

1.1 HumeLink Upper Lachlan Yass Valley Community Consultative Group: 9th Meeting 14 December 2022

Time	12 - 2pm
Date	14/12/2022
Attendees	Chair: Brian Elton Secretariat: Ella Burgess Transgrid CCG members: Naomi Rowe, Nathan Rhodes, Michael Johnson Transgrid project member attendees: Tammy Sinclair, Cameron Walters, Daryl White, Samantha Willoughby Community members: Cr Adrian Cameron, Rene Lunardello, Andrea Strong, Russ Erwin, Catriona McCauliffe Landowner and Community Advocate (Observers): Barbara El Gamal (Deputy)
Apologies	Tyronne Bell, Pam Kensit, Rod Stowe
Meeting location	Yass Council Chambers
Meeting materials	Presentation
Purpose of meeting	Meeting 9

Item	Discussion Summary	To note
Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The meeting commenced at 12:03pm. - The Chair welcomed all and gave an Acknowledgement of Country. - The Chair asked the community CCG members and the team from Transgrid to introduce themselves and their role in the HumeLink project. 	
Minutes and Matters Arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Previous comments received on the minutes were taken into account in the revised minutes from CCG meeting 8. <p><i>The minutes of the previous meeting were left open to receiving comments until 21 12 2022.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A CCG member disputed the October and November meeting minutes. It was noted that the CCG member believed Transgrid made a commitment to reviewing the transmission line route in the same way that has been done between Bannaby and Tumut via the Red Hat Review. - The CCG member expressed an opinion that Transgrid has been caught off guard 	

	<p>when the request was initially made. Upon reflection Nathan Rhodes has withdrawn the commitment made the reviewing the route in Yass.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair responded that the minutes have been reviewed by the Chair, the project team members in question and the Independent Landowner Advocates, who all agree that Transgrid did not make a commitment to reviewing the route in Yass at either the October or November CCG meetings. - The Chair noted that this dispute was raised at the November meeting and was clarified during that meeting, Transgrid did not commit to reviewing the route in the Yass area. - The Chair noted that in the October meeting Transgrid initially responded noting a review of the route would be considered in Yass. Upon consideration it was stated during the November meeting that the route would not be reviewed in the Yass area. - A CCG member noted that their recollection was also that Transgrid committed to a route review and the local community ask that Transgrid does review the route in the Yass area. Transgrid has made a commitment to minimise impacts on local communities, which would be reached by the optimal route for the community being taken. - It is noted in the minutes, some members of the CCG do not agree with the accuracy of the October and November meeting minutes. - A CCG member also noted that there was a commitment made during the November meeting for an RFS volunteer from the Upper Lachlan Shire Council to become a member on the CCG. - ACTION: Ella to engage with the ULSC in January during the CCG member refresh. 	
<p>HumeLink Progress Update: key dates</p>	<p>Naomi gave an overview of HumeLink’s key dates. See slide 6 of the presentation for an update on HumeLink’s progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Naomi commented that the most crucial update is that at the end of 2022, the EIS 	

	<p>program is continuing preparation as technical studies near completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement in early 2023 will focus on the EIS. - Key updates for early 2023 include the appointment of a delivery partner for the substations and the transmission lines. - Stakeholder consultation with landowners has moved through the stages around notifying about easement locations. The Transgrid team is progressing the development of the PMPs with individual landowners. 	
<p>Regulatory and procurement update</p>	<p>Regulatory and procurement update</p> <p>See slide 9 of the presentation for an update on regulatory and a contingent project application update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The AER has granted HumeLink \$360 million of funding so far, and the team must prove that the funding is being spent prudently. - Before the end of the year, the procurement partners will be narrowed down to two. - Regarding land acquisition, approximately 10% of the total project funding is allocated to land acquisition. The project must be at a certain degree of accuracy to prove the economic benefit of spending that amount of money to the AER. - Nathan reinforced the accelerate timelines that AEMO has recently enforced on the delivery of HumeLink. HumeLink needs to be energised by mid 2026. - A CCG noted that it seems as though Transgrid never took undergrounding seriously, given this work has been occurring in the background the whole time. <p>Procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nathan noted that the delivery partners will not only be engaged on HumeLink but on various Transgrid projects in across the NEM. - The main objective for the two ECI Contractors, (one for each contract package), is to select partners who demonstrate the greatest potential to 	

