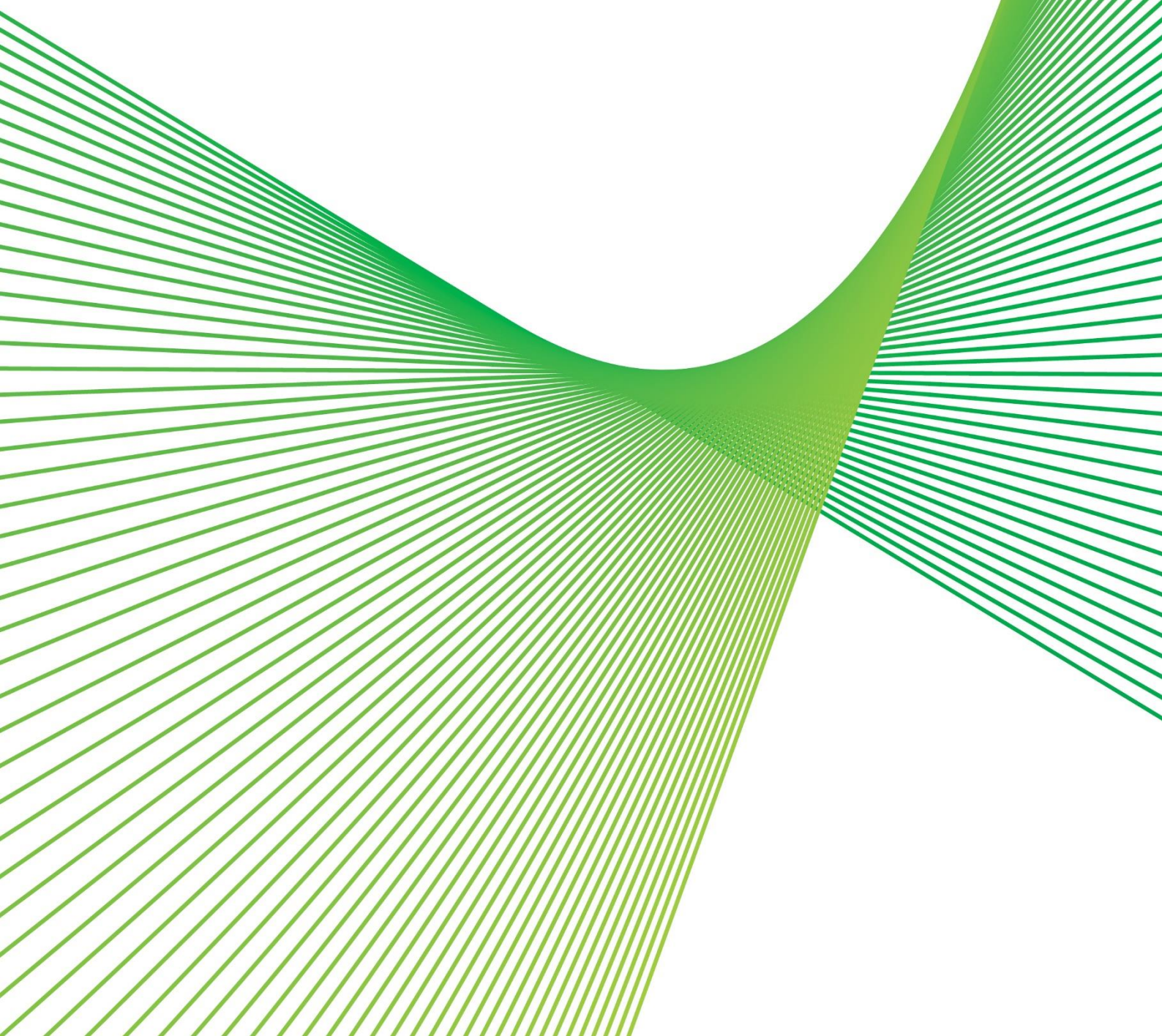


Consultation Outcomes for the Preferred Route

Mount Piper to Wallerawang Transmission Line Upgrade Project

March 2024



Acknowledgement

Transgrid acknowledges the Wiradjuri people as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which the preferred route is located and would like to thank the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council for their feedback and advice to date.

