

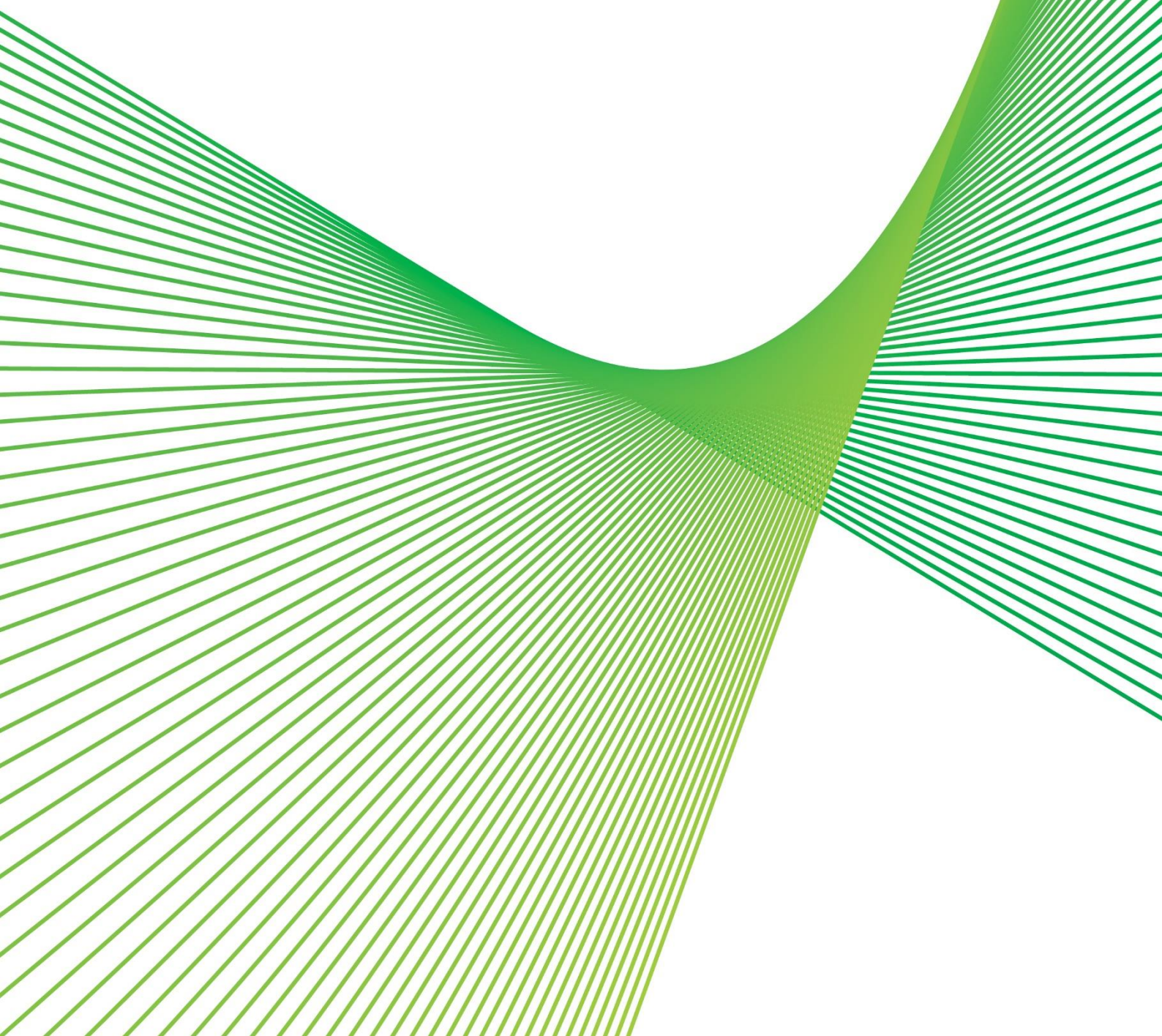


People. Power. Possibilities.

