

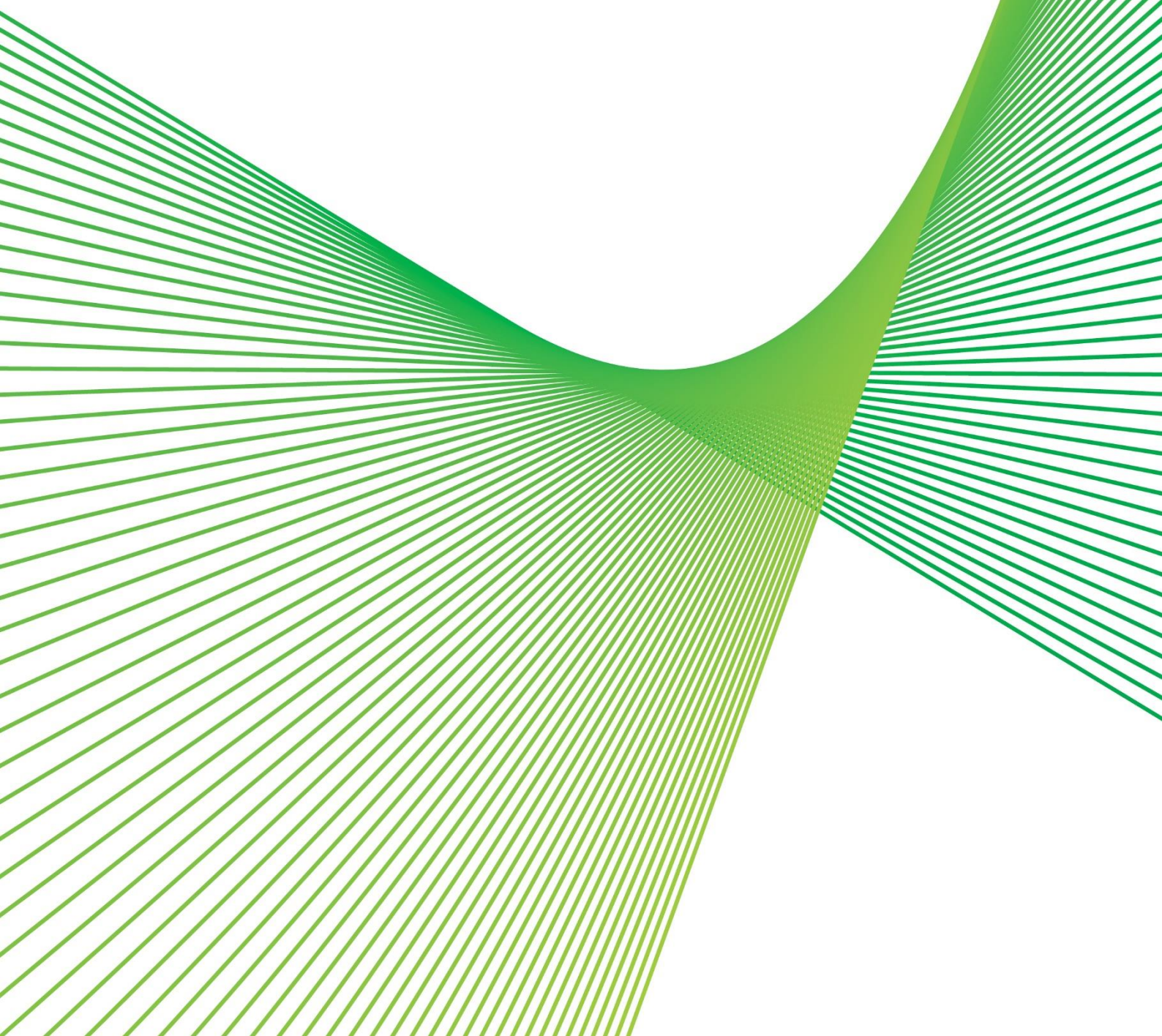


People. Power. Possibilities.

What We Heard Report

HumeLink Community Information Sessions

May 2023



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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 to 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 engage 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.

Transgrid's Remote Access Communications Hub (RACH) was also set up outside each of the information session venues to increase the visibility and accessibility of the sessions and provide community members with another avenue through which to engage with project team members.

The first round of sessions took place in September and October 2022 with 89 people attending across 17 sessions and focused on a project overview and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. A second round commenced in February and March 2023 with 16 sessions and a total of 67 people attending and focused on potential visual impacts from the project as well as impacts on land use. A third round of sessions were held in May 2023 with 11 sessions that had a total of 44 people attending and focused on noise and vibration impacts.