Traditional Owners have lived in the area for thousands of years and have an enduring custodianship and connection over the land and waterways of this region. We pay our respects to the people and the Elders past, present and emerging. And we celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the land and water.

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Introduction

The Mount Piper to Wallerawang Transmission Line Upgrade Project will see a new 330 kV (kilovolt) transmission line established between our existing substations at Mount Piper and Wallerawang. In early 2022, Transgrid began 18 months of community and stakeholder engagement to explore the different route options for the proposed transmission line. A preferred route was published in January 2024 and feedback was sought across different stakeholder groups. Over a period of nine weeks, Transgrid promoted the Preferred Route Report and feedback was sought from range of stakeholders.

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the consultation and engagement conducted on the Preferred Route Report. The data has been gathered from activities conducted between January to March 2024.

Engagement snapshot

How we engaged



Figure 1 Engagement summary snapshot

What we heard

The key themes stakeholders and the community told us / asked us were:

- Questions regarding future environmental impacts
- Questions regarding waterway impacts
- ‘Just get it done’ and ‘It needs to be done’ opinions
- Anti-renewable energy sentiment
- Confusion from the multiple proposed energy projects unrelated to Transgrid but within the project area

Route selection and the role of the community

The NSW Government plans to develop five Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) in the state, aiming to increase renewable energy generation and reduce emissions from traditional energy sources e.g. coal and gas. The first REZ is being developed in the Central-West Orana region with the goal of adding new energy generation capacity to NSW.

To support the connection of this REZ, upgrades are required within Transgrid's existing transmission network. The Mount Piper to Wallerawang Transmission Line Upgrade Project will see a new 330 kV transmission line between the existing Mount Piper and Wallerawang substations. The project will strengthen and reinforce the grid in the State's Central Tablelands region, helping to ensure that power from the Central-West Orana REZ can be reliably moved back into the grid and to consumers.

Transgrid follows a rigorous route selection process that analyses technical, environmental, social and economic factors. The stakeholder and community engagement activities to date have enabled Transgrid to gain a better understanding of local concerns and potential impacts.

Transgrid has identified a preferred 8 km route for the Mount Piper to Wallerawang Transmission Line Upgrade Project. It represents the lowest impact overall because it uses an existing transmission line corridor, which would impact the smallest number of landowners and minimises impact on the environment.

Transgrid recognises the vital role that landowners and the community have in the planning and delivery of our projects and consultation with landholders and the local community plays a key role in our decision-making process.

Engagement framework

Transgrid is guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation. The Spectrum is an internationally recognised tool for planning public participation in infrastructure projects. The Spectrum helps to establish the public’s role in the engagement process and their impact on the decision-making outcomes of a project. The Preferred Route Report was delivered in the ‘involve’ stage of the IAP2 spectrum as shown in the image below. The announcement of the preferred route was delivered within the ‘inform’ and ‘consult’ stages.