What We Heard Report

HumeLink Community Information Sessions

September and October 2022



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Purpose

The purpose of the 'What We Heard Report' is to capture and share information and issues discussed at key engagement events. The reports are published on the project website for those not able to attend an engagement event, as a record of engagement and ensure transparency. They are also passed onto the project team for consideration during project development.

Summary

The HumeLink Community Information Sessions (CIS) were designed to share information and receive feedback from the general public, communities and businesses along the proposed HumeLink alignment.

These sessions were planned in consideration of previous feedback the project team have received from Community Consultative Group (CCG) meetings and key stakeholders regarding direct and frequent engagement with the local communities. The CIS offered a two-way communication opportunity allowing stakeholders to meet and discuss the project with key personnel.

The sessions occurred during September and October 2022 with 17 two-hour face-to-face drop-in sessions in towns along the project footprint. There were 89 attendees. The session provided an overview of the project and approval process.

Additional sessions have been scheduled for February, May and June 2023 and will be promoted in the lead up to each session.

Sentiment of the CIS was generally mixed amongst interested community attendees. Impacted and near neighbouring landowners were generally negative about the project.

This document outlines the feedback gathered by the project team throughout each of the sessions as well as the key themes and common issues raised by community attendees.

Undergrounding, route refinement and compensation including the strategic benefits payments were the most frequently raised topics during the September and October 2022 sessions. The information below summarises the key themes across the information sessions and also provides analysis for each individual session.

Questions and actions taken on notice during the sessions were all responded to directly following the sessions. Further the location, format and promotion of future sessions will be adapted based on feedback received during the sessions.

Engagement Approach

The September and October 2022 CIS were drop-in style sessions where members of the project team make themselves available over a two-hour period to speak directly to community members about the project. The sessions were held during daytime and evening to attract the largest number of people possible.

The CIS were held in central locations which were set up with information displayed around the room (corflute display boards) to allow for group movement and flow with large maps of the project footprint