This document outlines the feedback gathered by the project team throughout each of the May 2023 sessions as well as the key themes and common issues raised by community attendees.

Workforce accommodation, the EIS process, construction timeline, project footprint, undergrounding and visual impact were the most frequently raised topics during the May 2023 sessions. The information below summarises the key themes across all 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, style and promotion of future sessions has been adapted based on feedback received during the sessions.

Engagement Approach

The May CIS were drop-in style sessions, where members of the project team make themselves available over a two-hour period to speak directly with community members. The sessions were held during daytime and evening to attract the largest number of people possible. RACH was out the front of each CIS to attract more community members to participate.

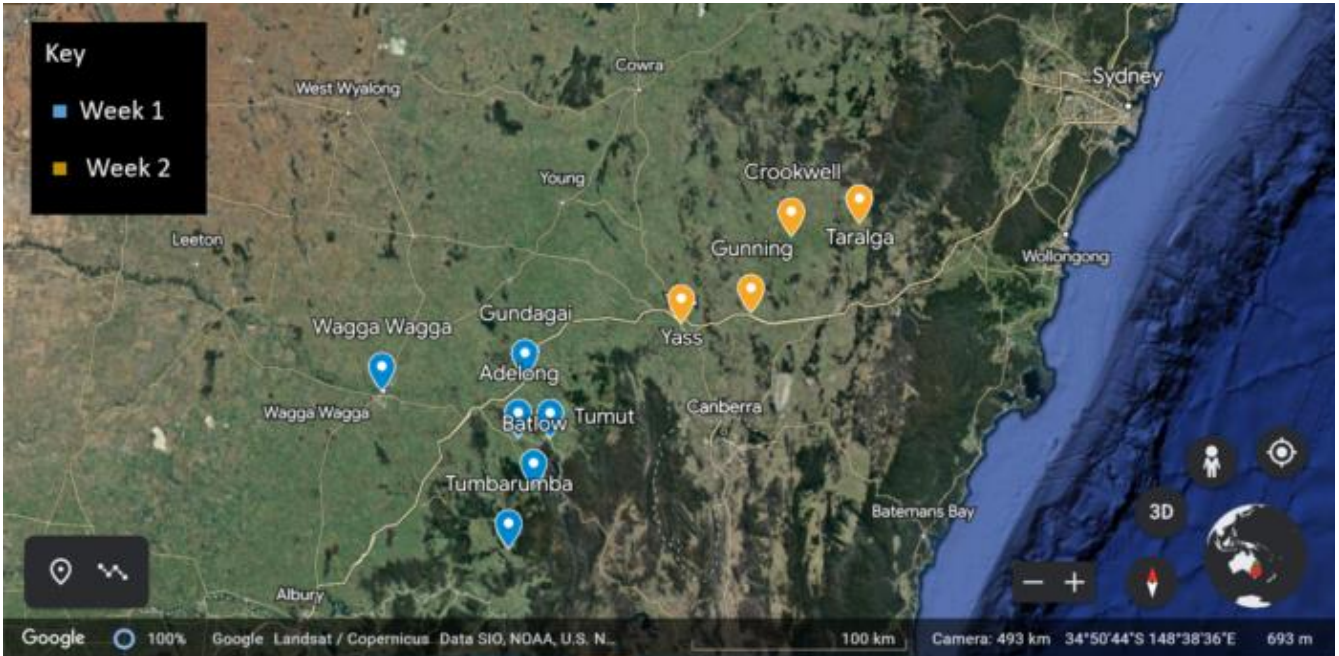
The CIS were held in central locations which were set up with information displayed around the room (corflute display boards) to allow for group movement and flow with large maps of the project footprint displayed in the centre of the room to facilitate collaborative discussions. Project representatives were available to explain the project and answer questions in small groups or with individuals.

These sessions were advertised in the 'HumeLink May 2023 Newsletter', which was published on the HumeLink website and sent via email to more than 600 project subscribers, impacted landowners, and CCG members, and via social media. This advertising approach was designed to maximise the reach and awareness.