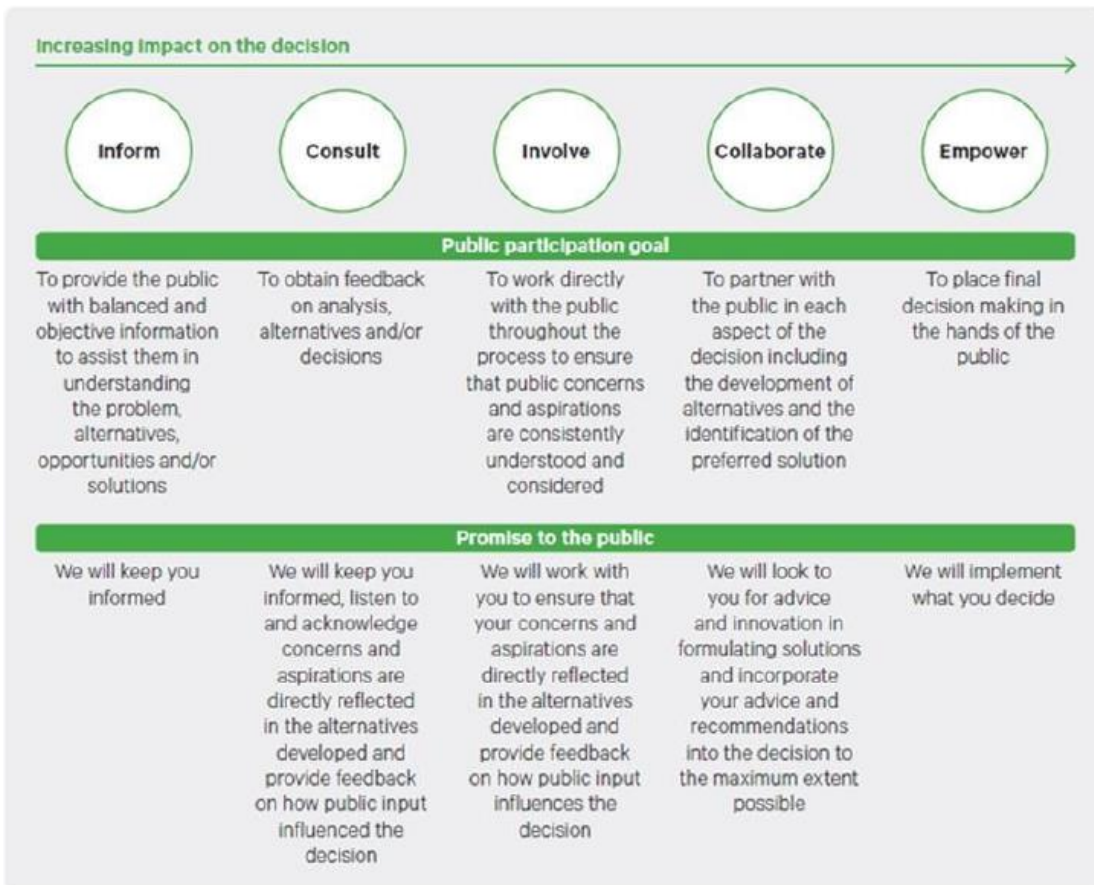


Figure 2 IAP2 spectrum of public participation.

Engagement objectives

The preferred route announcement is an important step in keeping stakeholders informed and engaged. Transgrid committed to engaging the community through a wide range of accessible and inclusive channels and platforms to provide stakeholders with just and fair opportunities to understand and share their input into transmission planning.

The engagement objectives were to:

- inform and consult with community members and external stakeholders on the preferred route
- raise awareness of the project beyond the project area
- capture feedback and sentiment about the project from the community and
- demonstrate Transgrid’s commitment to community engagement

Consultation tools and channels

A variety of communication tools and channels were used to target the Project's stakeholders and the community.


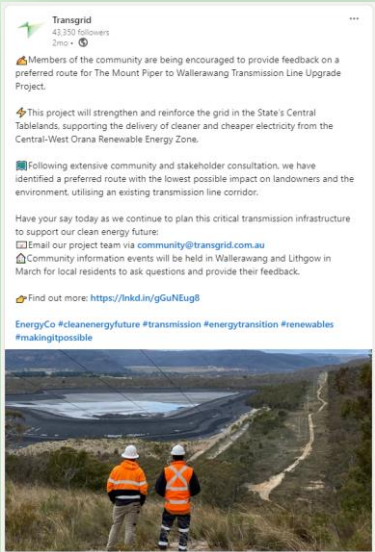
Stakeholders

One of the core objectives of the consultation was to ensure that the engagement was comprehensive and to engage a diverse range of interested and potentially impacted people and groups. Our stakeholders were identified during earlier consultation and the communications were divided up into two peaks of activity in January and March 2024, to target specific stakeholder groups. This was to ensure stakeholders had the highest opportunity to provide their comments to Transgrid by tailoring communications to achieve the depth and breadth of reach.

