

# HumeLink Community Consultative Group 6<sup>th</sup> meeting

September 2022



# Agenda

Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country	5 minutes
CCG commencement	5 minutes
Minutes and Matters Arising	5 mins
HumeLink Project Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress Update</li><li>• Undergrounding</li><li>• Red Hat Review</li><li>• Bushfires</li></ul>	60 minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EIS Update (Naomi Rowe)</li><li>• Geotech and Tower Locations (Dan Burn)</li><li>• Compensation (Carl Charlier)</li></ul>	30 minutes
Agenda setting for subsequent meetings	15 minutes
Close	

# Acknowledgment of Country

We begin our commitment to reconciliation by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.







# Minutes and Matters Arising



# HumeLink Project Update

# HumeLink project update

1. Progress Update (Nathan Rhodes)
2. Undergrounding (Dan Burn)
3. Red Hat Review (Brendan Nelson)
4. Bushfires (Naomi Rowe)

# Progress Update

## **Regulatory**

- Early Works (Contingent Project Application CPA-1) funding announced by Australian Energy Regulator (\$322m)

## **Route Refinement**

- 200m corridor refined for most of the route and investigated alternative routes proposed by community, including route through Green Hill State Forest.

## **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

- Field survey work continued, drafting of Initial chapters for EIS progressing, EIS community engagement commenced

## **Procurement**

- Expressions of interest process to identify suitable major contracting partner commenced
- Shortlist proponents to be identified in the next month

## **Property**

- Formal easement negotiation process with some landowners underway
- Property documents updated based on feedback

## **Engineering**

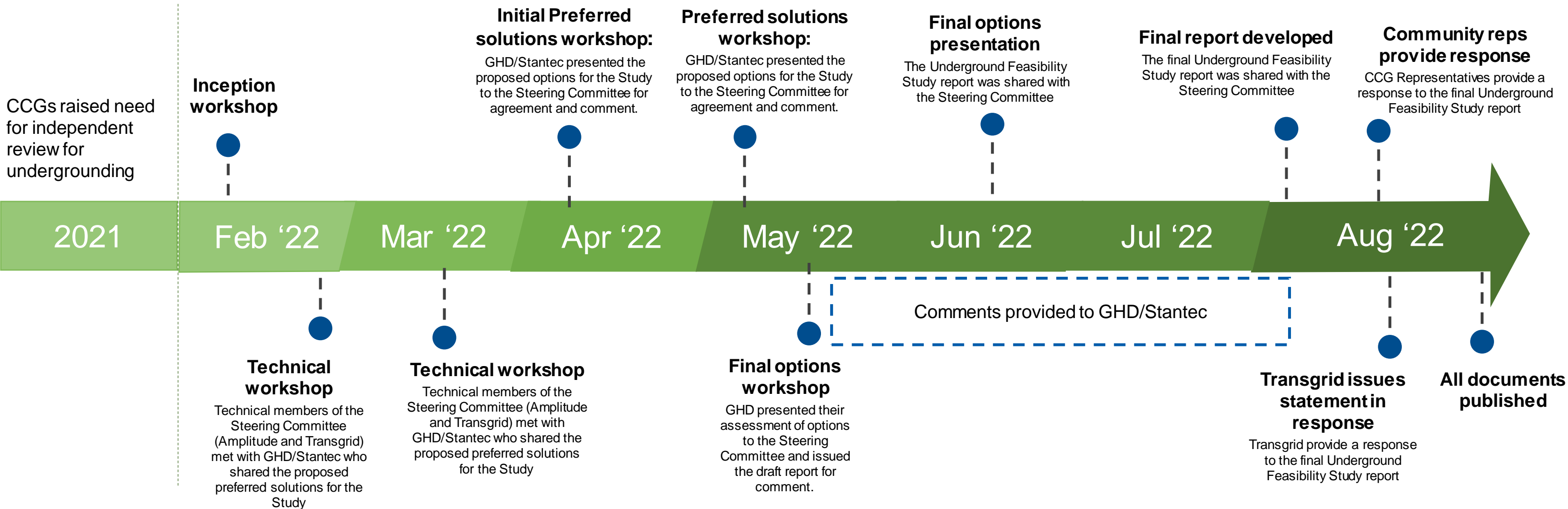
- Geotech (ground conditions) studies will commence in late 2022



