

HumeLink Community Newsletter

April 2024

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 - 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

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HumeLink preferred route



Figure 1: HumeLink preferred route.



What's coming up



Transgrid Discovery Hub Wagga Wagga

Community Open Day

More than a year in the making, Transgrid's Discovery Hub is our first community centre - a one-stop shop where the community can connect with us, access information and learn about energy and the unprecedented transformation occurring across the sector.

We hope you can join us to celebrate the opening of Transgrid's first community facing hub in the heart of Wagga Wagga at our Community Open Day on 16 April 2024. At this event you can tour the Discovery Hub and talk to Transgrid team members from our projects in the area. We'll have science demonstrations, stalls sharing information about electricity generation and distribution and we'll display the entries in our art competitions. You can also learn more about

our Yarning Circle, developed in collaboration with Girls at the Centre, meet the winners of our Discovery Pod challenge - Mater Dei Catholic College, and hear about our community initiatives including the Transgrid Community Partnership Program. Make sure to grab a sausage sandwich at the BBQ – we're looking forward to seeing you there.

Date: Tuesday 16 April 2024

Time: 10am-3pm

Location: Transgrid Discovery Hub, 27 Kincaid St, Wagga Wagga

For further information please contact our Transgrid Discovery Hub team at discovery.hub@transgrid.com.au



Pictured: Aerial view of Transgrid Discovery Hub Wagga Wagga.



Applications for community grants now open

Transgrid's Community Partnerships Program offers grants of up to \$5,000 for not-for-profit organisations that are local to our planning, operations, and major project areas. Not-for-profit groups provide a range of invaluable resources for their communities. Our Community Partnerships Program was created to give a boost to the people who live and work in the regions local to Transgrid assets or construction.

Since 2020, Transgrid has awarded grants to more than 60 organisations for a range of initiatives spanning from community infrastructure to workshops, along with inclusivity and accessibility projects. Applications are open until 30 April 2024. For more information on the program and past beneficiaries, see Transgrid's Community Partnerships Program webpage transgrid.com.au/community/community-partnerships-program



Business Buzz sessions



Join our May Business Buzz sessions

The HumeLink East project team recently held five Business Buzz information sessions to share business and workforce opportunities the project will bring to the region.

We will be holding more Business Buzz sessions in May – sign up to the local business register below to receive updates on our next schedule of events.

These sessions have included information on:

- upcoming packages of work
- registration of interest process
- training opportunities, including fully funded traineeships, apprenticeships, and scholarships
- Aboriginal engagement, participation and registration on Indigenous business networking bodies including Supply Nation and New South Wales Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (NSWICC)
- opportunities to grow local businesses through our business support program.



Pictured: HumeLink East's February Business Buzz sessions.



Upcoming community information events

Street meetings

In addition to our ongoing engagement with landowners, the HumeLink project team will continue to host street meetings with RACH, our Remote Access Community Hub, as the project progresses. Join us at our street meetings to speak with the project team about the proposed amendments and refinements to be included in the Amendment Report. We are preparing our schedule of events. To find out more details about our events and view the full schedule, scan the QR code.

As the project progresses, we will continue to host sessions online and in-person.

Scan the QR code to keep up to date about upcoming events or visit transgrid.com.au/humelink.



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 like 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](#).



Pictured: The HumeLink Remote Access Community Hub (RACH) at the February street meeting in Yass



Project update

HumeLink Contingent Project Application (CPA) update

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) has published the Contingent Project Application Stage 2 (CPA2) for Transgrid's HumeLink project, which outlines the estimated project costs and anticipated community benefits.

The CPA2 provides details on the specific costings to deliver the HumeLink project, and the significantly increased market benefits to consumers from \$491 million to more than \$1 billion. It also details millions of cost savings to consumers through innovative procurement and project integration planning, including:

- \$85 million for securing long lead equipment (LLE) such as reactors, transformers and conductors through Transgrid's Powering Tomorrow Together (PTT) program
- \$237 million in savings for the design and construction of substations and transmission lines including access tracks under an innovative contracting approach.

Publication of the CPA2 starts the AER's official four-week consultation process for this part of the process. It will run in parallel with the three-week consultation period for Transgrid's Response to the Material Change in Circumstance (MCC) assessment, which demonstrates that the project remains the preferred option. Feedback received on the draft CPA2, published on Transgrid's website since December 2023, will also be considered by the AER in making its determination.

More information on CPA2 can be accessed on the AER's website: www.aer.gov.au/news/articles/communications/consultation-open-humelink-stage-2-contingent-project-application

Submissions were invited by the AER between 1 March and 3 April 2024.

Transgrid welcomed feedback on the MCC until 3 April 2024.

For more information about the CPA2 and MCC, visit the project website transgrid.com.au/Humelink



Work notifications

Whenever any site investigation or associated work is being planned along the project alignment, the HumeLink team must advise landowners and gain their consent before any proposed entry. The way we do this is through Work Notifications. We must provide notice to the landowner, clearly document any conditions of entry the owner requests, and communicate these to our teams. We will contact landowners directly about any proposed activities on their property before work proceeds.