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

Week	Location	Date	Time	Venue
Week 1 (w/c 22 May 2023)	Wagga Wagga	Monday 22 May 23	4 pm – 6 pm	Koorinal Mall
	Tumut	Tuesday 23 May 23	11 am – 1 pm	Valmar Support Services
	Gundagai	Wednesday 24 May 23	11 am – 1 pm	Gundagai District Services Club
	Batlow	Wednesday 24 May 23	4 pm – 6 pm	Literary Institute
	Adelong	Thursday 25 May 23	11 am – 1 pm	Adelong Services, Citizens & Bowling Club
	Tumbarumba	Thursday 25 May 23	4pm – 6pm	Tumbarumba Motel
				Total attendees in week 1: 23
Week 2 (w/c 29 May 2023)	Yass	Monday 29 May 23	4 pm – 6 pm	Yass Soldiers Memorial Hall
	Crookwell	Tuesday 30 May 23	11 am – 1 pm	Crookwell Memorial Hall
	Gunning	Tuesday 30 May 23	4 pm – 6 pm	Gunning Shire Hall
	Taralga	Wednesday 31 May 23	11 am – 1 pm	Taralga War Memorial Hall
	Taralga	Wednesday 31 May 23	4 pm – 6 pm	Taralga War Memorial Hall
				Total attendees in week 2: 21
				May total attendees: 44

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:

- **Workforce accommodation**, in particular the possible positive and negative community impacts, workforce logistics such as the type of accommodation, location and number of workers and legacy opportunities. The increased workforce in local areas has been highlighted as bringing business and commerce opportunities, although the negative effects were also raised such as the possible increase of rent prices. This theme was the most popular theme, raised by 12 stakeholders from Wagga Wagga, Batlow, Adelong, Tumbarumba and Taralga.
- **General interest** in particular inquiries about the **EIS process, construction timeline, project footprint and alignment, landowner engagement** and overall **community sentiment**. These general inquiries were mostly asked by community members who had not yet engaged directly with the project and were from Yass, Tumbarumba, Gunning and Taralga.
- **Undergrounding** was raised over seven times throughout the community information sessions with an overall neutral sentiment.
- **Visual impact** including inquiries about the height of the transmission towers. There was an overall negative sentiment towards the visual impact of the towers, and the compounding impact of two paralleling transmission lines.
- A number of community members enquired about **employment and business opportunities** on the project and expressed an interest in joining the **Local business register**.
- **Bushfires**, in particular Transgrid's engagement with the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), clarification on the protocol of de-energising a transmission line and the exclusion zone around transmission lines during a fire. This topic was raised in Wagga Wagga, Gundagai and Yass.
- Feedback on **Community Engagement** including recommendations to utilise radio advertisement, providing food and drinks at the CIS, and hosting and sponsoring community events in local towns. This was raised in Adelong, Tumbarumba and Yass.
- Enquiries about the timing of the **construction contractor** announcement.
- Questions about the **easement acquisition process** and the **compensation** model used by Transgrid.
- **Route alignment** including the timing of the assessment on the Green Hills route option as well as HumeLink's connection to other projects.
- Questions about the impact of the revised Snowy 2.0 delivery timeline on HumeLink.
- **Noise and vibration** impacts, including concerns of the impacts on livestock, and the disturbance from corona noise.
- Questions about **Electro and Magnetic Fields (EMF)** and the potential impacts on humans and animals.
- **Project funding** and the **approval authorities** for the project were discussed at a number of sessions.
- Environmental impacts in respect to **vegetation clearing**, loss of **biodiversity**, national park regulations and environmental offsets.

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

Telephone: Toll-free phone number: 1800 317 367

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Week 1| Wagga Wagga - Session 1

Date: Monday 22 May 2023, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- Interested in the **local business register**
- **Bushfire** risk and if **undergrounding** would be considered as a mitigation option
- General project overview
- Workforce and **workforce accommodation**, and the opportunities as a local business owner
- **Visual amenity**, particularly the categorisation of residences into the near-neighbour category, classifying non-easement affected landowners
- Impact on **near neighbours** and the lack of compensation for near neighbours relative to the impact
- Concerned about the corona **noise impacts** and the potential safety impacts regarding **Electro and Magnetic Fields (EMF)**
- **Timeliness** of project announcements and updates to the community.

Week 1| Tumut - Session 2

Date: Tuesday 23 May 2023, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Concerns about **Electro and Magnetic Fields (EMF)**
- Impacts on the local community from potential **workforce accommodation** in particular potential **increase in cost** of rent and childcare
- Potential inflow of money into **local businesses**
- Creating a legacy post-project through investment in workforce accommodation.