# Undergrounding



# Undergrounding timeline – Dan Burn



# Project Update: Undergrounding

## CCG Undergrounding Steering Committee Representatives

CCG Representatives to the Undergrounding Steering Committee have, in consultation with their technical advisers Amplitude have prepared a detailed response to the Undergrounding Feasibility Report.

This is available on the HumeLink Project Website.

[https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/mwafmnbb/ccgsc-position-on-humelink-undergrounding-study\\_20220824.pdf](https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/mwafmnbb/ccgsc-position-on-humelink-undergrounding-study_20220824.pdf)

## Transgrid Response

Transgrid released a response to the Undergrounding Feasibility Study <https://www.transgrid.com.au/projects-innovation/Humelink>. The response agree on some factors but also disagree we have deemed this a difference of professional opinion.

## Next Steps

HAG and Transgrid will continue discussion with government on policy positions



# Undergrounding

- The cost of undergrounding the HumeLink transmission lines is estimated to be \$ 11.5 billion at least three times more than the entire project's current cost of \$3.3 billion
- Based on current AER regulatory frameworks with the AER this option is not economic
- For private and industrial consumers their great concern about escalating electricity prices is these pressures are increasing
- Federal and State governments have communicated emission targets which HumeLink and other transmission are crucial to supporting
- Undergrounding transmission lines would mean a significant delay in completion of the project by up to 5 years
- The additional expenditure would curtail expenditure on other transmission projects essential for connecting alternative, renewable energy to consumers. This is because there is only a finite amount of money available to rewire the nation to deliver alternative, renewable power.
- This delay would threaten the timely connection of the new renewable energy and the related essential new interstate connections to the grid. AEMO has communicated that the infrastructure must be completed by 2026 to secure the network before the ageing power stations are decommissioned.
- A significant delay would put the energy security and stability of large parts of Eastern Australia at risk of failure

# Red Hat Review



# Overhead Route Finalisation Decisions “Red Hat Review” – Brendan Nelson

## Route Options Tumut & Bannaby

- Macroplan engaged to undertake a red hat review of route alignment in the Tumut and Bannaby areas
- The review focussed on feedback and input from the HumeLink Action Group, Bannaby Residents Action Group and impacted landowners
- Review was conducted between June 2022 – August 2022 and included five (5) trips to the region to meet with key stakeholders
- Review in Tumut considered all options prepared by Transgrid and the Green Hills route option. The review also considered hybrid combinations of the above options
- A draft version of the review has been submitted to Transgrid and the consultant is making some additional amendments to reflect further technical studies prepared by the Snowy 2.0 Connection Project
- The review has made several recommendations for consideration by Transgrid



# Red Hat Review – Observations

Macroplan has made the following observations in relation to the route refinement and selection process:

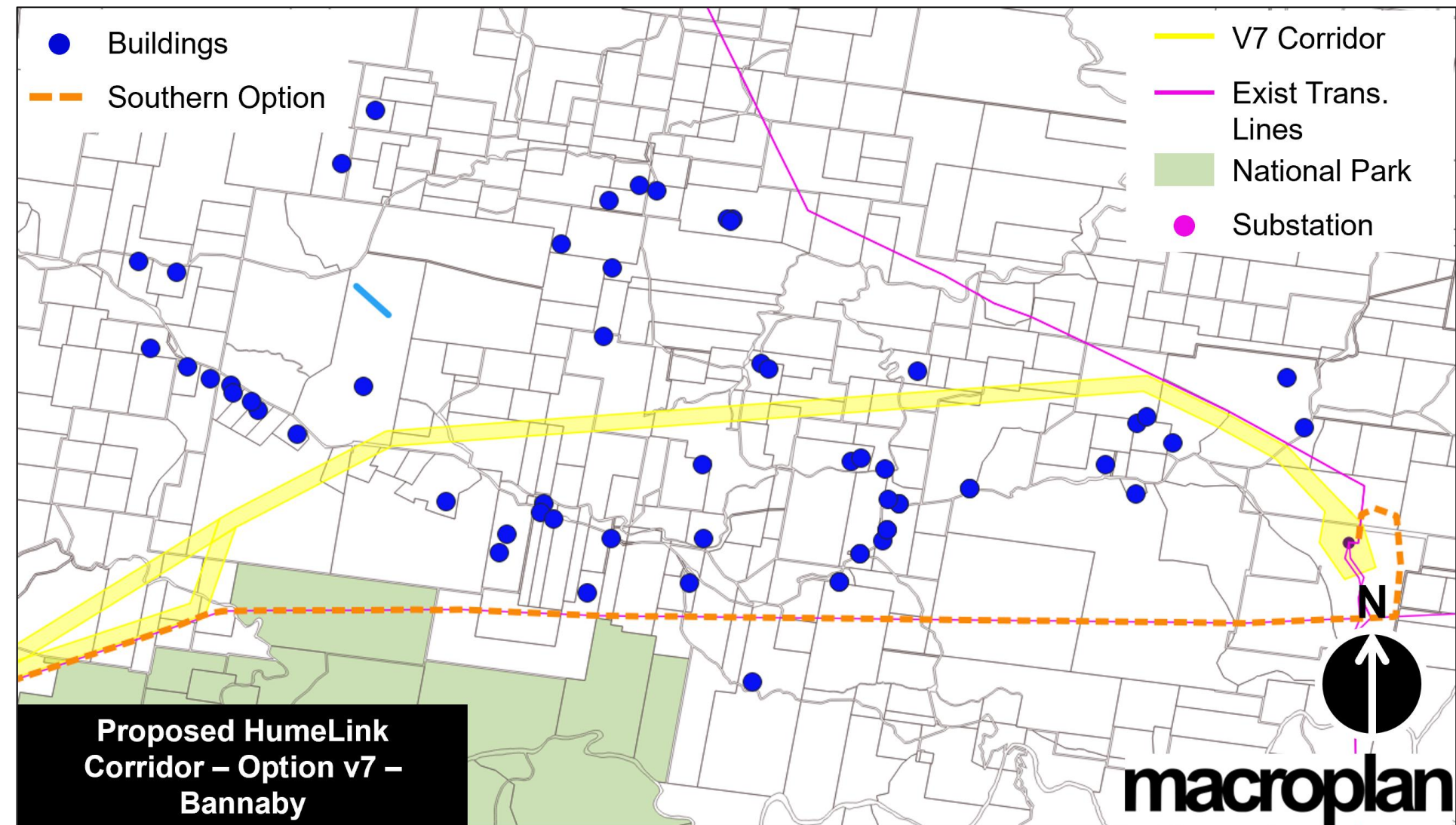
- Community engagement on the project was poorly coordinated at the start of the project and whilst significantly improved now, has resulted in widescale frustration within the community
- TG has largely shouldered responsibility for AER and AEMO expectations on project delivery (i.e. timeframe and cost) and the community needs to be informed of TG's operating parameters (i.e. what TG can control and what it can't).
- HumeLink is a nationally significant project and where there is a risk to the operations of HumeLink or the community (from bushfire), it should be avoided where there is a reasonable alternate option
- There is no 'silver bullet' of route options in Tumut or Bannaby. Each option has pros and cons.
- Many landowners have communicated important operational requirements on their land, and it is recommended that Transgrid properly consider these when discussing route refinements which is occurring.