Site investigations and associated activities started early in 2024 and are likely to continue until about mid-2024.

These works are undertaken by our delivery partners, and are assessed and approved via Transgrid's Environmental Assessment Framework. You can find the latest [HumeLink work notification](#) using the QR code below.

For more details about site investigations and associated activities, scan the QR code to read the latest information.



Support services for landowners

We recognise our transmission projects may have increased the level of stress and anxiety experienced by landowners and have engaged Assure Programs, and independent, confidential counselling service, to provide free short-term support to anyone who feels they need assistance or simply wants to talk. If you are a landowner and would like confidential support and counselling, we encourage you to book a free appointment by calling Assure on 1800 808 374, or request an appointment online at assureprograms.com.au/book-an-appointment/



Amendment Report assessment outcomes

Transgrid is currently preparing an Amendment Report and Submission Report which will be lodged concurrently with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

The Amendment Report describes and assesses a number of proposed amendments and refinements to the HumeLink project as presented in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in August 2023. The proposed amendments and refinements to the project have been made in response to issues raised in community and stakeholder submissions received during the public exhibition of the EIS, as well as changes made as part of ongoing design development and construction planning for the project. These amendments and refinements reflect functional improvements to the design and construction methodology of the project. They consider:

- feedback received from stakeholders prior to and during EIS exhibition
- comments made in formal EIS submissions
- ongoing design and construction methodology development by the construction contractors.

The proposed amendments to the project include:

- changes to the transmission line corridor including the realignment of the route through Green Hills State Forest to the west of Batlow
- change to the number and location of construction ancillary facilities including worker accommodation facilities and construction compounds
- nomination of access tracks to support the construction and operation of the project
- additional telecommunications connections to existing substations.

The proposed refinements to the project include:

- transmission line and substation design refinements at Gregadoo
- use of approved water sources
- use of helicopters and drones.

A number of technical reports have been prepared to support the assessment of the proposed amendments and refinements. These reports provide an assessment of potential impacts and proposed mitigation and management measures and consider submissions made on the EIS, where relevant.



Figure 2: Proposed amended project footprint and indicative locations of construction compounds and worker accommodation facilities.



Amendment Report assessment outcomes

This section provides a summary of a number of Amendment Report assessment outcomes. The topics outlined below are aligned with those most of interest from ongoing feedback from community and stakeholders.

If you are interested in learning about other topics and assessment outcomes associated with the Amendment Report please contact the project team at 1800 317 367 or HumeLink@transgrid.com.au



Traffic, transport and access

The amended project has resulted in changes to the traffic study area, which has been assessed in a revised traffic and transport impact assessment. Amendments such as the Green Hills route realignment, proposed construction compounds and accommodation facilities and the nominated access tracks have changed the roads most likely to be used during construction. The amendments have also resulted in changes in traffic movements between the new construction compounds/accommodation facilities and the transmission line corridor. As further detail has also been included in the amended project about potential water sources for construction water use, and extractive material locations such as use of existing quarries, traffic movements associated with these locations has also been considered.

The revised traffic and transport assessment found that there would be increased heavy vehicle movements, particularly on roads adjacent to substation sites and construction compounds – with potential impacts most likely to occur on unsealed access roads to compounds. It also found that the project might generate increased traffic volumes on the local road network, however the impact would be low relative to the current road capacity.

While the use of helicopters and drones was proposed in the EIS, further detail has been included in the Amendment Report. Helicopters and drones would be used for conductor stringing, and may be used for delivery of materials, equipment or personnel, survey and vegetation management. It has been assumed that most construction compounds would have a helipad and associated facilities.

The helicopter's flying height during stringing operations would depend on the height of the structure it is servicing. The minimum proposed flying height would be 1,000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) over towns and 500 ft AGL over unpopulated areas when travelling to and from construction compounds.

The noise emitted by a helicopter flying at between 500 feet and 1,000 feet is approximately equivalent to traffic noise on a busy arterial road, a hair dryer or lawnmower, according to the Environment Protection Authority's *Noise Guide for Local Government*.

We expect there to be intermittent aircraft operation within the project footprint. Impacted landowners and communities would be notified in advance of the activity.

All feasible and reasonable measures will be applied to reduce the potential noise and vibration impacts from the project.



Noise and Vibration

The revised noise and vibration assessment considers all proposed amendments and refinements including:

- potential impacts on sensitive receivers near the new worker accommodation facilities and construction compounds
- road traffic noise on the nominated access roads/tracks and at road intersections
- potential aircraft noise impacts from helicopter and drone
- changes to transmission line corridor, including the Green Hills realignment
- transmission line and substation design refinements at Gugaa

Proposed construction compounds and accommodation facilities will likely generate increased noise from construction activities and equipment, traffic movements and workforce presence. These impacts will be temporary in nature and managed through measures such as equipment selection, work hours and site set ups.