	<p>deliver the best value for money in an accelerate timeframe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nathan gave a high-level outline of the criteria for selecting HumeLink’s delivery partner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Organisation and key personnel o Technical and delivery approach o Critical resources and sourcing security strategy o Environment and community investment o Collaboration o Commercial alignment. 	
<p>Design update</p>	<p>Design update</p> <p>Undergrounding</p> <p>See slides 12 to 14 of the presentation for a design update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair gave an update of the outcomes of the most recent HumeLink Undergrounding Steering Committee meeting. - The Chair noted that the version of the GHD report with tracked changes was circulated the week before the CCG meeting and Transgrid’s official response was circulated the day before the CCG meeting. - The Chair noted that after liaising with Les Brand from Amplitude Consultants, an additional Steering Committee meeting would be convened to evaluate the two documents together. Comments from the Steering Committee would then be fed back to the CCGs. - A community Steering Committee member commented that after looking at the GHD report with tracked changes the Steering Committee’s position is that the GHD report is flawed, and the Committee does not endorse it. The report now has 52 outstanding issues. The Committee was very disappointed that it took four months to receive the GHD report with tracked changes, only for there to be an increase in the number of outstanding issues. - The Chair responded that the Undergrounding conversation would 	

happen during the Steering Committee meeting later in the week.

- A community Steering Committee member commented that Transgrid made a commitment to minimise impacts to local communities. The way of having the least impact as possible is via undergrounding the route, and yet Transgrid is pushing ahead with the overhead option.
- It would be a fairer scenario if the same amount of work and study had gone into undergrounding as has been done already for overhead. All the information needs to be made available for the State Government so a fair decision is made.
- It is frustrating that community members volunteered time to work on the Steering Committee in good faith, when the independent advisor, Amplitude Consultants, is clearly stating that the costs calculated for undergrounding are wildly inaccurate.
- The Chair reiterated that the undergrounding conversation would be had at the next Steering Committee meeting. The real decision makers in the undergrounding v. overhead debate are the regulators. Transgrid is on the record stating that undergrounding is not 10 times more expensive than overhead, perhaps it is 3 times more expensive. There has been a benefit in the undergrounding study, in that the cost of undergrounding has reduced and that is the public domain now. It is difficult for Transgrid to publicly illustrate what they are doing behind the scenes to advocate for undergrounding at a political level.
- The Chair reiterated that if there is a change in policy, the contractors and delivery partners will be flexible enough to move to an undergrounding option.
- A CCG member noted that communities need Transgrid to advocate for undergrounding at a political level and talk to the additional non-market benefits.
- A CCG member asked if any analysis on the pass through impacts to consumers of undergrounding compared to overhead has been done, and what would cause potential price increases.

- Naomi responded that there is not a team within Transgrid that carries out those studies, but the Regulator does have a team which performs that analysis.
- A community Steering Committee member commented that in the response from Transgrid to GHD report, Transgrid stated that even using the lower cost numbers as estimated by Amplitude, the project would cost an additional \$1.98 billion. There are 3 million consumers in NSW. Over 80 years that additional \$1.98 billion would equate to an additional \$8.33 per consumer.
- The Chair responded that is an argument that needs to be put to the regulator.
- A CCG member asked if Transgrid has done a community sentiment survey to determine how the consumers feel about these impositions to impacted communities.
- Naomi responded that Transgrid has not commissioned a study such as the one mentioned. Transgrid has participated in broader studies determining the tolerance of the end consumer for an increase in price, which is none at all.
- A CCG member commented that the Federal Government has been stating that as a consequence of utilising renewables energy costs will go down. If that is the case, Transgrid should deliver responsible transmission line infrastructure.

Route refinement

Nathan gave an overview to the context behind the Bannaby route review.

