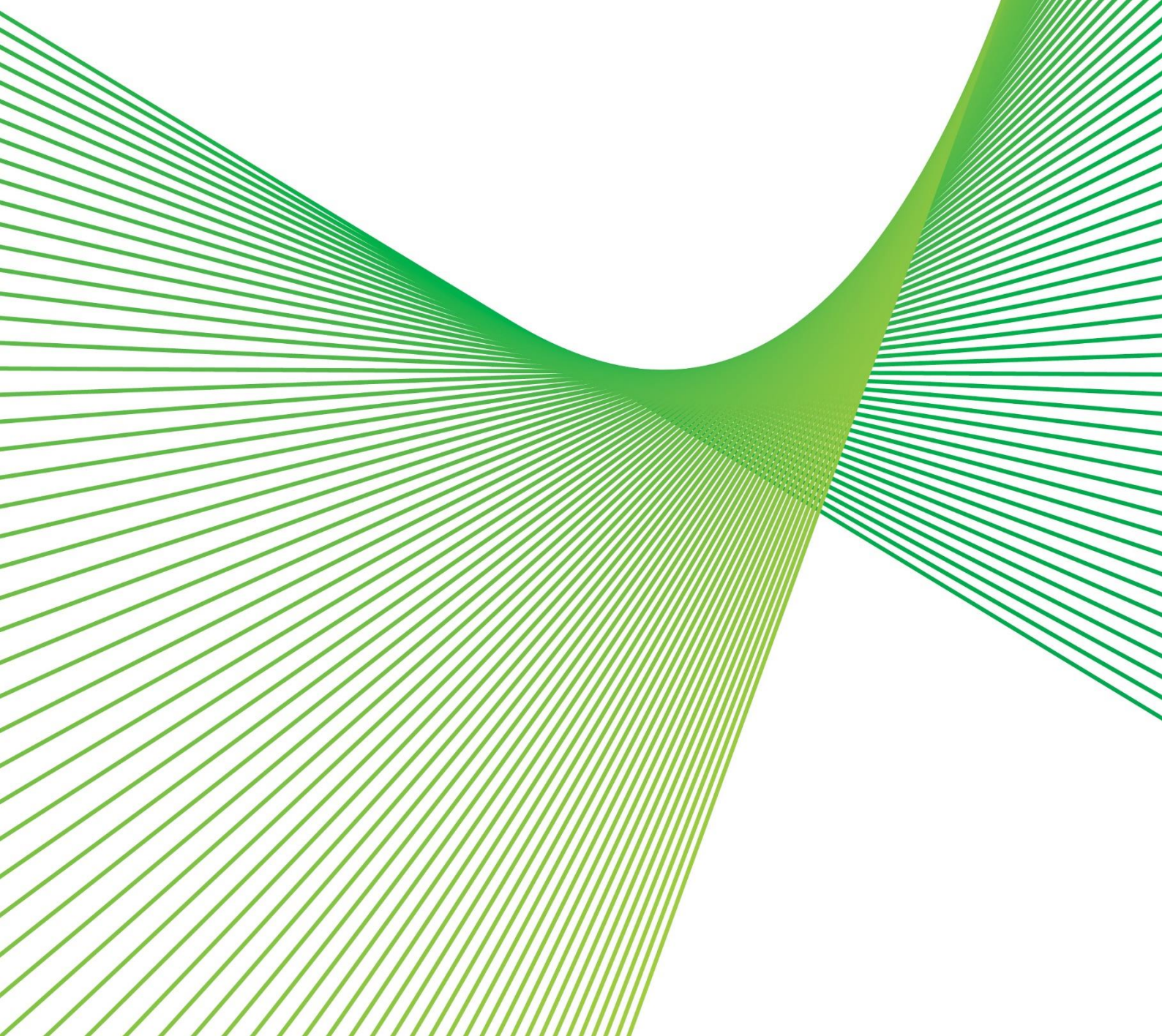


Implementation of the Landowner Advocate's Recommendations on HumeLink

February 2022



Background

HumeLink is a new 500kV transmission line in southern New South Wales which will carry electricity to customers from new generation sources, including the expanded Snowy Hydro scheme. Following HumeLink's initial consultation process, Transgrid appointed Rod Stowe, a former NSW Commissioner for Fair Trading, as independent Landowner and Community Advocate to review our engagement practices. The Advocate's review report¹ identified areas for improvement captured within 20 recommendations. On receipt of the Advocate's review, Transgrid committed to implementing all the recommendations.