Landscape character and visual amenity

The landscape character and visual impact assessment for the Amendment Report considers changes to landscape character areas associated with changes to the transmission line corridor, including the Green Hills route realignment and the proposed locations for the worker accommodation facilities and construction compounds.

The assessment found that there will be reduced impacts to landscape character around the Tumbarumba valley area, as well as around Batlow rural area due to the relocation of the transmission line corridor. However, with the Green Hills realignment, there will be an increased impact on the Green Hills forested hills character area.

Additional photomontages were developed for select residences where the amended project resulted in new or changed visual impacts.



Land use and property

Outcomes from the Agricultural Impact Assessment and Land Use and Property Assessments include:

- greater area of forestry land impacted, due to the Green Hills route realignment
- while there is an increase in agricultural land impacted, mainly due to access tracks, this remains a small proportion of total agricultural land area in the region
- additional temporary land use impacts associated with the additional accommodation facilities, construction compounds and access tracks
- additional land use impacts associated with the potential retention of access tracks during operation, which will

be subject to consultation with landowners prior to the completion of construction.

If you are interested to know more about the proposed worker accommodation facilities and construction compounds, as well as the construction stages for HumeLink – please check our [Construction fact sheet](https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/n0ugpord/humelink-extended-construction-fact-sheet.pdf): <https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/n0ugpord/humelink-extended-construction-fact-sheet.pdf>

The HumeLink team is currently assessing these additional sites and progressing commercial negotiations with the relevant landowners. The newly proposed locations will be assessed and included as part of the Amendment Report. We will continue to consult with the community and stakeholders as we assess these facilities.

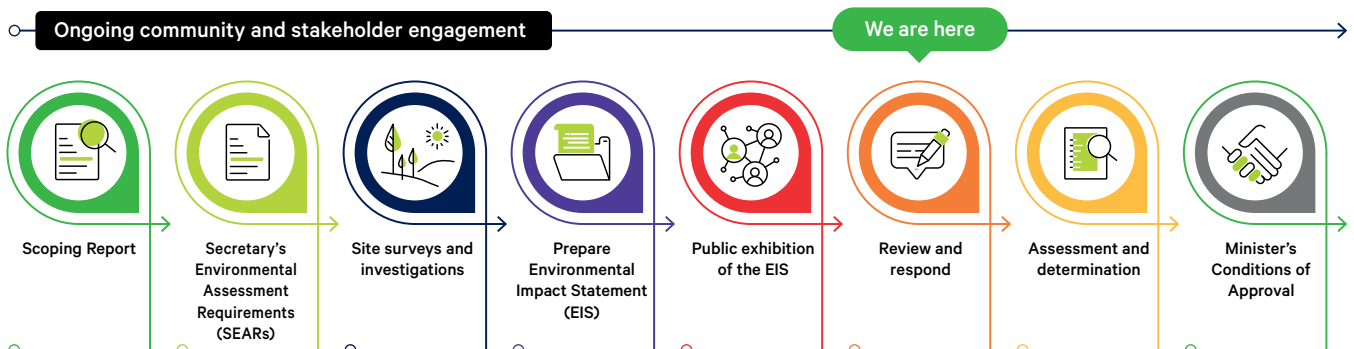


Pictured: Example of worker accommodation from Project Energy Connect.



Next stage – assessment and determination

HumeLink Environmental Planning Approvals Pathway





In the community



What we heard at the last round of community information sessions

HumeLink's community engagement team visited communities along the amended project footprint in February to share updates on the Amendment Report and Submissions Report, answer questions and talk to community members.

Community information sessions were held at the following locations:

- Wagga Wagga
- Tumut
- Gundagai
- Batlow
- Yass
- Gunning
- Taralga
- Adelong
- Crookwell
- Goulburn
- Tarcutta
- Tumbarumba

We have completed a [What We Heard](#) report outlining the key themes discussed at the sessions including proposed worker accommodation facilities, traffic movement and traffic safety during construction, and the use of local roads and access tracks. Other feedback received related to local business opportunities and the positive local economic impact the project may bring.

The What We Heard report is available on the HumeLink website transgrid.com.au/humelink.

Women in Construction breakfast

Aligned with our commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion in the construction industry, the HumeLink project team proudly participated in the Women in Construction Breakfast 2024, championing the empowerment and advancement of women in the construction industry.

Members of the HumeLink project team attended the breakfast event during Women in Construction and NSW Women's Week. The event gave attendees a unique opportunity to glean valuable insights from accomplished women in the construction sector, hearing firsthand about their pathways to enter the industry and experiences as women in construction. Employees from Snowy Hydro 2.0, Inland Rail, Martinus and the Riverina Redevelopment Joint Venture (CPB Contractors, Downer) also attended the breakfast which aims to build a new network and unlock pathways for women to enter the industry.



Pictured: Transgrid project team at the Women in Construction Breakfast.

Connect with us

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



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