Week 1| Gundagai – Session 3

Date: Wednesday 24 May 2023, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Discussed **undergrounding** and the reasons the project is overhead
- Community member raised concerns about **noise impacts** to livestock during construction and operation, including the impacts and management of **livestock** during construction and how this is captured and implemented through the **Property Management Plans (PMP)**
- Discussed how landowners can influence the delivery partner's **biosecurity** plans during construction
- Transgrid's responsibility and current protocols and procedures in regard to **national livestock issues**
- Engagement with the **RFS** on a brigade level to respond to community concerns, by setting in place protocols, training and releasing educational information to the public.

Week 1| Batlow – Session 4

Date: Wednesday 24 May 2023, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- Discussed opportunity for **local businesses** to participate in the delivery of the project
- Enquiry about who determines where the **workforce accommodation** facilities will be located.

Week 1| Adelong - Session 5

Date: Thursday 25 May 2023, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Discussion about **project funding**
- Discussed possible community and commercial benefits for local towns from added **workforce accommodation**
- Potential **visual impact** of the 500 kV double circuit towers
- Discussed the **easement acquisition** process and landowner negotiations
- Suggestion of adding electric recharging stations in local towns along the project footprint to support the incoming traffic and commerce during the construction phase
- Recommendations for **advertising** future Community Information Sessions on local radio.

Week 1| Tumbarumba - Session 6

Date: Thursday 25 May 2023, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- Transgrid's **sponsorship** and **event planning**, and the need to collaborate and fund smaller causes along the project footprint
- Positive local impact of increased **workforce**, the announcement of location and type of worker's accommodation, and approximate number of workers along the project footprint
- Collaboration with Crown Land and Council to ensure **notice of construction** for walkers on tracks and awareness of the track's location for **concept design**
- **Visual amenity** and cumulative impact of two paralleling lines
- Stages of **construction**, including the announcement of **construction contractors**, and **EIS** submission process.
- **Green Hills option** and the environmental aspects of **construction**
- Fire breaks and **firefighting operations** including the limitations of fighting fires with the smoke exclusion zone
- Possibility of **undergrounding** to reduce **bushfire** risks
- Recommendations for future **CIS**, such as providing food and drinks.

Week 2| Yass – Session 7

Date: Monday 29 May 2023, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- General interest in the project including **project footprint, timeframe, EIS process and construction**
- Recommendation on improving **CIS advertising** through Yass based local radio
- Length of **EIS public exhibition period** and possibility to extend through lobbying
- Possibility of **undergrounding** due to community sentiment
- Potential **program impacts** due to revised Snowy 2.0 delivery date, and connection with renewable projects, such as solar farms
- Impact of transmission lines in **bushfire** conditions including the 25m restriction zone and Transgrid employee restrictions during fire bans
- **Route alignment** and route identification process
- Local **subcontracting opportunities**.

Week 2| Crookwell – Session 8

Date: Tuesday 30 May 2023, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- General project discussion including **construction timeline** and project completion
- Possibility of **undergrounding**
- Interest in the **local business register** and **Transgrid Community Partnership Program (CPP)**

Week 2| Gunning – Session 9

Date: Tuesday 30 May 2023, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- **General interest** in project update, landowner engagement and biosecurity
- Possibility of **undergrounding**.

Week 2| Taralga – Session 10

Date: Wednesday 31 May 2023, 11am – 1pm

Key topics raised:

- Inquiry about the **workforce accommodation**, highlighting positive impact to **local businesses** during construction
- Inquiry regarding **undergrounding**
- General interest in **understanding** the **project timeline**, **EIS process** and timing for submissions, the **digital EIS** and overall project delivery
- Interest in project **funding**, property **compensation** model and easement **acquisition process**
- Disapproval of additional **non-state-significant wind farms** in the area.

Week 2| Taralga – Session 11

Date: Wednesday 31 May 2023, 4pm – 6pm

Key topics raised:

- **Workforce accommodation**, construction camps and training centre
- **Local business register**, possible local industry sessions as the project progresses through design
- Interest on project related **local community sentiment**
- General interest in project update, **construction timeframes**, **route alignment**, delivery approach and **EIS process**
- Challenges of **undergrounding**
- Yass **route refinement**, specifically community sentiment towards transmission lines crossing National Parks
- **Compensation model** of HumeLink in comparison to other projects
- **Environmental constrains** and loss of **biodiversity**
- **Height** of transmission towers.