# Route Option Review - Bannaby

The two (2) primary options considered as part of the red hat review were:

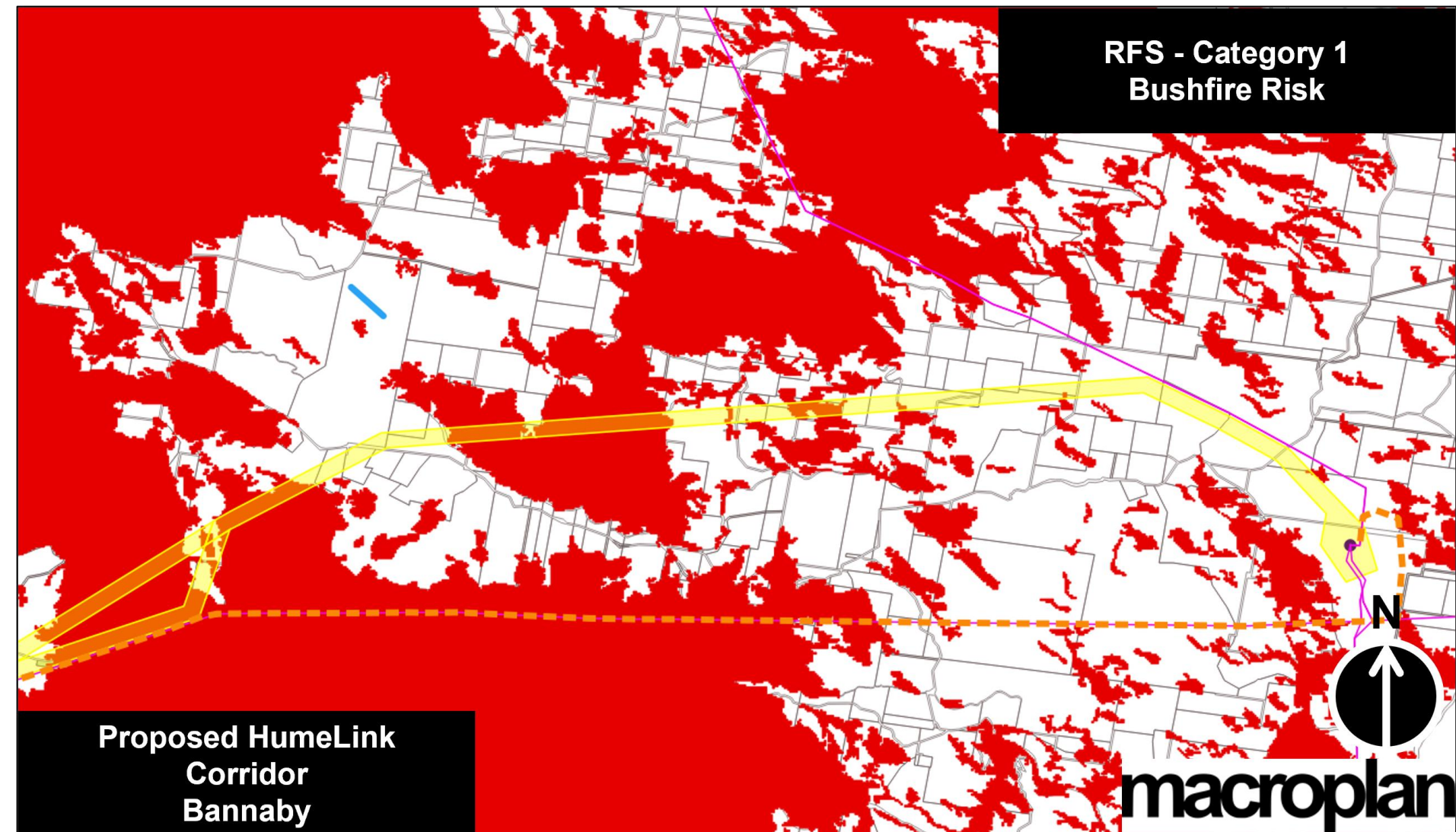
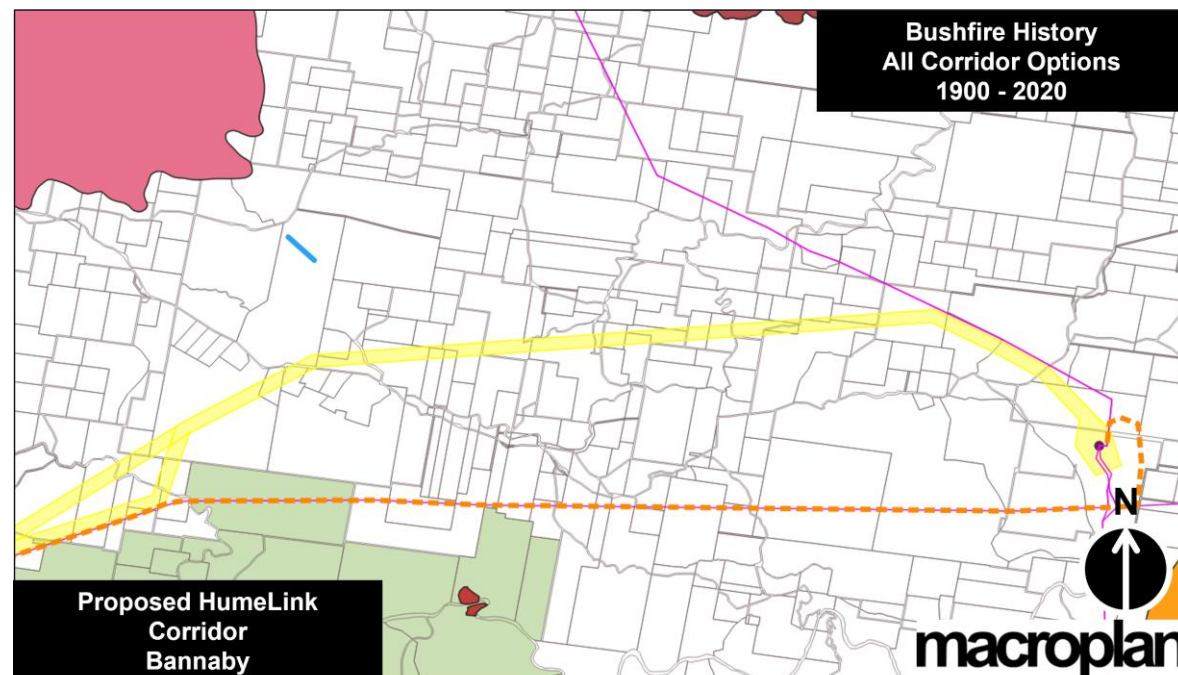
- Bannaby north – travels to the north of the Tarlo River National Park through private property and enters the Bannaby substation from the north
- Bannaby south – travels in parallel to the existing 300kV line through Tarlo River National Park and enters the substation through a complex loop to the north