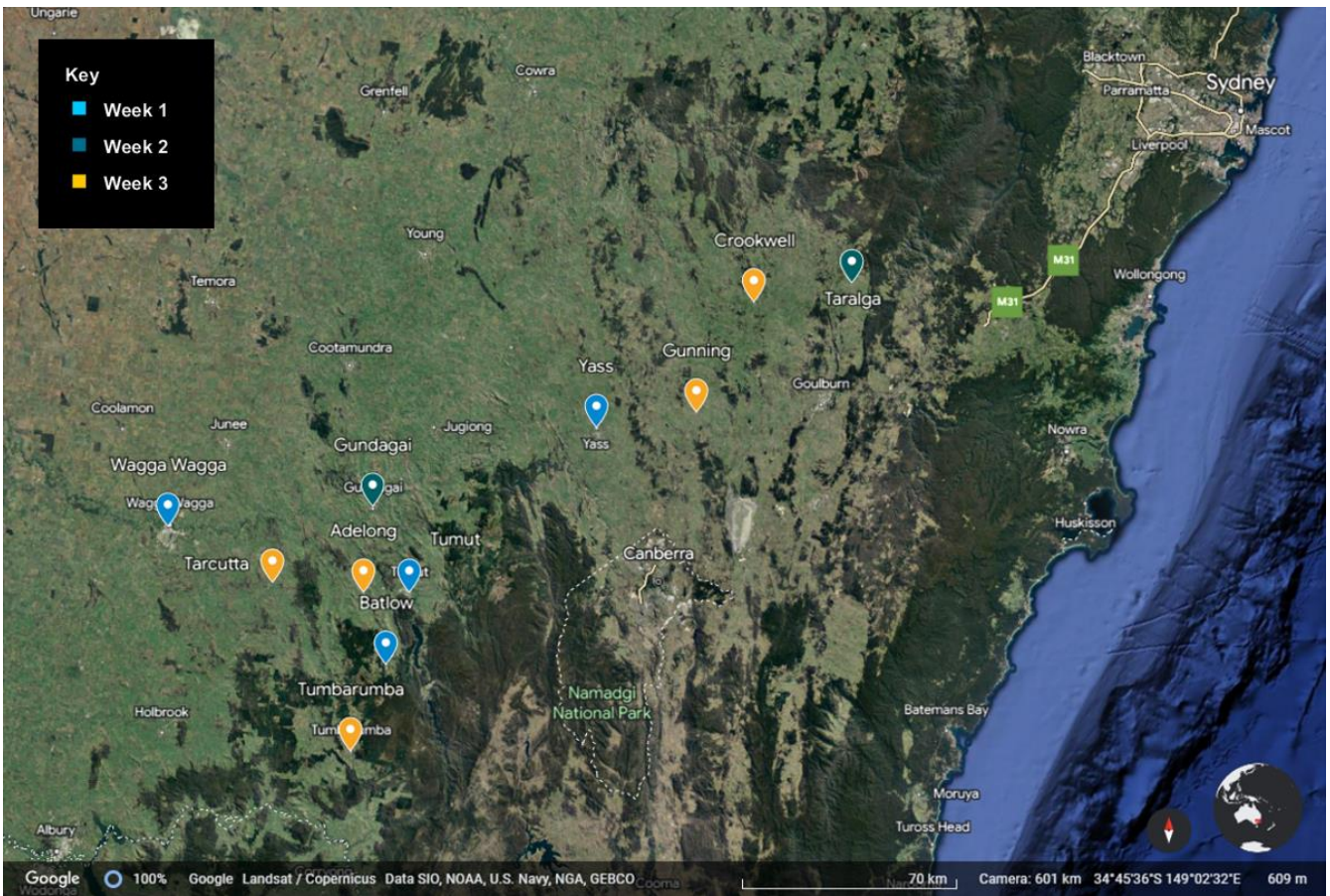
displayed in the center of the room to facilitate collaborative discussions. Project representatives were available to explain the project and answer questions in small groups or with individuals.

These sessions were advertised in the ‘HumeLink Project Update – August 2022’ newsletter, which was distributed via letterbox drop to more than 16,000 locations, as well as via email to more than 600 project subscribers, impacted landowners, and CCG members, on the radio and via social media. This advertising approach was designed to maximise reach and awareness.

The table below outlines the days, times, locations, and attendee numbers where the project team held the CIS:

| Week | Location | Date | Time | Venue |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|---|
| Week 1 (w/c 12 Sep 2022) | Yass | Tuesday 13 Sep 22 | 11 am – 1 pm | Yass Soldiers Memorial Hall |
| | Yass | Tuesday 13 Sep 22 | 5 pm – 7 pm | Yass Soldiers Memorial Hall |
| | Tumut | Wednesday 14 Sep 22 | 11 am – 2 pm | Valmar Support Services |
| | Batlow | Thursday 15 Sep 22 | 11 am – 1 pm | Literary Institute, Batlow |
| | Batlow | Thursday 15 Sep 22 | 5 pm – 7 pm | Literary Institute, Batlow |
| | Wagga Wagga | Friday 16 Sep 22 | 11 am – 1 pm | Kooringai Girl Guides Hall |
| | Wagga Wagga | Friday 16 Sep 22 | 5 pm – 7 pm | Kooringai Girl Guides Hall |
| | Tumut | Saturday 17 Sep 22 | 10 am – 12 pm | Valmar Support Services |
| | | | | Total attendees in week 1: 42 |
| Week 2 (w/c 20 Sep 2022) | Taralga/Bannaby | Tuesday 20 Sep 22 | 11 am – 1 pm | Taralga War Memorial Hall |
| | Taralga/Bannaby | Tuesday 20 Sep 22 | 5 pm – 7 pm | Taralga War Memorial Hall |
| | Gundagai | Wednesday 21 Sep 22 | 11 am – 1 pm | Gundagai District Services Club |
| | | | | |
| Week 3 (w/c 24 Oct 2022) | Crookwell | Monday 24 Oct 22 | 4 pm – 6 pm | Crookwell Memorial Hall |
| | Gunning | Tuesday 25 Oct 22 | 12 pm – 2 pm | Gunning Shire Hall |
| | Gunning | Tuesday 25 Oct 22 | 4 pm – 6 pm | Gunning Shire Hall |
| | Adelong | Wednesday 26 Oct 22 | 4 pm – 6 pm | Adelong Services, Citizens & Bowling Club |
| | Tarcutta | Thursday 27 Oct 22 | 12 pm – 2 pm | Tarcutta Memorial Hall |
| | Tumbarumba | Thursday 27 Oct 22 | 5 pm – 7 pm | Tumbarumba Motel |
| | | | | Total attendees in week 3: 25 |
| | | | | Total attendees: 89 |

