

HumeLink Community Newsletter

November 2023

What is HumeLink?

HumeLink is one of Australia’s largest energy infrastructure projects connecting renewable energy sources to the grid, increasing availability and market competition and helping to put downward pressure on energy prices in Australia.

The project consists of 365 kilometres of 500 kV overhead transmission lines connecting Wagga Wagga, Bannaby and Maragle, and new or upgraded infrastructure at four substations.

HumeLink is critical to bringing more affordable, reliable and renewable energy to the grid and is a priority project for the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and the Commonwealth and NSW Governments. HumeLink is subject to the approval of the Australian Energy Regulator.

To view HumeLink’s interactive route map go to transgrid.com.au/humelink.

In this issue:

Next stage – review and respond

What we heard

Survey update

Supporting Australia’s agricultural transformation

HumeLink preferred route



Figure 1: HumeLink preferred route.



Project update

Project footprint total length update

Following ongoing investigations and consultation with impacted landowners in August this year, Transgrid determined that the alternate western route through Green Hills State Forest is the most viable route for HumeLink.

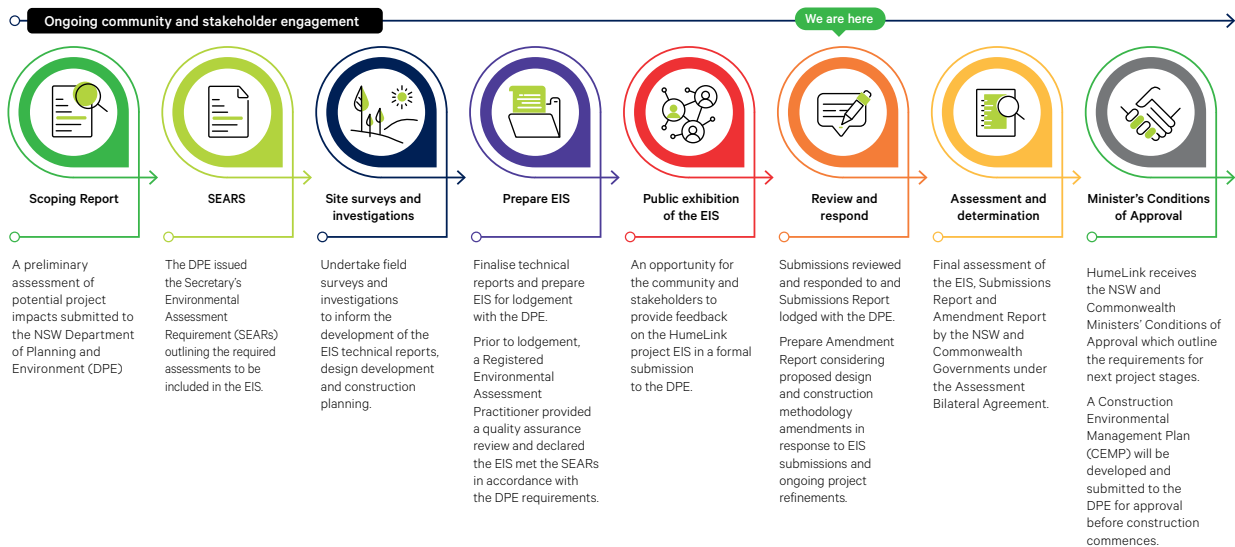
In place of the original eastern route through the Gilmour Valley south of Wondalga, the Green Hills route will remove private landowners from requiring an easement, overall reducing community impact and visual impact from transmission towers.

As a result of the confirmed Green Hills route refinement, the HumeLink project footprint has an adjusted total transmission line length of 365 kilometres, compared to the original 360 kilometres. While this is an increase in total length of the project, the project route significantly reduces impacts to 10 private landowners and aligns with NSW Government principles on placing transmission infrastructure on public land where feasible.



Next stage – review and respond

HumeLink Environmental Planning Approvals Pathway



Thank you to everyone who made a submission on the HumeLink Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) during the public exhibition period. More than 150 submissions were received from government agencies, councils, local organisations and individual community members.