# RFS Category 1 Bushfire Risk Vegetation

- RFS Category 1 Vegetation is considered to be the highest risk for bush fire. It has the highest combustibility and likelihood of forming fully developed fires including heavy ember production
- Unlike Tumut, there is no recorded bushfire events(1900-2020) on the Category 1 vegetation on either alignment in the Bannaby area





# Route Option Review - Bannaby

- The red hat review considered the two main options prepared by TG in the Bannaby area and minor variations of these options to minimise property disturbance
- Both options have pros and cons, with the northern option avoiding the Tarlo River National Park, but the causing a level of fragmentation within the Bannaby community, whereas the southern option parallels the existing 330kV network, but involves crossing through the Tarlo River National Park for approximately 3.5km adjacent to its northern boundary
- The southern option relies on TG exercising rights under the *Electricity Supply Act 1995* and will involve some disturbance to the National Park, but will have a superior overall community outcome
- Both options will create a similar disturbance to native vegetation. The red hat review found that whilst there was marginal difference between the two options, and that whilst there would be some impact on southern properties (from the southern option), it was the option that had the least overall community impact
- The southern option also presents an option to potentially increase and offset any areas of the Tarlo River National Park through a refined property acquisition plan and enlargement of the National Park by approximately 178 hectares.

# Biodiversity Offsets

- Projected biodiversity offset costs don't reflect the importance of this project in helping NSW and Australia to achieve its climate change and carbon reduction targets. The Prime Minister has committed Australia to an emissions reduction target of 43% by 2030 and this will be largely achieved by fast tracking renewables share of the energy grid to 82% by 2030. HumeLink is critical to achieving this ambition
- Projected biodiversity costs are in the vicinity of \$850-1.2bn compared with community compensation which are expected to be about 20% of the projected biodiversity costs. The community feel that there is a major discrepancy in the allocation of funding to biodiversity vs the allocation to compensation.
- The Biodiversity Offset calculations used in NSW are not contemplated with projects of HumeLink's nature in mind.
- Representations should be made to the NSW Government to establish a more reasonable offset having regard to the strategic importance of HumeLink in achieving Australia's carbon reduction targets. Any reduction in offsets could then be used for support such as improving bushfire resilience of the project and/or undergrounding in strategic locations.



# Bushfire Management



# Bushfire Management – Naomi Rowe

## Snowy Valleys CCG 'Pilot' Bushfire Management Workshop took place 27 July 2022, 10am – 2.30pm

Attendees included representatives from the project team, local council, forestry organisations and landowners.

Key issues that were raised in the workshop included:

- Transmission line route selection
- Impact of firefight operations
- Undergrounding option
- Transgrid resourcing during fire events
- Bushfires within the EIS

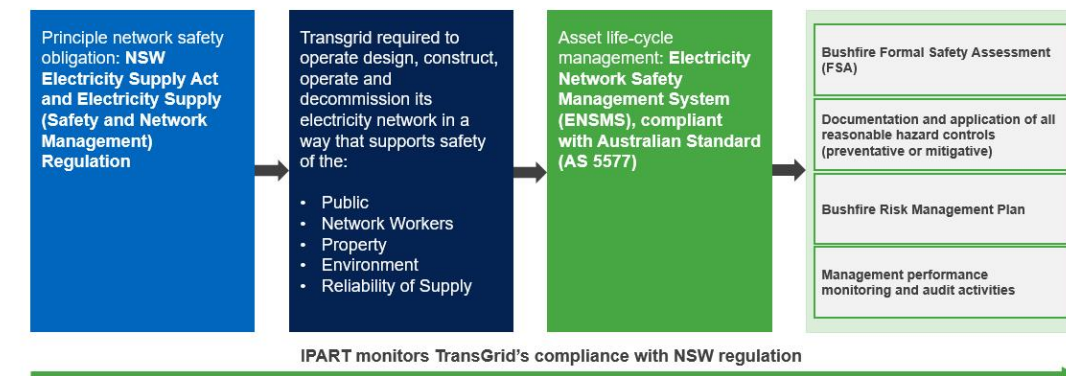
### Next steps

11 questions were taken on notice. Following consultation with Transgrid's subject matter experts, we are compiling responses and will share the answers with attendees of the workshop.

Transgrid has secured a meeting with RFS Commissioner to seek direction and advice on next steps