Implementation of the Recommendations

As part of its commitment to implementing the recommendations, Transgrid embarked on a six-month process from August 2021 to improve the quality, transparency and consistency of our engagement on HumeLink. Transgrid's progress was tracked and the key activities were documented on a fortnightly basis with a progress report distributed to key government and industry stakeholders. In parallel, the HumeLink Engagement Team sought the Advocate's advice and review on communication materials and the associated engagement approach. During this time, the Advocate's office participated in key community engagement meetings, notably with the Community Consultative Groups (CCGs) and community action groups as independent observers.

Key outcomes achieved from implementing the recommendations included:

- Improvement in the consistency of engagement with regular meetings and briefings with landowners, stakeholders and the community;
- Enhanced information quality, sharing and transparency with the review of all consultation documents for accuracy and the use of the HumeLink website as a source of truth for information; and
- Uplift in the capability and capacity of the HumeLink Engagement Team delivering engagement activities.

The recommendations, feedback and learnings gained during the implementation process have not only been applied to HumeLink but have been or are in the process of being embedded in Transgrid's standard practice for all engagement and planning activities around projects, operations and maintenance.

However, we recognise that although we are improving our quality of engagement through implementation of the recommendations, there is still progress to be made before Transgrid's engagement approach on HumeLink is seen as credible by the community and we can start to build trust. Transgrid will continue to be active in further improving engagement across all projects with the support of the landowners, stakeholders and the community. In addition, Transgrid and the Advocate are developing a formal survey which will be open to landowners, stakeholders and the community to assess the effectiveness of Transgrid's implementation of the recommendations, the overall quality of Transgrid's engagement, and key areas where Transgrid can improve.

Details of the key activities and actions undertaken during this period and ongoing identified measures to further provide assurance of continued improvement are described in the table below.

¹ The Landowner and Community Advocates' report can be found on the HumeLink website, or here: <https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/vgsasezn/findings-of-the-humelink-review.pdf>

Recommendation	Actions Taken	Sustaining Actions
<p>1. “Re-set” landowner and community consultation by holding a meeting with all potentially impacted parties to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. examine all proposed transmission route options (including those proposed by landowners) with detailed advice as to feasibility and reasons for exclusion; b. have experts available to discuss all aspects of the project; c. provide advice on how Transgrid is using international best practice infrastructure technology in transmission line project; and d. provide advice on the remaining steps in the consultation process and how they will be conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Managers have reached out to meet with all landowners within the study corridor to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outline the Engagement Reset and confirm our commitment to improve to the quality of engagement; ○ Discuss the project generally, including the decision making process, the route options, infrastructure and technology that is being considered, the project’s timeline and next steps in the process; ○ Seek feedback on the consultation process, particularly understanding the best way to engage with landowners; and ○ Communicated the channels that Transgrid will engage regularly, including through regular check-ins and newsletters. • Place Managers schedule and hold face-to-face meetings and regular phone check-ins. • Community engagement improvements were also discussed through the CCGs, webinars and meetings with landowner action groups. • Key Transgrid subject matter experts and industry experts have provided advice and participated in key meetings, including the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC), Andrew Dyer, and the undergrounding expert, Amplitude, as the independent consultant for the community advising on the undergrounding study. • All feedback received from landowners, stakeholder groups and the community are registered in our consultation management process and considered as part of the project planning process. • Landowners and other stakeholders have been provided with detailed information on how their feedback has been considered. • We have considered alternative route options based on feedback provided by landowners, stakeholders and the community and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These actions are now embedded in our engagement approach as business as usual practice.

