of the \$4.892 billion was biodiversity offsets. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- **ACTION: Transgrid to determine how much of the \$4.892 billion is going to biodiversity offsets.**

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jeremy noted that the analysis of the cost benefit of HumeLink still has to be done by the market operator. They need to decide it is still prudent to continue with the project, Transgrid need positive feedback loop confirmation.- <i>A CCG member commented that they are concerned about the ISP modelling, they noted that from their understanding it is a sequential modelling method that biases the results into delivering benefits into interconnectors that far exceeds their net benefit. The CCG member commented that Transgrid needs to model the costs of HumeLink using the RIT-T.</i>- The Chair summarised that there were a number of actions for Transgrid to take away and noted that the meeting should move onto discussion around the EIS.
Program Update	<p>The Chair asked Jeremy to give a program update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jeremy gave a regulatory and procurement update including that Transgrid are in their final phases of ECI with contractors and are close to awarding contracts for two contractors. He noted that Transgrid have ordered transformers, reactors and are in the process of ordering a conductor. He noted that detailed design will commence once the contractors are engaged. Jeremy continued that the technical EIS is ready for submission and will be on public exhibition on the 30th of August. The concept design is complete with Geotech investigation complete and land valuations and landholder negotiations ongoing. See slide 9 for more detail.- <i>A CCG member commented that members are interested in undergrounding while Transgrid is pushing ahead with an alternative option, they noted that there is no point them being involved in the CCG meeting as they all want to investigate undergrounding options but Transgrid does not want to.</i>- The Chair commented that the EIS is going on exhibition in four week's time and that it is important for CCG members to have a good understanding of what will be required to make a submission.- <i>A CCG member asked what Transgrid mean by the Geotech being complete.</i>- Jeremy responded that it is preliminary Geotech which has been done on a portion of the line, not the whole route.- <i>A CCG member asked how Transgrid can complete this when they have not determined the final route.</i>- Jeremy responded that they have completed Geotech in 40% of the line approximately and noted that these are preliminary investigations to inform the concept design which are the subject of the EIS.- The Chair commented that the EIS looks at the project as a concept, it is not looking at every single centimetre of the route.- Jeremy commented that at this stage Transgrid are continuing to deliver on the overhead option as per their requirements to deliver on time. He noted that this is the current phase while they await the recommendations under the inquiry.- Naomi commented that the presentation on the EIS is not seeking to change the opinions of the CCG members but is about providing them

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with the information so that if they wish to make a submission as part of the EIS process, they are able to. Naomi noted that Transgrid has an obligation to ensure community members know when it is going on exhibition, what is going to be exhibited, how to make a submission and who to make a submission to.

- *A CCG member questioned what difference their submission would make. They noted that even if a number of people complained, would it make any difference?*
- Jeremy noted that the EIS assessment process is independent of Transgrid and is undertaken by the Department of Planning. They look at the project and whether, from the methodology and measures outlined in the EIS, it meets the SEARs and relevant legislation.
- *The CCG member noted that they need to know whether, either way, it will still happen. They asked whether a project previous to this has had anything changed due to an EIS.*
- The Chair responded that there are many EIS's that go through the assessment process and either have major changes suggested to them from submissions from community or from experts. He noted that it is very common on large projects such as road projects, mining projects and wind farm projects to have alterations in response to submissions.
- *A CCG member commented HumeLink has been defined as a critical state significant infrastructure and they are unaware of any SSI projects not being approved. The CCG member noted that they believe it should not be defined as a state significant infrastructure project as the net benefit, excluding competition benefits and excluding costs on the community and environment, is only \$39 million.*
- *The CCG member continued that Transgrid say they are bound by the energy regulator but the regulator stated that if Transgrid had come to them and said undergrounding was the best option they would have considered it. The CCG member noted that they feel as though Transgrid has failed the communities by not testing this as an option with the regulator. The CCG member noted that there is still time with Snowy 2.0 being delayed and noted that delivering it underground will be the quickest as community will work with Transgrid.*
- *Another CCG member noted that they have had meetings with several Transgrid employees over the past few years and have said they want to work with Transgrid to get it underground. The CCG member noted that if Transgrid continues to go with overhead lines the community will fight against it.*
- *A CCG member commented that there is a disconnect between the community and Transgrid, they noted that the conversation keeps coming back to the same issues and that they feel as though Transgrid are not hearing what they are saying. They noted that undergrounding does not appear in the EIS, and in this way it feels as though the community has not been listened to.*
- Naomi acknowledged that she can understand the community feels as though they have not been listened to but the EIS is focusing on an overhead option.
- Sumaya noted in the assessment report Transgrid talks about undergrounding and a feasibility study culminating in the inquiry