Following the completion of the public exhibition stage, the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) has provided Transgrid with the submissions received. The HumeLink team has commenced reviewing the submissions and preparing a Submissions Report which will be lodged with the DPE and published on the [DPE Major Projects Planning Portal](#) when completed.

As the project has progressed, we have identified a number of design and construction methodology refinements. These refinements, along with the project amendments in response to issues raised in submissions received on the EIS, will be assessed in an Amendment Report.

The Amendment Report and Submissions Report will be submitted to the DPE concurrently in early 2024. The Submissions Report and Amendment Report will cross reference one another and should be read in conjunction.

Frequently asked questions

What has been happening in design and construction planning?

As the project design progresses, we have been able to identify and further refine a number of design and construction methodology components.

Project refinements made following the public exhibition of the EIS may require further assessment. This assessment will be completed to identify potential impacts and how we intend to manage and mitigate these.

What further assessment will be carried out?

As part of the ongoing project development, Transgrid will be completing further assessment related to design, construction methodology, access tracks, accommodation facilities, construction compounds and route refinements. This includes additional survey and assessment of potential biodiversity and Aboriginal heritage impacts along the Green Hills route.

Throughout this time, Transgrid will continue to engage with landowners, key stakeholders and community members and provide regular updates as information becomes available.

Changes or refinements in the period between EIS lodgement and project approval will be compiled and outlined in an Amendment Report. The report will be published on the [NSW DPE Major Projects Planning Portal](#).

What's in an Amendment Report?

The purpose of the amendment report is to outline the changes to the project and to help the community, government agencies and the approval authority understand the implications of these changes.

The final scope of the Amendment Report for HumeLink is being finalised in consideration of further input identified by delivery partners, and in response to issues raised during EIS engagement and in submissions. The HumeLink Amendment Report is likely to include project amendments and refinements related to design, construction methodology, access tracks, accommodation facilities, construction compounds and route refinements.

Will the community be able to provide input to the Amendment Report?

Yes. The project team will continue to engage with landowners, stakeholders and community members throughout the development of the Amendment Report.

This report will be available on the DPE Major Projects Planning Portal in early 2024.

If you are interested in hearing more about project progress, we invite you to register to receive email updates [here](#).

How does the Amendment Report fit in with the environmental planning approvals?

The Amendment Report will be reviewed and assessed by the DPE alongside the Submissions Report and the EIS. The DPE will then make a recommendation to either approve the project along with any conditions or provide reasons for refusal.

HumeLink will need approval from both the NSW and Commonwealth governments.

To keep up to date with the HumeLink project, visit the [HumeLink website](#).

What we heard

Transgrid hosted 22 in-person and three online events during the EIS public exhibition period to share information on the EIS and submission process with the community. The most popular topics raised, and where to find more information, are outlined below:

1. Questions about the EIS process included:

- the public exhibition timeframe
 - the environmental approvals process
 - next steps after the public exhibition
 - additional EIS resources, including the Digital EIS (DEIS).
- More information about the EIS is available on our [website](#).

2. Questions about our engagement included:

- engagement with the community and stakeholders to-date
- opportunities for accessible consultation with our Remote Access Community Hub (RACH).

More information about our community engagement is available on the HumeLink website and in [Chapter 6 of the EIS](#).

3. Questions about bushfire and bushfire risk included:

- concerns regarding firefighting operations and procedures.

You can find resources and information in our [EIS Bushfire Risk Factsheet](#).

4. Questions about construction methodology included:

- construction timeframes
- access tracks
- road use
- construction impacts
- mitigation measures
- contractor resourcing.

Find out more information about construction in [Chapter 4 of the EIS](#).

5. Questions about the Green Hills route refinement:

You can find information about the Green Hills route in our [August/September newsletter](#). Further information will also be provided in the Amendment Report.

View the preferred corridor and provide feedback via our [Interactive Map](#).



Survey update

The project team has undertaken further environmental surveys including for Aboriginal heritage. These surveys were conducted in accordance with the [Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in NSW](#) (DECCW, 2010a).

All Aboriginal heritage sites will be documented as part of the surveys, recording key information such as:

- details of the site where the artefact is found including date, type, coordinates, dimensions and condition
- landscape and landform character
- site content including numbers and artefact types
- raw materials and detailed recordings of artefact samples
- photos
- any other relevant information.