The map below provides a visual display of the locations where the project team held the CIS:



Key Themes

Key topics raised throughout the sessions include:

- **Route alignment:** particularly in Tumut, Batlow, Taralga and Gundagai people were concerned with why the alignment wasn't going through national park
 - **Undergrounding:** specifically questions around why HumeLink is not being undergrounded and discussion on the positives and negatives of undergrounding. Questions included the technical assessment, financial feasibility and environmental impacts including reduced ability to fight bushfires around overhead transmission lines
 - **Farming activities:** particularly the impact to aerial spraying on landowners who host transmission lines on their property
- **Visual impacts and reduced visual amenity:** for both directly impacted and near neighbours and compensation for said impacts, and perceived impacts from reduced visual amenity including impact to tourism
- **Asset management** of existing Transgrid lines and how the future transmission lines will be managed
- **Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF):** particularly the impact to livestock
- **Property compensation:** impacted landowners raised concerns that they were not being compensated fairly. Also, discussion around taxation requirements associated with compensation payments.
- **Biodiversity and vegetation:** and strategies to minimise vegetation clearing during construction.
- **Construction:** impacts during construction from increase temporary population specifically related to workforce accommodation and housing supply
- Frustration that there were no senior representatives from HumeLink in the second week CIS (Taralga and Gundagai)
- **Strategic Benefits Payments:** concerns around the length of the scheme and end date.
- **Community investment** opportunities and project legacy
- **Road maintenance** costs and the impact on roads
- **Local business opportunities** from the HumeLink project
- **Impact on the local and regional economy**
- Impact of transmission lines on **bushfire risk**
- **Project timeline** and key dates
- **Route alignment and route refinement** process.

Detailed Session Overviews

The following section includes an overview of each session and common, high-level themes which were discussed. Please note, if you feel that high-level points you raised were not highlighted in this report, please reach out to the HumeLink team on

Phone: 1800 317 367

Email: humelink@transgrid.com.au

Week 1| Yass – Session 1

Date: Tuesday 13 September 2022, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Questions included the **undergrounding** technical assessment, financial feasibility and environmental impacts. Also, discussion on the increased impact to fight bushfires around above ground transmission lines
- Concerns about current asset management with existing Transgrid assets around Yass. Attendees indicated concern around future management of HumeLink transmission lines
- One attendee indicated concerns around teams not following **biosecurity** measures when accessing the properties for the EIS
- Interest in potential **Electric Magnetic Fields** (EMF) impacts, particularly impacts to grazing and livestock moving under the transmission lines. Also interested in potential for cumulative impacts from EMF
- Strategies to minimise **vegetation clearance** was also mentioned by one of the attendees who was interested to know more about how Transgrid approaches this in general.