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	<p>however it does not assess it as an option. The EIS is put forward as the project is currently defined which is as an overhead line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>A CCG member commented that a lot of CCG members have been involved for two years and are not being heard, the CCG member noted they feel as though Transgrid is pushing through their agenda. The CCG member asked how many Transgrid people watched the public forum from the community on the inquiry. The CCG member noted that the people who spoke at the Forum are the voices that Transgrid needs to be listening to, their voices are being ignored. They noted that the community are not used to standing up and speaking and they put significant time, research and resources into speaking.</i>- <i>Another CCG member commented that community scepticism has been brought on by Transgrid throughout the whole process. They noted that all throughout the undergrounding study that asked for updated prices on the overhead line in line with 2022 prices, however as soon as there was undergrounding costings, it had to be on 2022 prices and in that time there has been massive increases. Meanwhile the overhead costings were not 2022 prices. They noted that it was not until the inquiry when there was pressure on Transgrid that a new figure was brought out for overhead costings that was close to \$5 billion. The CCG member also noted that Transgrid has created the impression that underground cables will be 10 times the cost.</i>- Jeremy corrected that it was said to be 3-10 times the cost.- <i>The CCG member agreed that 3 was mentioned however noted that it was more often described as 6-10 times the cost. They noted that the information fed out is selective and they noted that it builds scepticism within the community.</i>- The Chair noted that all the comments from CCG members were being taken down in the minutes and that no decisions or commitments could be made today but the information would be fed back to Transgrid. The Chair asked whether Jeremy could make a commitment that the feedback heard here would be passed onto senior Transgrid team members.- Jeremy agreed.- Action: Jeremy to report back to Transgrid senior leadership team on community feedback including that the community feel as though Transgrid are choosing figures to exaggerate the cost/impact of undergrounding.- The Chair requested that CCG members focus their attention on the EIS which will be out in four weeks' time. The Chair noted it is important that CCG members get all of the information so that they can make an informed submission.- The Chair introduced Katia Reviakina who is leading the engagement for the EIS as part of the stakeholder engagement team.
EIS Process and Development	<p>Katia presented on the planning and approval pathway process.</p> <p>See pages 11-18 of the presentation slides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Katia explained that the EIS has been submitted for review and Transgrid are now finalising the documentation in preparation for the formal lodgement. Once formally lodged it will be placed on public

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exhibition and the community will have the opportunity to make formal submissions. The timing for submissions will depend on the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) who is the responsible entity for determining the length of the exhibition period. DPE will receive submissions which will be provided to Transgrid. The EIS is expected to be on exhibition on August 30. Transgrid will widely advertise these dates so the community can actively participate. Once the exhibition period is complete, DPE will collate the submissions and provide them to the Humelink team for review and response, this will all be captured in the submission report.

- Katia noted that there are two ways to make a submission, either through the online DPE planning portal or via post. Katia explained that hard copy submissions and mailing envelopes should be addressed to the department.
- Naomi noted that all submissions have to go to DPE, they cannot go to Transgrid. She also noted that while they cannot be made anonymously you can request that you not be identified.
- *A CCG member asked whether Transgrid will direct anyone who accidentally sends a submission to Transgrid to the Department.*
- Naomi confirmed that Transgrid will send it back to them informing them to send it to the Department. Transgrid is unable to send it to the Department themselves.
- *A CCG member asked if the timeframe is four weeks.*
- Naomi confirmed that the timeframe is still four weeks as set by the Department.
- *A CCG member asked whether Transgrid could recommend to the Department that the exhibition period be extended to 8 weeks.*
- Naomi responded that Transgrid has made significant effort over the past 9 months to keep the community informed of the timeframes. Naomi noted that she cannot advocate to the Department on the exhibition period as it is a decision for them.
- The Chair recommended that CCG members take it up directly with the Department.
- *A CCG member noted that CCG members have brought this up before and it is disappointing that Transgrid have not approached the Department about this.*
- *Another CCG member noted that NSW Farmers and Snowy Valley Council have both made an official lodgement for an extension of the exhibition period and there has been no response.*
- *Another CCG member noted that the volume and size of the paper is beyond the capability for the average person to digest and make a meaningful response within 4 weeks. The CCG member noted that there may be an opportunity for Transgrid to say to the Department that the community deserves the opportunity to digest the information and make an informed submission. The CCG member noted that it further erodes the trust between CCG members and Transgrid.*
- Naomi responded that she would take the feedback and consider whether something can be done.