Timing	Tactic	Stakeholder target
January	Media release	ABC Central West Lithgow Mercury
	Stakeholder email offering briefing	Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council Department of Planning and Environment (previous name) Lithgow Environmental Group Wilderness Australia Lithgow Shire Council Paul Toole MP Andrew Gee MP
	Email subscribers	21 stakeholders
	Landowner email	12 landowners
	Landowner meetings	8 landowners and stakeholders
	Social media	All stakeholders
	Website update	All stakeholders
March	Community event	Local community who reside in Lithgow, Wallerawang and Portland
	Media release	ABC Central West Lithgow Mercury
	Newspaper advert	Local community who live in Lithgow, Wallerawang and Portland
	Letterbox drop	All letterboxes in Wallerawang 2845 and Portland 2847
	Website update	All stakeholders
	Email subscribers	29 stakeholders
	Stakeholder email	12 landowners
	Landowner meetings	8 landowners and stakeholders
	Online survey	All stakeholders

Further information on the communication tactics and results are below.

Communication activities

Activity	Example
<p>In-person local community events</p> <p>Transgrid held two pop-up stalls to target local community members and allow an opportunity for face-to-face conversations with the project team.</p> <p>One stall was set up on Friday, January 15, at the 2024 Lithgow Show and the second pop-up was positioned outside Wallerawang Library on Saturday, March 16.</p> <p>The project team had in-depth conversations with 31 community members, distributed printed project materials and recorded oral feedback.</p> <p>The printed take-home material available was a project factsheet, bushfire factsheet, feedback form, size A0 project map, survey QR code and photos of the current easement.</p> <p>Image: Transgrid's Community Engagement Team at the Lithgow Show</p>	
<p>Social media</p> <p>There were three posts to promote the Preferred Report launch in January. One featured on Transgrid's Facebook, X and LinkedIn pages and promoted the launch of the Preferred Route Report.</p> <p>LinkedIn: 1 comment, 4 shares, 110 likes Facebook: 4 comments, 7 shares, 56 likes X: 0 comments, 0 shares, 1 like</p> <p>A total of 12,820 people were reached and 476 clicked on the link on the three posts.</p> <p>Image: LinkedIn post</p>	

Print media

An advert was placed in the Lithgow Mercury newspaper to promote the in-person community events. The Lithgow Mercury has a print circulation of 4658.

Image: Quarter page advert on page 6, highlighted in red box.



Online media

Two press releases were sent to local media outlets in January and March.

In January, ABC Central West Radio interviewed Craig Stellan, Transgrid's Executive General Manager of Delivery.

The Lithgow Mercury reported on the in-person community events. Their monthly digital reach of news articles is 5,575.

Energy Magazine reported on the January media release. Their monthly digital readers are 14,437.

Image: Transgrid's online press release

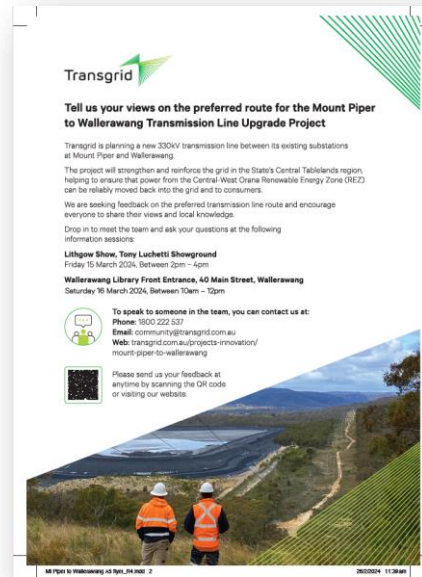


Letterbox drop

Transgrid engaged Australia Post to deliver an A5 flyer to all letterboxes in Wallerawang 2845 and Portland 2847.