- Six months ago in conversations with the Bannaby Residents Action Group (BRAG), Nathan committed to reviewing the route from Bannaby to Tumut.
- Transgrid has completed an analysis and risk assessment of the Southern route option through Tarlo River National Park. The engineering studies were re-done to create a like for like comparison between the two options.
- The two options were equal in terms of impact, apart from impacts to the environment. Transgrid met with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment to determine the feasibility of all impacts

as well as other agencies to try and consider other work arounds. Transgrid is very cognisant of the community impacts for both options and pursued an investigation into the second route in good faith.

- A CCG member asked what the difference in length is between the two routes – **TAKEN ON NOTICE.**
- Nathan clarified that the second option was not the preferred option, and it would be outlined in the EIS why not.
- **TAKEN ON NOTICE** if both routes will be in the EIS.
- Nathan noted that Transgrid committed to re-analysing the route. The findings were taken back to the Department, and it was determined that the environmental and new landowner costs were too significant.
- The Chair noted that a CCG member disputed the October and November meeting minutes. The CCG member has suggested that Nathan committed Transgrid to completing an official review of the Yass route.
- The Chair clarified that this was not a commitment made by Nathan, but rather something that Nathan confirmed he would consider.
- After consideration, Nathan confirmed that there would be no review of the route in Yass.
- Nathan noted that from the project commencement date, the areas are narrowed down as constraints are mapped out. The alignment is reduced down to a width within the constraints mapping.
- A CCG member reiterated the original request for an official review of the route from the Bango Nature Reserve through to Tumut. The line as it stands is zig zagging all over the country and it is time that Transgrid disclose their intention.
- It was noted there is strong sentiment in the community for an official review of the route in the Yass area.
- A CCG member who disputed the recount of Nathan committing to considering a review of the Yass route rather than

committing Transgrid to an official review of the route recounted the circumstances under which they believed the conversation to have played out.

- Nathan responded that there are many micro-siting reviews currently in the works with landowners, and they are the only reviews to be conducted of the route.
- A CCG member asked if Transgrid will really do that, even if it is clear that the community want to see an official review of the route. It was noted that the representative of the Yass community present at the meeting were in favour of an official route review.
- The Chair reiterated that what Transgrid will do is work with landowners in the existing easement. Transgrid will not undertake an official review of the route.
- Nathan confirmed that the route has been refined and there are various constraints in the refinement process. Once the level of detail at 200m is achieved and all parties have been notified, Transgrid will then work with landowners through that process.
- A CCG member commented that it seems as though Transgrid is sheltering under the Compulsory Acquisitions Act.
- The Chair reiterated that the route option has to go through a long public planning process at both State and Federal Government.
- A CCG member asked if the Bannaby and Tumut route refinements are at the same level of refinement as the Yass route currently is.
- Nathan noted that the Bannaby and Tumut route alternatives were tabled some time ago.
- A CCG member asked what prompted Transgrid to review the route in Bannaby and not in the Yass area.
- Nathan responded that it was the timing of the consultation that the information came to light some time ago and refining the route has progressed during that timeframe.
- A CCG member commented that the consultation process is flawed. Transgrid