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- **Action: Transgrid to consider advocating for an extension to the EIS exhibition period.**

Katia outlined how CCG members can make a submission.

See page 15 of the presentation slides.

- Katia explained that submissions can be written as bullet points or full sentences and noted that they do not require technical expertise. She noted that the submission must have an application number which will be the number outlined in the NSW Planning Portal. Submissions can be made by individuals or groups and every submission must be signed. If it is a submission on behalf of a group, it must be signed by the whole group.
- *A CCG member asked whether it is invalid if someone does not sign the submission.*
- Jeremy responded that it must have at least one signature.
- *The CCG member noted that some community members will need support to do this.*
- Katia explained that the DPE has an explanatory video on the website which community can watch.

Click here to view the video explaining how to make a submission:

<https://youtu.be/bU2tAO2eQAI>

Click here to view the pdf guide on how to make a submission:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022/How%20to%20Make%20a%20Submission.pdf>

- Transgrid will also be out in the community throughout the exhibition period to assist people to understand make a submission.
- Naomi noted that a full schedule can be sent out on where there will be community information sessions in the community to support DPE's process.
- **Action: Transgrid to provide a full schedule on where they will be in the community to assist people during the EIS exhibition period.**
- *A CCG member asked whether Transgrid will provide a hard copy of the EIS to each of the CCG members.*
- Naomi responded that it is not usual practice to do this however Transgrid will consider it. TAKEN ON NOTICE.
- **Action: Transgrid to consider whether they can provide CCG members with a hard copy of the EIS.**
- *A CCG member noted that at the last CCG meeting, Transgrid indicated that they were contacting 4322 indirectly impacted residents, the CCG member asked whether this has now happened.*
- Naomi confirmed that they have been contacted.
- *The CCG member asked whether they were contacted by phone.*
- Naomi confirmed that a number of mechanisms were used to contact people including letterbox drops, emails, phone calls and direct mail.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>A CCG member commented that at the last CCG meeting they were assured that each of their neighbours would be doorknocked, they asked why this did not happen.</i>- Naomi responded that she would need to get back to the CCG member but her recollection was that Transgrid had committed to letterbox dropping rather than doorknocking.- Action: Transgrid to confirm who is being doorknocked about the impact of the project on them and whether any of the 4322 indirectly impacted residents are being doorknocked.
EIS topics – biodiversity	<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Sumaya presented on the technical studies that inform the EIS including the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR).</p> <p>See pages 22 - 26 of the presentation slides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sumaya explained that the secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs) sets the requirements for the biodiversity assessment and satisfies the requirements under both the NSW and Commonwealth legislation. The state and federal agencies have an agreement that one set of documents including one EIS can be developed to satisfy both State and Federal requirements.- The team have been surveying since late 2019 to ensure they get seasonal representation. As part of this Transgrid is not required to survey every single property, each study has its own defined study area and for biodiversity it is broken up into sub regions.- The study area looked at 10km around the project footprint for the federal requirements. For the state requirements the focus is on project footprint, Transgrid added a buffer of 500m as it is typical for linear infrastructure to use that size. There is another level of detail which is a more refined area called the disturbance area, where we will find indicative tower pads, access tracks etc. This considers if we put the infrastructure in place how much vegetation clearing is needed which determines the impact on species.- They conducted a proportional approach to the study because they could not survey for everything due to seasonal habitats. They purposely took a conservative approach to surveying, where they have not been able to find a habitat they assume they are there in a number of instances. These assumptions improve as you get access to properties which means that through the process of ongoing recording and monitoring you improve your understanding of areas.- <i>A CCG member noted that Transgrid may not have accounted for as much as is there.</i>- Sumaya noted that they intentionally take a very conservative approach where they assume everything is there if they do not have access, they take the worst case scenario and then as the construction methodology is refined, the disturbance footprint will be refined.- <i>A CCG member commented that Transgrid should be hiring an ecologist to do a biodiversity study.</i>- Sumaya responded that further work is done through preconstruction surveys where a number of experts including accredited ecologists and

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arborists look at the route and assess whether trees will need to be removed or whether they can stay.