The event notification was distributed to 2,900 letterboxes in total.

Image: A5 flyer



Community inbox and freephone 1800 number

The project received one call to the freephone 1800 number and two emails to the community inbox.

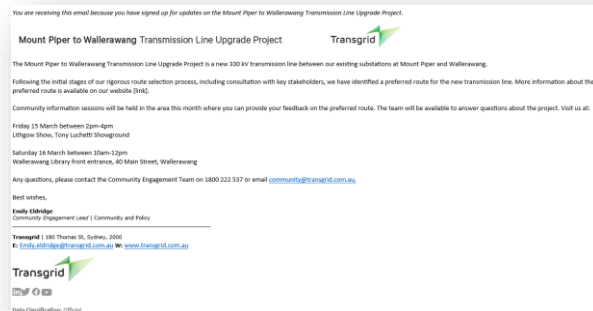
There is no image provided to protect privacy of the sender.

Electronic Direct Mail (emails)

Two emails were sent to stakeholders who have subscribed to receive project updates.

The first email launching the Preferred Route Report in January was sent to 21 people. 8 additional people requested to be added to the mailing list. Therefore, 29 people received the second email in March that promoted the community information sessions and resulted in a 38% increase in subscribers.

Image: Email to subscriber list



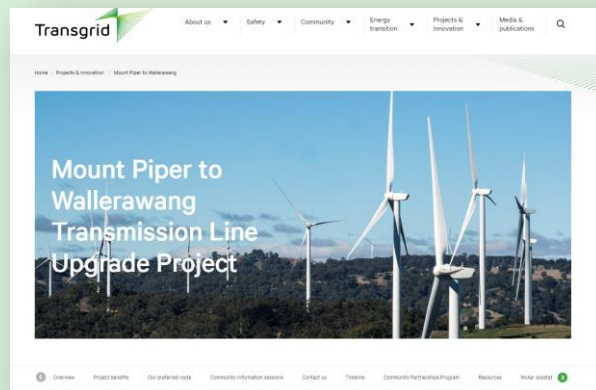
Website

Transgrid updated the project website with information on the Preferred Route Report and community events.

Between a two-month period from January 15 to March 18, the webpage received 1,150 views and 167 users downloaded the Preferred Route Report.

Previous webpage numbers, between a 15-month period from August 2022 to November 2023, were 143 views and 453 downloads. This is a 704% increase in views and 63% decrease in downloads.

Image: Screenshot of project webpage



Factsheet

Transgrid updated the project factsheet and had printed copies available for community to take home at the information sessions.

Image: Screenshot of the project factsheet



Online survey

Transgrid created an online survey to capture feedback digitally. A QR code that linked to the survey was included in the letterbox drop, a poster at the community information sessions and a link included on the project webpage. There was one survey response from a community member who complained Australia Post posted three flyers through their letterbox.

Image: Screenshot of the online survey



Engagement results

At the end of the consultation period, the reach from the communication activities was high but the amount of feedback received was comparatively low. However, the insights and feedback that were received were detailed and well informed.

The relatively low amount of feedback could indicate that overall, stakeholders and community felt relatively 'neutral' about the project and did not feel a need to respond. Similar sentiment was also reflected in the comments Transgrid recorded during the engagement.

It should be noted that Transgrid has been involving key stakeholders and the community for more than 18 months in planning a preferred route. We have listened to stakeholders and community feedback on the different route options and this feedback has been used to determine the preferred route. Therefore, the low number of respondents could be a sign of satisfaction that the preferred route is the most suitable.

Common feedback themes that were received are below. Detailed feedback is in Appendix A of this document.