	<p>made a commitment to minimise community impact and route refinement would be a step towards that outcome. However, Transgrid is now saying its too late to the review the route in the Yass Valley.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nathan clarified that Transgrid will minimise community impacts within regulatory periods. Transgrid has done extensive consultation on the ground and through the CCGs. - A CCG member noted that Transgrid approaches the community well resourced. Landowners have no corporate experience or political information to dispute what is being said. It was commented that Transgrid is bulldozing through the local communities. - Nathan responded that there is a lot of evidence where that is not the case. There are many impacted parties across the alignment. Transgrid is hearing loud and clear that the CCGs are dissatisfied with the consultation process. - A CCG member commented that the CCG has a commitment from Nathan that Transgrid would consider route refinements. - The Chair confirmed that Nathan has considered reviewing the route, and Transgrid will not be reviewing the Yass route. - ACTION: Nathan to email confirmation that Transgrid will not be doing an official review of the route in Yass. - A CCG member noted that there was at least a commitment to consider a review of the route, and there has been no evidence of the analysis to come to that decision. - ACTION: Transgrid to provide an official explanation as to why they will not be conducting an official review of the Yass route. 	
<p>Stakeholder Engagement &Community Investment</p>	<p>Stakeholder Engagement &Community Investment</p> <p>See slide 20 of the presentation for an update on stakeholder engagement and community investment.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Naomi noted that over the last few months, extensive consultation on compensation and the EIS has been underway. The sessions were designed to develop a baseline understanding of the HumeLink project as the project team prepares for more detailed conversations as the EIS progresses. - The project team has also prepared feedback forms for those who engage in the in-depth sessions on technical studies that will inform the EIS. - Transgrid has had a number of meetings with local councils in relation to local road impacts, accommodation options for workers and broader project updates. - Transgrid has met with both State and Federal Ministers to provide them with project updates, including that of undergrounding etc. - There has been significant planning for information sessions in 2023. 	
<p>EIS and construction update</p>	<p>EIS and construction update</p> <p>See slides 22 – 34 of the presentation for an update on the EIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Naomi gave an overview of the EIS and the different parts that make up the full study for the benefit of the observers in the room. - The EIS team are currently completing site surveys and investigation as they prepare technical reports. - In early 2023, the team will be moving to progress preparation of the EIS for public exhibition following the State Election. - A CCG member commented that Transgrid’s assumption from the start has been that an overhead option is the only option, rather than considering the overall social and community impact of the decisions being made. Transgrid seem to have chosen the quick and easy route for the whole project. The EIS process seems to be another method of going through the motions for Transgrid to get what they want. - The Chair commented that the difference in the EIS process is that it is not just Transgrid. It provides an opportunity to prosecute the comments made in the 	

planning process by both State and Federal governments.

- The Chair noted the technical studies have to be completed by experts and signed off by independent experts to ensure they have met the SEARs.
- A CCG member commented that there seems to be a distinct deficiency in agricultural expertise on the Transgrid team. The process of the EIS is flawed. The RIT T process did not take into account the environmental or societal costs of the project. You are now progressing with the EIS and deciding in the midst of the process if the project is of benefit which is based on benefit to consumers, not the State. Environmental externalities have been ignored until the project progresses to planning when the balance is lost between environmental motivations and state significant infrastructure.
- The Chair acknowledged the EIS system is flawed but remains in place for both the State and Federal governments to have a say.
- A CCG member commented that the EIS process is very frustrating. The project team goes through all these processes that are completely flawed and have an unfair result on the local communities. It was noted there must be a way of changing it. However, it was acknowledged that the EIS process is the chance the community have to respond to ensure agricultural concerns are taken into account. Having access and understanding of the studies prior to the EIS going on public exhibition will only be a positive thing.
- As part of the technical studies, three areas have been identified as areas of interest and outlined in the SEARs – construction, operational and road noise and vibration of the project.

Noise mitigation

- Noise areas and sensitive receivers are identified. Noise loggers determine the existing noise before any infrastructure or construction is in the area. The noise loggers determine where noise levels may

be exceeding requirements and any mitigation steps that may be needed.

- The technical information of the studies will be made available, not necessarily the benchmark noise.

Roads – Management and Mitigation

- Transgrid is identifying areas of traffic impact and determining areas where significant construction will be occurring.
- Transgrid is working with local and state governments to determine where transmission infrastructure may be crossing over roads etc.
- Currently workshops are occurring with councils and technical teams to identify road interactions and the management of road area. This is an important exercise to feed into management and repair of the roads.
- The Chair asked about impacts farm access roads.
- Naomi responded that farm access roads and alike are being managed in the individual PMPs.
- The Chair noted that when all road impacts are identified, the budget can then be allocated towards road upgrades and maintenance.
- A CCG member asked what provisions are in place for landowners during and after construction?
- Individual provisions will be outlined in the PMP. Following construction, operational and maintenance set ups will have a different set up because there will be less vehicle movements and requirements.
- A CCG member asked how they are expected to manage stock during construction on their property?
- Naomi responded that Transgrid's team on the ground will be working with landowners to be work around timing and various options to ensure operations can continue.
- The Chair noted that Transgrid will go through the process with each landowner to tailor the program to suit individual circumstances