- *The CCG member noted that a qualified ecologist should walk the 360km route and do an assessment and report on each property.*
- Sumaya noted that it is not a requirement for the EIS to assess every property and noted that they are not clearing vegetation on every property.
- *A CCG member asked if there will still be some trees left under the lines.*
- Sumaya responded that they will not need to clear everything under the lines.
- *A CCG member asked if each property is assessed.*
- Sumaya responded that each property will have a pre-clearing survey done prior to construction.
- *A CCG member asked how the biodiversity information gathered so far is used, they asked if it is used to determine how much biodiversity offset or whether the line should be changed?*
- Sumaya responded that it is used for the purpose of the EIS which looks at the impact. She noted that there will be things identified that they need to avoid which will mean they need to come up with an alternative solution. They can then consider whether they move a tower. The information gathered is iterative and can be used along with consultation with the contractor to determine what can and cannot be done.
- Sumaya continued that around 670 hectares of native vegetation will be cleared, she noted that they will look to minimise impact where they can however noted that it is inevitable with a project of this size that there will be impacts.
- *A CCG member commented that there is a feasible alternative to minimising impacts which is by going underground.*
- *Another CCG member noted that they are looking at impacts where the line is going but asked about impacts caused by access tracks.*
- Sumaya responded that the impacts caused by access tracks are assessed as well. She noted that Transgrid do not have confirmation on exactly where the towers will go however they have made assumptions to consider the access impacts.
- *A CCG member asked if it is normal practice to not know where the towers are going when delivering an EIS.*
- Sumaya noted that the EIS is based on a concept design, she noted that they have narrowed it down to a 200 metre footprint and assume that anywhere within that area there could be an impact. As part of the final design they look at optimisation and the opportunity to reduce towers or do better where possible.
- *A CCG member noted that there are different types of towers and asked if there is a larger footprint for tension or suspension towers.*
- Jeremy confirmed that tension towers are larger.
- *The CCG member asked how it can be put in the EIS when there is no confirmation on where they will go.*

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- Sumaya responded that it is based on the concept design route. She noted that Transgrid understand how many towers are suspension and how many are tension.
- *A CCG member asked about how there can be trees under transmission lines.*
- Sumaya responded that they have height restrictions but it does not mean full clearing under the lines is required.
- *The CCG member asked about whether it is just vegetation and noted that they assume there will be fairly substantial clearing required?*
- Jeremy agreed that there is clearing required.
- *A CCG member asked about whether the west of Batlow line is still in consideration. They noted that from their understanding Transgrid was going to respond in July with an answer on that route option.*
- Jeremy confirmed that it is still being considered.
- *A CCG member asked whether it is being considered in the EIS.*
- Sumaya responded that it will be done as an amendment if it proceeds. She noted that the team will be doing surveys in Spring and this will inform part of the amendment report.
- *A CCG member asked whether Transgrid have informed the neighbours.*
- Jeremy responded that this will be done hopefully in the next couple of weeks. He noted that they will both be informing people who were going to be impacted and now will not be and those that were not going to be impacted and now may be.
- *A CCG member noted that it is upsetting not having an answer to where it will be going. The CCG member noted that Transgrid are only presenting information having surveyed 40% of the line.*
- Jeremy responded that 66% of properties were surveyed to inform the EIS.
- *A CCG member asked how many hectares of land will be cleared.*
- Sumaya responded that 670 hectares of vegetation.
- *A CCG member asked whether that includes the route refinement.*
- Sumaya responded that it is the figure for the current route.
- *A CCG member asked if that is for a cleared 70 metres easement.*
- Sumaya responded that it is a disturbance assessment, it does not include the whole easement as not all of it will be required to be cleared, it is just what will need to be cleared.
- *A CCG member asked whether Transgrid is violating its legislative requirement to avoid and mitigate biodiversity impacts by not undergrounding.*
- Sumaya responded that from her understanding it is not a legislative requirement to underground but she noted that there are still biodiversity impacts to undergrounding.
- *The CCG member acknowledged that there are still impacts but noted that if you go underground the easement is about a quarter of the*

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overhead easement. The member noted that by going underground there is the opportunity to mitigate impacts.