Anti-renewable energy

Community members stated their disapproval of renewable energy projects in general and told us that they were 'anti-renewable energy'. This is an ongoing theme that was identified in previous face-to-face information sessions conducted in 2022.

Environmental impact

We heard concerns and questions from the community regarding the potential impact to the local environment, in particular on vegetation clearing and waterways. This theme was also raised frequently during the consultation that took place in 2022 and 2023.

Nearby major infrastructure projects

Some community members were confused about who was responsible for different projects in their region and asked questions regarding other infrastructure projects not related to Transgrid. There are a number of proposed major projects in the local Wallerawang community for example: EnergyAustralia Pumped Hydro Project and Battery Energy Storage System, and Greenspot's development of the decommissioned Wallerawang Power Station site. Transgrid has and will continue to clearly explain and separate the Mount Piper to Wallerawang Transmission Line Upgrade Project from these projects and be mindful of community fatigue and information saturation that could be caused by other projects.

Next steps

The Mount Piper to Wallerawang Transmission Line Upgrade Project will follow a comprehensive environmental assessment process. Transgrid intends to submit a Scoping Report over the coming months to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure that will then be formally published in May 2024. The information gathered in the engagement for the preferred route will be used to shape future community and stakeholder engagement.

Community and stakeholder engagement in 2024 will inform a broader Social Impact Assessment, which is a requirement for projects of this scale. The Social Impact Assessment will look at potential areas of concern raised, such as impacts to local community facilities, along with less tangible impacts to community cohesion that can accompany large scale developments and the changes to local economic conditions they can bring.

A project timeline is available on the project's homepage at www.transgrid.com.au/wallerawang

Appendix A : Feedback received

1.1. Email responses

Stakeholder	Comment
Community	You have made reference to the lands of the Wiradjuri, Gundungurra and Darug people. I wish to correct you, this is Wiradjuri country we had cultural lore about when others may pass but it has never been anything but Wiradjuri country in this area. Could you please take these other mobs off as it's great disrespect to the Wiradjuri people.
Community	We are interested in any loss of water body/ water way access or any access arrangements that may be affected both during and after construction.
Community	Thank you for the update and information flyer. Thank you for involving us in this consultation process.
Landowner	I will be interested to understand what response you get from the community. My initial view would be that the Community would welcome the upgraded infrastructure, to future proof power supply to the region and the transition to renewables.
Landowner	Thank you for the heads up and the information regarding the preferred route options.
Landowner	We provide in principal support to the preferred option, B-4, as currently proposed.

1.2. Community Information Sessions

Friday 15 March

Feedback and comments	Sentiment
Believes it needs to happen. We should just get on with it as long as sites are repaired once Transgrid are done.	Positive
Interested in heritage survey and protection	Neutral
Transgrid have put a lot of time and effort into route planning and consultation. Makes sense to put it where an easement already is.	Positive
I know that line already	Positive
I have my own solar so it doesn't impact me	Neutral
I never go to Wallerawang anyway	Neutral
Put all powerlines underground	Negative
My son lives out that way. It's good you are doing this.	Positive
Renewables won't last, Government are rushing it all	Negative
Opposed to renewables, nuclear is the only that that would work	Negative
Community is unsettled with lots of change from nearby projects like EnergyAustralia's Pumped Hydro	Neutral
What impacts are there to the water?	Neutral
Seems ok to me. I don't like renewable energy but seems ok to go through existing easement	Neutral

Saturday 16 March

Feedback and comments	Sentiment
Concerned about impact to waterways from all the mining projects	Neutral

Pro renewable energy but I'm moving house so this isn't relevant for me	Neutral
This needs to happen	Positive
I walk in the State Conservation Area. Asked about tree clearing, structures proposed, boundary lines.	Neutral
I'm happy for this to go ahead. Pro-development. Most concerned about impact to Gang Gang birds.	Positive
Is underground more expensive? Do you impact much private land?	Positive
Why do you need this project? What are project impacts?	Neutral