Left: Test excavation at a Potential Archaeological Deposit site.

Transgrid's heritage consultants will report the findings onto the [NSW Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System](#) (AHIMS). This database contains information for over 100,000 recorded Aboriginal sites and over 14,000 archaeological and cultural heritage assessment reports across NSW.

Transgrid will continue to assess and identify potential impacts to Aboriginal heritage over the coming months and consider opportunities to avoid or minimise impacts. Survey findings will be included in a revised Aboriginal and Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) presented in the Amendment Report.



Right: Hammerstone artefact found near Taralga.



In the community

Transgrid's Remote Access Community Hub (RACH) brought information to communities and stakeholders across the HumeLink project footprint during the EIS exhibition period.

RACH allows us to be flexible in our approach to community engagement and bring project information to landowners who are unable to attend in-person community information sessions – helping us to reach

even more community members and ensure everyone has the information they need. You may have seen RACH at our community sessions and at the 2023 Henty Machinery Field Day.

If you are interested in a visit from RACH and learning how it can help you understand more about the project, contact the project team via email humelink@transgrid.com.au or phone 1800 317 367.



Image: RACH visiting landowners Dick, James and Geoffrey at their property.



Supporting Australia's agricultural transformation

During October, Transgrid was a major sponsor of the 2023 Digital Agrifood Summit, hosted by Charles Sturt University (CSU). Several Transgrid representatives attended including members of the HumeLink team. Transgrid's General Manager of Land, Property and Approvals, Suzanne Westgate, presented at the summit and spoke about developing the electricity network to support the renewable generation transition.

Suzanne highlighted Transgrid's commitment to working with primary producers and regional communities to balance building assets with minimising impacts to the people and businesses in those areas, and said:

"The reason we take a real interest in what's important to farming communities is because it's where we exist, it's the environment we live in and the communities we potentially impact. So, what is important to farming landholders and their future is also important to us so we can understand and learn how we might be part of a solution."



Local business register

If you have a business in the local government areas along the HumeLink project footprint and are interested in working with the HumeLink project, we would love to hear from you.

Simply register your business and we will share your details with our delivery partners. The local business register will also be the project teams' first port of call when we are looking to procure goods and services at various stages of the project.

If you are a local business interested in working on HumeLink Register your business [here](#)





RACH Drop-in sessions

Transgrid are proposing to build temporary accommodation facilities to house our workers during the construction stage of the project, reducing the impacts to local housing and short-term accommodation availability.

If you have any questions about HumeLink, the Transgrid project team is holding drop-in sessions at proposed accommodation facilities and compound locations. Bring your questions about the route, the design and construction, the proposed accommodation facilities and compounds – and how we're supporting local communities impacted by construction.

Tarcutta

Monday 27 November
2pm-5pm
Across from Coffee
@ Joe's, Tarcutta

Batlow

Tuesday 28 November
11am-2:00pm
Literary Institute centre,
Batlow

Yass

Monday 4 December
2pm-5pm
92 Meehan Street, Yass

Crookwell

Tuesday 5 December
11am-2:00pm
44 Spring Street, Crookwell



Holiday period

As we approach the end of the year, the HumeLink team wishes you a safe and happy holiday.

The HumeLink team will be away on break from Monday, 25 December 2023 until Friday, 5 January 2024 and will have minimal staff available. If you contact us with

a routine enquiry throughout this time via our 1800 number or at humelink@transgrid.com.au we will get back to you when we return.

For emergencies please contact **1800 027 253** or visit the [Transgrid website](#) for more details.

Acknowledgement of Country

Transgrid acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this great land. We recognise and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first explorers, scientists, farmers, astronomers, and storytellers.

We pay respects to the people, the Elders both past and present and celebrate the diversity and successes of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing connections to the lands and waters where we work and live.

Connect with us

Transgrid is committed to working with landowners and communities through the development of HumeLink. Please connect with us for more information.



1800 31 73 67 (free call)
humelink@transgrid.com.au
transgrid.com.au/humelink

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