- Sumaya responded that there is full clearing required for undergrounding but it is not full clearing required for overhead lines. She noted that access tracks will be unavoidable, she noted that Transgrid will look at existing access tracks and ones that can be upgraded where possible.
- *A CCG member commented that Sumaya said undergrounding causes as much damage as overhead, the CCG member noted that Amplitude's submission to the inquiry outlined undergrounding in significant detail and advised that everyone from Transgrid should read the submission.*
- The Chair noted that in the interests of time the presentation should continue.
- Sumaya explained that the vegetation clearing is the most direct impact however they also look at impacts on fauna and animals, dust, lighting, vehicle impact, birds or bats. She noted that they will be looking at ongoing refinements and opportunities to reduce the footprint of the project. They will work with contractors to find ways to reduce the impact.
- The Chair introduced Jack McGovern who is in the EIS project delivery team to present on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report.

Aboriginal Heritage

Aboriginal Heritage

Jack presented on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR). See slides 28-30 of the presentation slides.

- He outlined that the ACHAR methodology was used to assess the impacts on Aboriginal heritage within the study area. They used a 1km buffer on either side. In April 2021 Transgrid reached out to Aboriginal landholders who may want to assist in developing the ACHAR. They had 30 Aboriginal respondents who have supported the development of the ACHAR.
- 90 Aboriginal Heritage sites were identified which included 79 stone artefacts.
- *A CCG member asked what is defined by impact and how many metres does the line have to go within to be considered to have an impact.*
- Jack responded that it depends on the impacts, vibration impacts could be considered a direct impact. That information can be found in the ACHAR.
- Jack continued explaining that they have used a wider study area and project footprint than the easement will follow, where possible they will avoid and minimise impacts. He noted that it may require some removal of materials, if it is an archaeological deposit, where possible, efforts to avoid impacts would be applied the first principal.
- *A CCG member asked if people were on the ground surveying the whole line?*
- Jack responded that 70% of the line was walked.
- *A CCG member asked if Transgrid relied on information from the Aboriginal people.*