- A CCG member asked what plan Transgrid has for Stock returning from Agistment with diseases such as footrot.
- **TAKEN ON NOTICE**
- A CCG member commented that regardless of overhead or underground options, there is going to be a significant disturbance to the agricultural sector. The PMPs and other aspects that can be negotiated will not be easy, whether the infrastructure is underground or overhead. If, as a landowner, you will be impacted either way you need to negotiate as hard as possible to get the maximum benefits or the maximum payment.
- A CCG member asked if compensation will be considered during this process.
- Naomi confirmed it would.
- A CCG member asked about the restitution of disturbed lands.
- Naomi confirmed that lands that will no longer be needed for access will be repaired.
- The Chair asked how far the PMPs have progressed.
- Darryl responded that 30% of landowners have a PMP in place.

Visual impact

- As part of the Humelink Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment for the EIS, a number of photomontages will be included from selected private and public viewpoints.
- Stage 1, the Preliminary Assessment has been completed.
- Stage 2, the Detailed Assessment is currently underway.
- A CCG member asked if the visual impact assessment takes into account all residences along the line.
- Naomi confirmed that the study takes into account all residences within and outside of the route.
- A CCG member responded that Transgrid does realise there are significant visual impacts for neighbouring properties but no compensation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Naomi responded that there is no compensation for neighbouring residences who are visually impacted under the Just Terms Act. - A CCG member recounted that a local landowner in the Yass area was told by a valuer that their property value would lose 20% of its value due to the visual impacts of the project, yet there is no compensation for these people. - Nathan responded that compensation for visually impacted neighbours is something the project team is looking into, and there are a number of advocacy forums to push the importance of the issue. The Special Benefits program is an example of Transgrid's successful advocating. - A CCG member commented that when Transgrid contacts residents along the route, it is critical they are informed to contact their local Member to push for visual impact compensation. The community appreciate the Special Benefits Payments, but there is a great discrepancy in the payment sums. - Nathan responded that Transgrid does not disagree. - Naomi noted that areas of public visual impact in the study are those that are deemed to have the greatest visual impact. - A CCG member commented that the visual impacts should have been taken into consideration when deciding upon the route, not at this point in the project. 	
<p>Other business</p>	<p>Other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair noted that the team will approach ULSC to recruit a member with RFS experience for the CCG. - A CCG member requested a joint CCG with members from all three CCGs, possibly in Gundagai – ACTION. - The Chair noted that there is good representation on the CCG, however it would be good to have more landowners on the CCG as well as First Nations representation. - The Chair noted that this would be his final meeting as the HumeLink CCG Chair 	

	<p>and thanked all CCG members for their contribution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time was given to observers in attendance to ask questions of the project team. 	
Next meeting	<p>Next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The next meeting will occur on 15 February 2023. - The meeting closed at 2:08pm. 	

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	Underway
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.	Underway
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.	Underway
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.	Underway
Transgrid to institute the \$50 reimbursement for eligible members	Underway
Transgrid to request the value of the multiplier from GHD used in their report.	Underway
Nathan to follow up with particular CCG member about tower locations	Underway

Transgrid to consider their position on sending draft tower locations to all directly (and preferably indirectly) impact land owners.	
Once revised, circulate the Department's Guidelines for CCGs	Underway
At the November meeting, placeholder dates, times and locations for 2023 CCG meetings to be shared	Underway
Engage with the ULSC in January during the CCG member refresh, with particular focus on people with RFS experience	Underway
Transgrid to supply the difference in route length between the original Bannaby to Tumut option and the alternate option that was considered	Underway
Transgrid to determine if both route options that have been analysed between Tumut and Bannaby will be included in the EIS	Underway
Transgrid to email confirmation that Transgrid will not be doing an official review of the route in Yass.	Underway
Transgrid to provide an official explanation as to why they will not be conducting an official review of the Yass route.	Underway
Transgrid to determine a plan for impacts to stock	Underway