Week 1| Yass – Session 2

Date: Tuesday 13 September 2022, 5pm – 7pm

Key topics raised:

- Discussion on the impact of transmission lines and towers to landowner's **airstrip and aerial spraying**
- Concern about potential **Aboriginal heritage** site located on near the route
- Concern about why HumeLink is not being **undergrounded**. Attendees were interested in the technical components that were assessed to make the decision about undergrounding the transmission line
- Concern about potential **bushfire** fighting impacts from overhead transmission lines. Interested in knowing more about why HumeLink will not go **underground** in those critical bushfire prone areas.
- Interest in the project's impact to landowner's **tourism** businesses
- Concerned about the impacts on visual amenity and **compensation** for near neighbours.

Week 1| Tumut – Session 1

Date: Wednesday 14 September 2022, 11am – 2pm

Key topics raised:

- Request for more information on the project, specifically transmission lines and **tower location**, and the requirements and regulations around distances between transmission lines and residential properties
- Interest in the impact to **farming** activities, including of the project to aerial spraying, drone usage, and the loss of productivity as a result of hosting transmission lines on their properties
- Interest in additional information around the decision made on the **route options** for the Blowering area and through Kosciuszko National Park
- Request for the option through Kosciuszko National Park to be revisited
- Concern about the **impact to land value** and the subsequential financial impact.

Week 1| Batlow – Session 1

Date: Thursday 15 September 2022, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Interest in **general information** about the project
- Concerns about why the project is not being **undergrounded** and discussions around the positives and negatives of undergrounding
- Interested in knowing more about ongoing **maintenance costs** of a transmission lines
- Discussion around the impacts to **tourism** in Batlow because of decreased visual amenity. Attendees proposed undergrounding as a solution for visual impacts.

Week 1| Batlow – Session 2

Date: Thursday 15 September 2022, 5pm – 7pm

Key topics raised:

- Concerned about potential **visual impacts** of transmission lines and towers to tourism and local business, and landowners' businesses
- **Vegetation clearing** impacts
- Request for an **undergrounding** technical specialist to be present at the upcoming community information sessions.

Week 1| Wagga Wagga – Session 1

Date: Friday 16 September 2022, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Concerns about **visual impact** and mitigation measures

- Interest in having more information on the project and potential **visual impacts** to understand how the project may influence landowners' renovation projects
- Attendees would like support from Transgrid to plant trees at the front of their house to mitigate the **visual impact**
- Interested to know how HumeLink will manage the workforce and potential issues associated with **workforce shortage** as a result of major projects in the area. They also mentioned that are working on workers safety as they anticipate a big influx of people due to projects in the area such as HumeLink, PEC, Inland Rail
- Interest in **workforce accommodation**.

Week 1| Wagga Wagga – Session 2

Date: Friday 16 September 2022 – 5pm – 7pm

Key topics raised:

- Concerns about property **compensation** payments. Impacted landowners were particularly concerned that they may not be being compensated fairly. Also, discussion around taxation requirements associated with compensation payments
- Concerns about the financial impact of the transmission line to landowners' **property value**
- Concerns about the **community engagement** conducted to date, specifically landowner's contact with their Place Managers and Land Access Officers
- Interest in more detail on the proposed **route alignment** and **tower location**.

Week 1| Tumut – Session 2

Date: Saturday 17 September 2022, 10am – 12pm

Key topics raised:

- Conversations and concerns about **visual impact** of the HumeLink project
- Interest in impacts to **biodiversity** and the impact of land clearing on existing vegetation
- Discussion around current regulatory framework not providing flexibility to consider **impacts to private landowners** while focusing strongly on other aspects such as Aboriginal heritage
- Discussion of impact to private land, **land value**, **impact to cattle** and associated activities
- Concerns about the impact of the transmission lines to **farming activities**, including aerial spraying
- Interest in **compensation** payments.

