

# HumeLink Community Consultative Group

## Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

### *TERMS OF REFERENCE*

#### **Background and purpose**

TransGrid has committed to reset our community and stakeholder engagement approach and adopt all twenty recommendations from the Landowner Advocate Report. The establishment of Community Consultative Groups (CCGs) for the HumeLink project is one of these recommendations. The groups will initially run through the planning stages of the project.

Three groups are proposed to cover the following local government areas:

- Upper Lachlan and Yass
- Cootamundra Gundagai, Wagga Wagga
- Snowy Valleys

The CCGs purpose are to:

- Bring together TransGrid, local community groups, landowners and councils, to provide an opportunity for two-way communication about the HumeLink project
- Provide a forum for TransGrid to keep the community informed about the project, seek community views and respond to matters raised by the community
- Provide a forum for community members, stakeholders and local councils to seek information from TransGrid and provide input to inform Corridor refinement and the subsequent Environmental Assessment process
- Suggest ideas for community benefits/ project legacy contributions along the corridor
- To provide feedback and guidance to TransGrid about their community engagement approach.

The CCGs will be one of many means by which TransGrid will engage with communities and stakeholders along the study corridor. The CCGs will be a forum for consultation rather than a decision-making body. Where possible, specific recommendations or actions arising from discussions will be agreed through consensus. Where this is not possible, different views and opinions will be noted.

TransGrid has engaged Brendan Blakeley as the inaugural independent chair of the CCGs with secretariat services to be provided by WSP.

#### **Membership of the CCG**

Each group will have a maximum 15 members comprising:

- 3 proponent representatives
- 1 member from each council
- 1 member from each land council
- 1 representative from each of the established landowner groups within the CCG area
- Remainder drawn from recognised community groups (first preference), then individuals who have nominated.

Participants must be:

- A member or representative of the local community
- Willing to commit to attending meetings regularly (alternative attendees are permitted if the CCG Chair/secretariat is advised prior to the meeting). The use of alternative attendees should be kept to a minimum. The Chair may request the replacement of any member who fails to attend three consecutive CCG meetings
- Willing to gather input from the community/stakeholder group represented and bring forward any queries or concerns raised in relation to the project
- Able to disseminate information received during the meetings back to the property owners/neighbours/community/stakeholder group
- Able to demonstrate why they have an interest in this project and their key areas of interest.

### **Selection criteria**

- The CCGs should comprise an equitable mix of gender and preferably age groups
- The group should provide for coverage of locations along the corridor
- Members of recognised groups may be given preference over self-nominated individuals, this includes landowner groups
- While landowners are key stakeholders the CCGs should not solely be a forum for directly impacted landowners
- Other groups to be invited to nominate include:
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Progress or Resident Associations
  - Indigenous groups
  - Local Environmental Groups
  - Landcare / Bushcare
  - Tourism Associations
  - Industry associations such as Forestry Groups, NSW Farmers
- Particular expertise or skills sets
- Breadth of local organisations represented.

Assessment of applications and selection of members will be undertaken by the independent chair of the CCGs and the independent landowner advocate.

Meeting minutes and presentations will be published on TransGrid's website, along with the list of CCG members.

### **CCG Chair**

The independent chairperson must be:

- A convenor, facilitator, mediator and advisor for the CCGs
- Independent and impartial
- The key contact (with assistance from support secretariat) between the CCGs and TransGrid.

The Chair will oversee the preparation and publication of the minutes of the CCG meetings and the Chair's standard fees (and secretariat support) will be paid by TransGrid.

### **Meeting frequency**

The CCGs will meet once every 3 - 6 weeks for the first 3 months. This timing is to maximise the two-way sharing of information during the initial refinement of the corridor and in advance of more detailed planning commencing. Meeting frequency will be reviewed in early 2023.

## ***CODE OF CONDUCT***

### **Working together**

The principles underpinning the CCGs that all members and project team representatives must agree to are to:

- Work collaboratively in an open and honest fashion
- Be respectful of all members and their opinions
- Refrain from any form of conduct that may cause a reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment
- Undertake to fairly present the information provided at the CCGs, to their local communities
- Not misrepresent the views of other members of the group outside meetings.

### **Code of conduct**

All members, including the independent chairperson and alternative members, must agree and sign the following code of conduct at the first meeting. Breaches of this code of conduct can be reported to the independent facilitator, who will raise the issue with the member. This may take the form of:

- A verbal warning before or during the meeting (which will be formally recorded in the meeting)
- A written warning after the meeting.

Following three warnings, the independent chairperson may ask the member to leave the group. This position will then be replaced by the independent chairperson.

Members of the CCGs will be expected to:

- Attend meetings, at dates and times agreed by the group
- Advise the independent chairperson in advance if they are unable to attend and who their alternative member will be
- Respectfully engage with other members of the CCGs
- Contribute to an atmosphere of open and constructive participation
- Openly communicate relevant concerns, interests and ideas and make reasons for any disagreement clear in a constructive and thoughtful manner
- Put forward views but also remain committed to open and shared dialogue
- Actively work with the members of the group to try and resolve any issues that may arise during the CCGs work

- Ensure they do not discuss or share information about matters that are identified as confidential during meetings
- Not interrupt when another member is speaking
- Not speak publicly, for example to the media, on behalf of the CCGs
- Not misrepresent the views of other members of the CCGs
- Immediately advise the independent chairperson during meetings of any potential or actual conflict of interest relating to matters under discussion
- Abide by the reasonable directions of the independent facilitator as to the conduct of the meetings.

### **Operating protocols**

The following operating protocols will govern the CCGs:

- Meetings will be held approximately every 3 - 6 weeks for the first three months and then every 2-3 months thereafter
- Conduct of meetings will be informed by social distancing guidelines and health advice
- The meetings may be held in various convenient locations within a CCG area to ensure any travel load is shared equitably amongst members. In the event of COVID restrictions meetings may be held online.
- Meetings will generally run up to 2 hours
- To ensure safe travel meetings will occur during the day and early evenings, suitable times for meetings will be established with members
- A call for agenda items will be issued by the chair two weeks before a meeting, with the agenda then being determined by the chair and distributed one week prior to the meetings
- Technical advisors or specialists will attend as required
- All information provided should be accurate and timely
- Any pecuniary/conflict of interest should be declared by members
- Notes of the meeting will be provided electronically to CCG members within five working days of the meeting, with any comments to be provided within five working days of that time. In the event of any disagreement about the minutes the independent chair will have final say. A final set of minutes will be uploaded to the HumeLink website within 3 weeks of the meeting date
- Recording of the meetings by an electronic device is not permitted without prior agreement of the independent chair and all CCG members
- TransGrid may choose to reimburse reasonable travel expenses incurred by members.

Members may ask the independent chairperson to invite non-CCG members to attend meetings, either as observers or to provide advice to the committee. This may include:

- Representatives of government agencies
- Technical experts or consultants
- Members of the general public.

The independent chairperson is to consult with the other members of the group before issuing the invitation. If there is any disagreement between the members about the invitation, the independent chairperson will

have the final say on the matter. Non-CCG members cannot participate in the business of a meeting unless they are invited to do so by the independent chairperson.

### **Media/social media protocols**

To encourage open discussion at the meetings, we require members of the CCGs to adhere to the following media/social media protocols:

- Members of the CCGs are not authorised to provide written or verbal statements to the media/social media purporting to represent the views of the CCG
- The minutes are the authoritative record of the meeting
- CCG members are entitled to utilise media/social media on project matters in a personal capacity, and in doing so must ensure that their views are understood to be personal views and not the views of other CCG members or the project team.