Transgrid: managing bushfire risk across transmission network



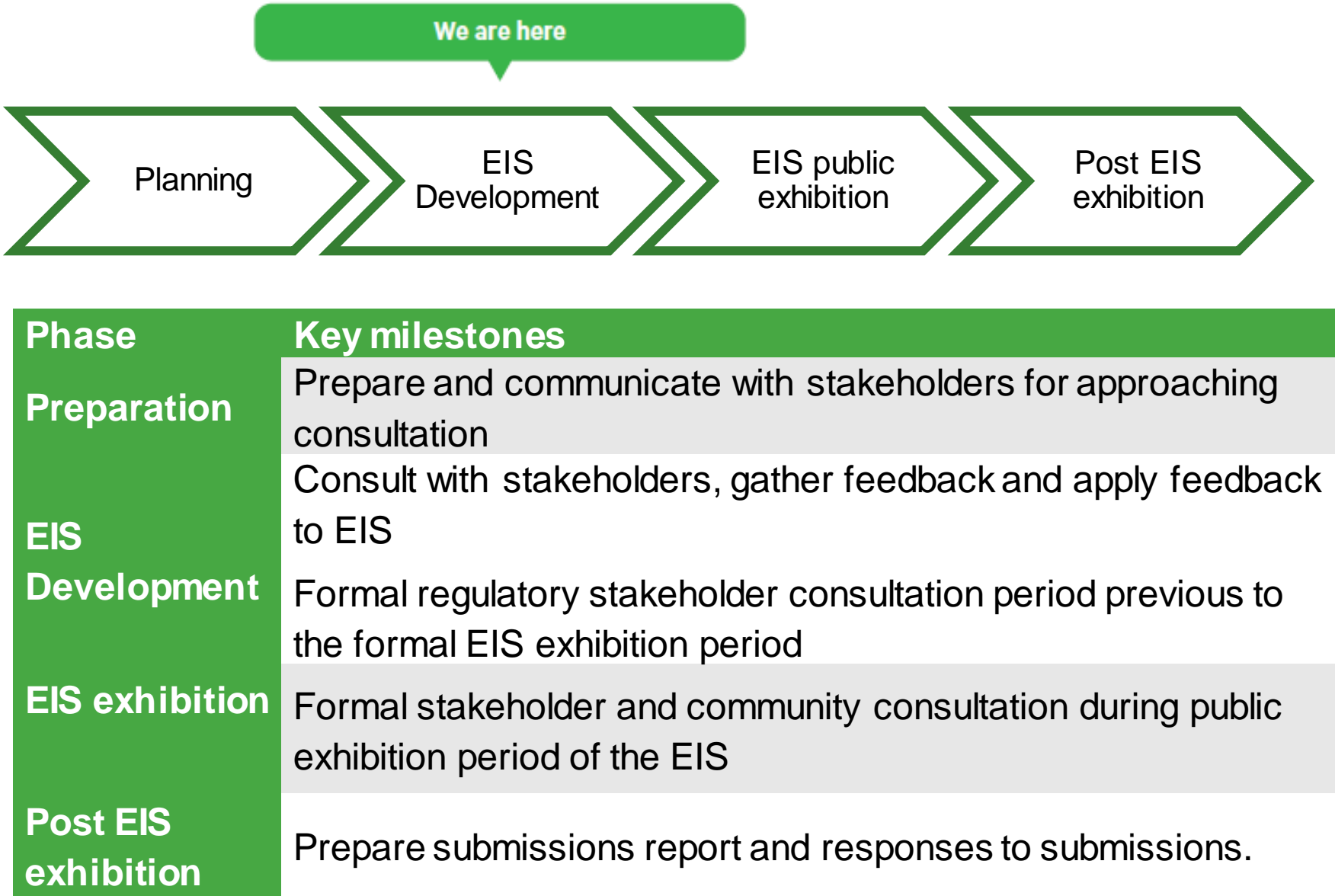
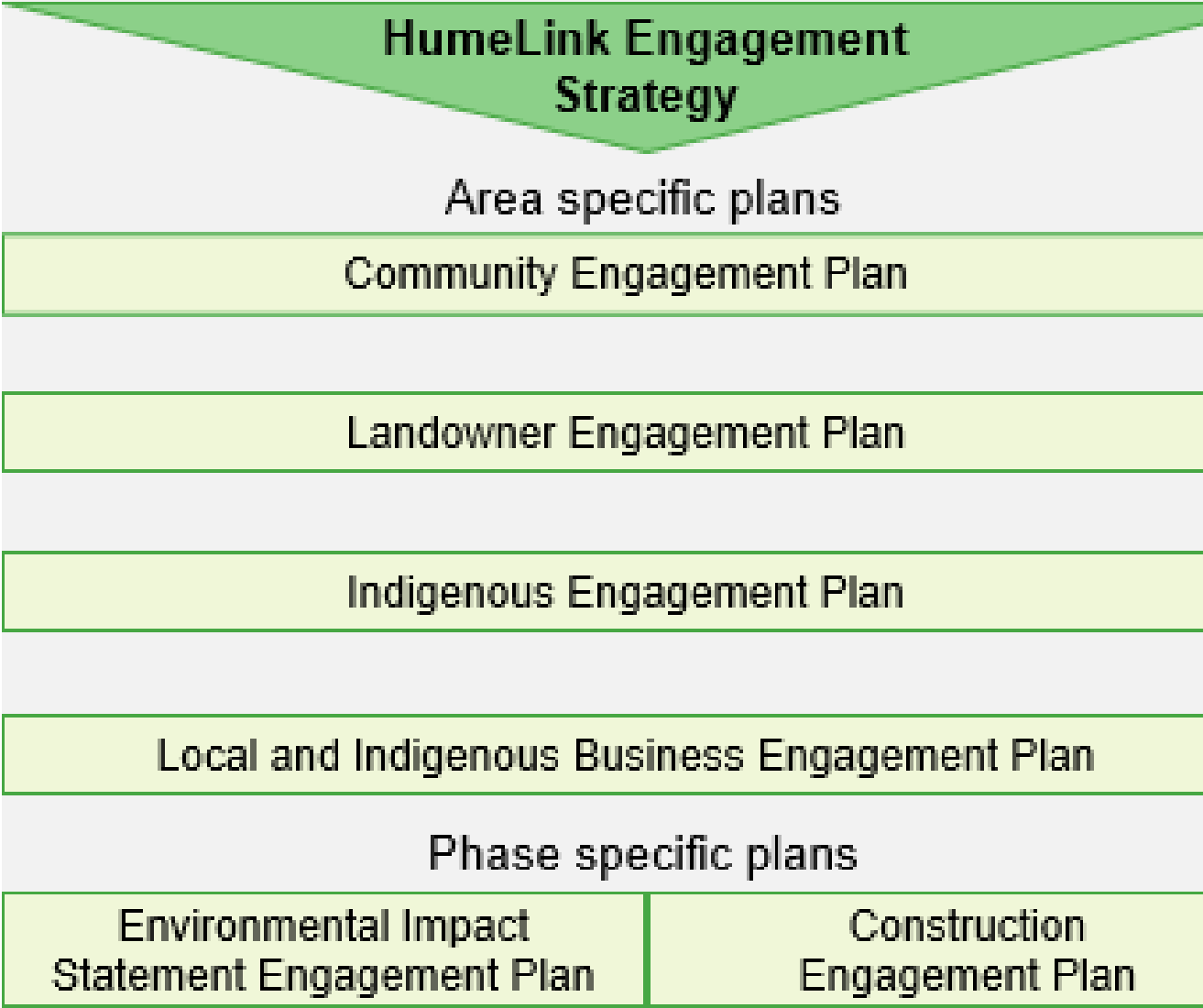
Source: [2020 Electricity Safety Management System and Bushfire Report](#)



# Update

1. EIS Update (Naomi Rowe)
2. Geotech and Tower Locations (Dan Burn)
3. Compensation (Carl Charlier)

# Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – Naomi Rowe





# Geotech (ground conditions) and Tower locations – Dan Burn

- Geotech investigations (ground condition surveys) are expected between late September 2022 to mid-March 2023
- On site drilling activities should not take longer than one day per location
- All efforts are being made to minimise impact
  - Limiting crew size , work hours and footprint
  - Implementing biosecurity processes
- We will seek consent from the landowner prior to the work taking place
- Tower locations are being refined, but not finalised as this can not be done until detailed design is complete

# Compensation – Carl Charlier

The meeting with the HAG, the AEIC and Transgrid on 25 August 2022 identified that a review of the current template Option Deed and PMP being used on the HumeLink project was required.

A review was required in order to restore the balance under the Option Deed and in particular:

- Remove certain offensive provisions
- Review the access provisions
- Review how damage to land is dealt with
- Refine the Option Deed

A revised PMP template was also requested.

Key changes are detailed in the pre- reading materials



## Agenda setting for next meeting



**Thank you**