Week 2| Taralga – Session 1

Date: Tuesday 20 September 2022, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Unhappy with the preferred 'dog-leg' **alignment** option. Would prefer if alignment went through the National Park
- Frustration that there were no senior representatives from HumeLink, Transgrid, local members or technical subject matter experts from various disciplines

- A perceived lack of genuine **consultation** with no new information or two-way dialogue with landowners
- Request for more information on the project.

Week 2| Taralga – Session 2

Date: Tuesday 20 September 2022, 5pm – 7pm

Key topics raised:

- Expressed disappointment in HumeLink and the general handling of the project
- Frustration that there were no senior representatives from HumeLink, Transgrid, local members or technical SMEs from various disciplines and request for a direct line of contact to Transgrid Executives
- A perceived lack of genuine **consultation** with no new information and no two-way dialogue with landowners
- Concerns about **visual amenity** for **near neighbours**
- Request for information on **tower location**
- Request to revisit national park **route options** which avoids landowner's land
- Concerns about potential health impacts due to **EMF**.

Week 2| Gundagai

Date: Wednesday 21 September 2022, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Concerns about the proposed alignment and **route refinement** process
- Questions around why the **alignment** does not go through Kosciusko National Park as the route is more direct and would save project cost on property acquisition
- Frustrated with the lack of detail on the current alignment
- Interest in **visual amenity** and request for photomontages of the proposed alignment or digital examples to be presented
- Interest in **EMF** and the impacts to livestock
- Conversations around Transgrid's **biosecurity** measures
- Interested in **Strategic Benefits Payment**.

Week 3| Crookwell

Date: Monday 24 October 2022, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- Concerned about **visual amenity**
- Discussion on the positive and negative to **tourism** and the impacts on the local Crookwell economy
- Attendees also communicated the continued preference for the project to be **undergrounded**.

Week 3| Gunning – Session 1

Date: Tuesday 25 October 2022, 12pm – 2pm

Key topics raised:

No community members attended the session.

Week 3| Gunning – Session 2

Date: Tuesday 25 October 2022, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- Attendees asked why HumeLink isn't being **undergrounded**. Also, discussion on the pros and cons of undergrounding the transmission line versus overhead transmission lines
- Concern about the impact of the construction workforce on the **local housing supply**
- Concern about the impact of construction on council **roads** and increased maintenance cost to council
- Conversations around **social legacy opportunities**, including affordable housing and community housing
- Questions around haulage routes and **heavy vehicle movements** during construction.

Week 3| Adelong

Date: Wednesday 26 October 2022, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- Concerns about the effectiveness of community **engagement** to date
- Concerns and questions around Transgrid's approach to **bushfire** risk mitigation. Attendees also spoke of the ongoing trauma created from recent bushfire events
- Discussion around **compensation** and **strategic benefits payment**
- Discussions on route **alignment** and **tower location**
- Broad discussion on general **community sentiment** towards the project.

Week 3| Tarcutta

Date: Thursday 27 October, 12pm – 2pm

Key topics raised:

- Impact to specific landowners
- Discussions on **route alignment**
- Discussion and interest in **compensation** and **strategic benefits payment**
- Broad discussion on general community **sentiment** towards the project.

Week 3| Tumberumba

Date: Thursday 27 October, 5pm – 7pm

Key topics raised:

- Questions on why HumeLink isn't being **undergrounded**
- Conversations about **compensation** and the **strategic benefits payment**, specifically questions and concerns on the duration of the payment scheme
- Questions and conversation around the property **valuation process**
- Investments opportunities for HumeLink in the local economy and impacts or threats to the **local economy**
- **Legacy opportunities**, specifically related to housing
- Conversation about **local procurement** opportunities
- Discussion on project **timeline** and key dates
- Questions about **workforce accommodation**
- Questions on route **alignment**
- Impact on **local infrastructure** and potential increase of cost on maintenance, specifically roads
- **Bushfire** risk and Transgrid's approach to bushfire mitigation
- Feedback on appropriateness of **engagement** activities to date.