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jack responded with yes, the Aboriginal people were consulted throughout the whole process.- <i>A CCG member asked whether Transgrid can identify the section of the line that was walked.</i> TAKEN ON NOTICE- Action: Transgrid to identify the 70% of the line that was walked as part of the biodiversity and Aboriginal Heritage work done for the EIS.
Social	<p>Social</p> <p>Jack presented on the Social Impact Assessment for the EIS.</p> <p>See pages 32 - 36 of the presentation slides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jack explained that the social impact assessment was developed in accordance with the SEARS. It has included the local government level, key communities including the local government areas and also consideration at a project footprint level.- Jack explained that they look at the impacts in accordance with the Department guidelines which looks at both the likelihood of the impact and the magnitude of the during the construction and operational phase. Then based on that assessment the impact is given a rating ranging from low to very high.- <i>A CCG member asked if it considers access to the property and access tracks.</i>- Jack responded that it considers the impact of access tracks.- <i>A CCG member asked if there is consideration of the impact on way of life, sleep disturbance, the risk of mental health and the ongoing impact.</i>- Jack responded that the ongoing impact to communities is considered.- <i>A CCG member commented that listing 'positive social impacts through new relationships and interaction' as a social benefit of HumeLink was insensitive. They noted that for them there is no positives, they commented that they believed this should not be in the EIS and noted that it shows Transgrid's ignorance of the community concerns.</i>- The Chair noted that if there are conclusions that the community do not agree with, they should include this in their submission on the EIS.- <i>A CCG member commented that Transgrid should already be aware of this, it should not be up to community members to bring this to their attention.</i>- <i>Another CCG member noted that there is no monetary benefit. They have spent significant money on mental health, and they believe that Transgrid has no empathy for their situation. They noted that they attend the meeting and get nothing in return. They noted that there is no price that can be put on the social impact. They asked if Transgrid recognised the significant psychological duress that community members have been under for the past few years and would continue to suffer if the project goes ahead in its present form noting the wording of the social impact assessment presentation would indicate they have no idea of the social and mental health cost of the project.</i>- <i>Another CCG member commented that they have met with Transgrid right back at the start of the process and it has never changed anything.</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>A CCG member asked if Transgrid will pay for legal and valuation expenses if the powerlines go underground. TAKEN ON NOTICE.</i> - Action: Will Transgrid pay for the legal and valuation expenses if the transmission lines go underground? - <i>They also asked whether Transgrid will pay for a property management consultant who do property management plans. TAKEN ON NOTICE.</i> - Action: Will Transgrid pay for property management consultants who do property management plans? - <i>The CCG members noted that property owners should not be using their personal time to prepare documents that may be over 50 pages long. They commented that they believe Transgrid should be paying for this.</i> - <i>A CCG member asked whether given the feedback today there has been any work done to investigate a blended delivery model where there is partial undergrounding and partial overhead lines.</i> - <i>Another CCG member noted that this was mentioned by someone as a possibility at the inquiry.</i> - <i>Another CCG member noted that as part of the undergrounding study, alternative options such as undergrounding private land and overhead in public land was explored. The CCG member noted that Jeremy's comment saying that Transgrid is required to look at the prudent cost minimising option for consumers is in contradiction to what Jim Cox said. Jim said if the community was consulted with and they said that undergrounding was something they wanted to investigate, the Australian Energy Regulator would have looked into it. The CCG member noted that this is a failure of consultation that this was not picked up. The CCG member noted that it is not too late with Snowy 2.0 being delayed, it was originally due to finish on 1 July 2025 and is now due to finish at the earliest in December 2029.</i>
<p>Other business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair thanked CCG members for their time and all of their comments. The Chair noted that the minutes will be out within a week. - <i>A CCG member asked that the pre-reading be distributed at least a week before the meeting.</i> - Naomi agreed that Transgrid would try and ensure pre-reading came out a week before the meeting.
<p>Next meeting</p>	<p>Next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair noted that the next meeting will be in October with the exact date confirmed in the coming weeks. - Naomi noted that Transgrid are looking at moving the meeting around to different locations so that CCG members do not always have to travel so far. - <i>A CCG member noted that they believe it would be good to have a meeting in September while the EIS is on exhibition.</i> - Naomi responded that there will be multiple information sessions occurring throughout the weeks of the EIS and multiple opportunities for CCG members to raise concerns. They noted that they will be starting in Wagga on the 4th of September and Tumut on the 5th of September.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>The CCG member stated that it is disappointing that Transgrid are sending CCG members to information sessions when they have been attending these meetings for nearly 2 years, and are representative of their communities. TAKEN ON NOTICE.</i>- Action: Transgrid to consider whether the next CCG meeting will be in September during the exhibition period.
Meeting close	The meeting closed at 7:27pm.

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Action	Status or comment
HumeLink EIS and SEARs to be circulated to CCG members	Completed
Transgrid to provide the CCG with technical information explaining how the structural integrity of the transmission lines is maintained in windy conditions.	Completed
Transgrid to respond to the Steering Committee's letter and the 52 outstanding issues within 4 weeks of the meeting.	Complete
Transgrid to supply the exact number the 2022 undergrounding figures were based on	Completed
Transgrid to check the parameters for covering ecology studies for landowners	Completed
Transgrid to supply their proposed biosecurity processes for the geotech investigations.	Completed
Transgrid to supply revised Option Deed	Completed
Transgrid to supply the revised Property Management Plan	Completed
Transgrid to outline how the procurement process will minimise impact on local communities	Completed
Transgrid to follow up with GHD for more insight into their value scoring methodology and reasoning, including the difference in value between agricultural land compared to State Forest.	Completed
Transgrid to follow up with GHD for more insight into the social and environmental matters included in its model InDeGo (Infrastructure Development Geospatial Options), how they are weighted and the scoring methodology.	Completed
Transgrid to determine if there are barriers to technological advancements with undergrounding cables	Underway
Secretariat is to follow up with members on administrative details including signed Code of Conduct Agreements and sharing of contact details.	Completed
Transgrid to institute the \$50 reimbursement for eligible members	Completed
Transgrid to request the value of the multiplier from GHD used in their report.	Completed
Transgrid to supply the difference in route length between the original Bannaby to Tumut option and the alternate option that was considered	Completed

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Transgrid to email confirmation that Transgrid will not be doing an official review of the route in Yass.	Completed
November meeting minutes to include further detail regarding the biodiversity offset process.	Completed
Transgrid requested to provide summary slides for each topic of the EIS	Completed
Transgrid to provide the CCG with an example of a noise and vibration catchment	Completed
Transgrid to provide an explanation of the noise monitoring process and how the noise machines work	Completed
Transgrid to answer if the noise monitors will remain post construction of the route	Completed
Transgrid to dedicate an agenda item during a CCG in 2023 to noise and bring an acoustic expert in	Completed
Transgrid to determine if the Neara modelling will be ready in time for when the EIS is on public exhibition	Completed
Transgrid to provide a chart of all the different companies involved in Humelink and what they do.	Underway
Transgrid to provide more information on the tower details	Completed
Transgrid to send through the map outlining the 65 outages that occurred during the Dunns Rd fire and confirm that there were 65 outages.	Completed
First Nations Humelink stakeholder list to be shared with the CCG	Completed
Pre-reading material will be provided at least a week before each meeting.	Completed
Transgrid to confirm the number of requests for power lines to be turned off during the Dunns Road fire.	Completed
Transgrid to re-distribute correct route map identifying East and West sections of the line.	Completed
Transgrid to review fact sheets reportedly displaying 330kV lines in place of 550kV lines.	Completed
Can landowners be paid for the time spent developing their PMPs?	Completed
Chair to review the questions sent through on the Yass route refinement.	Completed
All future CCG meetings held as combined meetings and open to the public.	Completed
Transgrid to provide the CCG with an update on progress with AEMO at the next CCG	Completed
Transgrid disclose how many lobbyists they have working in Sydney and Canberra.	Completed

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Transgrid to show images to CCG members of different visualisation tools, including NEARA to compare visual representation and different tool options. The presentation must provide a large selection of NEARA images where NEARA provides an accurate visual representation and where it does not with a comparison to photomontage.	Completed
Transgrid to attempt to obtain more detailed information on fighting fires under transmission lines and on ability to evacuate where there is a 25 metre exclusion zone due to smoke. This includes documenting where there is no evacuation route for landowners because of transmission lines, in the case of a bushfire.	Completed
Transgrid to provide greater detail on the Yass Valley route refinement.	Completed
Transgrid to review questions sent through by CCG member on the Yass Valley route refinement.	Completed
Transgrid to respond to community on where WSP's study to assess undergrounding overseas is up to.	Completed
Transgrid to discuss with Rod Stowe to determine if there will be a replacement for Barbara El Gamal as Landowner Advocate.	Completed
Transgrid to clarify the percentage of op-ex over cap-ex assumed in the RIT-T and that if assumptions have changed to explain the implications of this for the overall project viability in terms of net benefit/net cost.	Completed
Transgrid to provide an update on the AEMO review when completed.	Completed
Transgrid to provide an update on route in the Yass region and what route will be in the EIS.	Completed
Transgrid to confirm that no tower in HumeLink will be higher than 76 metres.	Completed
Transgrid to provide the height of the towers of the 550kV transmission lines between Bannaby and Mount Piper.	Completed
Transgrid to provide some clarification around how creeks or crossings will be managed by contractors.	Completed
Transgrid to provide CCG members with the depth and width of trench required for the underground cabling done for the Powering Sydney's Future project.	
Transgrid to find out what agricultural expertise they have, including the certifications of individuals to determine what agricultural activities can be undertaken above and in proximity to underground lines.	
The recent Transmission Expansion Options report has HumeLink with a transfer capacity of 2200 megawatts, it was previously 2570 megawatts. Transgrid to confirm the transfer capacity of HumeLink.	
Transgrid provide the amount they will get for maintenance of HumeLink in regards to the easement.	

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How much of the \$4.892 billion is biodiversity offsets?	
Jeremy to report back to Transgrid senior leadership team on community feedback including that the community feel as though Transgrid are choosing figures to exaggerate the cost/impact of undergrounding.	
Transgrid to consider advocating for an extension to the EIS exhibition period.	
Transgrid to provide a full schedule on where they will be in the community to assist people during the EIS exhibition period.	
Transgrid to consider whether they can provide CCG members with a hard copy of the EIS.	
Transgrid to confirm who is being doorknocked as part of the project and whether any of the 4322 indirectly impact residents are being doorknocked.	
Transgrid to identify the 70% of the line that was walked as part of the biodiversity and aboriginal heritage work done for the EIS.	
Will Transgrid pay for the legal and valuation expenses if the transmission lines go underground?	
Will Transgrid pay for property management consultants who do property management plans?	
Transgrid to consider whether the next CCG meeting will be in September during the exhibition period.	