	<p>provided detailed information on how these options have been considered and if not progressed, why this is the case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional advice and discussions held during meetings and briefings with stakeholder groups have been documented into FAQs and published alongside other materials on the HumeLink website to be available to all parties. 	
<p>2. Review the mid-year time frame for disclosure of the proposed transmission route and advise landowners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the start of the Engagement Reset, the mid-2021 time frame was updated to the end of 2021 to allow time to genuinely engage with landowners and the community. This was communicated to landowners by Place Managers through direct engagement and mentioned in the August newsletter. • The timeframe to provide formal notification of the narrowing of the corridor to 200m was subsequently extended until early 2022. This was to balance providing certainty for some landowners, providing time for landowners that were newly included in the study corridor and to assess community provided corridor alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -
<p>3. Conduct a general information session with each regional group along the corridor prior to the commencement of each new stage of the consultation process, such as the commencement of on-site visits. This should explain the process, what it aims to achieve, how it will be conducted and what will be required of them. This should be supported by a fact sheet on the website at the same time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key information on the stages of the consultation process, the upcoming proposed field activities, their timing and what to expect have been discussed in webinars, the Landowner Brochure, newsletters, and periodic meetings with landowners and CCGs. • Each stage of the consultation process has information available on the HumeLink website. For example, the Route Selection Fact Sheet provides information on how Transgrid conducts the route selection process, whilst the Ecology Survey Fact Sheet and the Cultural Heritage Fact Sheet provides details on the process and what to expect during the field surveying activities within private property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgrid is continuing to further detail when and how landowners, stakeholders and the community can be engaged and consulted with during the project's end-to-end lifecycle. This will be documented and incorporated within Transgrid's wider project planning process and be made publicly available.
<p>4. Review the number of staff required to conduct the consultation on this major project using a best practice model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgrid has used the advice from industry experts and lessons learned from other Transgrid major projects to gauge the level of full-time staff needed for the engagement program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgrid will continue to assess and monitor the team's capacity and resourcing as we plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Engagement Team has been resourced accordingly and consists of the Community Engagement Lead, a Strategic Lead, a Team Lead, three Place Managers, a Communications Officer, a Systems and Support Officer, and support staff. All of these team members work with other teams within the HumeLink project team to deliver engagement activities. 	<p>each project and engagement stage.</p>
<p>5. Review the list of landowners it is consulting with to ensure that all appropriate landowners are included.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The list of landowners has been updated based on looking through all properties within each route area and discussions with landowners, the community and stakeholders. Place Managers have reviewed the list to ensure it is comprehensive. The list continues to be updated as the consultation process progresses, including other interested parties who sign up to the newsletter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team is currently exploring how to identify neighbours who are not within the study corridor but are impacted by the project and should be included in the consultation process.
<p>6. Review the capacity, skills and suitability of staff and contractors involved in landowner and community engagement activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry experts have been used to assess the Engagement Team, and the wider project team (particularly those with external facing roles), and resources uplifted as needed. All members of the Engagement Team were assessed on their capabilities based on their skills, previous experience, and qualifications (e.g. all members of the Engagement Team have IAP2 certification or equivalent industry experience). This was done by both the Community Engagement Lead within the Project team and other senior members within Transgrid's operations and human resources teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training records will be kept and monitored to ensure that all external facing team members have the necessary training.
<p>7. Provide appropriate training to all engagement staff focusing on empathy and customer centrality in business operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A set of minimum training requirements was developed for each team member who would engage with external stakeholders, including those outside of the Engagement Team such as the Project Director, the Land Access and Acquisition Team and other roles that provide ad-hoc support to engagement activities. The training requirements include the IAP2 certification which provides the fundamentals of community engagement and best practice guidelines, and also training on developing empathy and dealing with challenging situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training records will be kept and monitored to ensure that all external facing team members have the necessary training.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All members of the Engagement Team and the Land Access and Acquisition Team were assessed against the training requirements, particularly on empathy and customer centrality. Training was issued where there were gaps in their capability. 	
<p>8. All Transgrid staff involved in landowner engagement activities be required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> comply with Transgrid guidelines for property visits i.e. provide accurate information about the identity and number of staff/consultants attending the property. Any variation to the originally agreed arrangements should be renegotiated with the property owner; generally ensure the number of Transgrid staff/consultants attending a property does not significantly exceed the number of owners present at the property. (e.g. a ratio of five Transgrid staff to one property owner would normally not be considered desirable.); and ensure that all landowner feedback/communication is responded to in a timely manner and comply with commitments to provide advice by a specific timeframe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HumeLink guideline on accessing and visiting properties was updated and enforced for all staff to follow. Overseen by the Community Engagement Lead, all property visits are conducted in pairs of one Place Manager with one Land Access Officer. Place Managers and Land Access Officers worked with landowners to receive and update property access agreements in the form of Consent to Enter forms. These forms are in the process of being updated with clearer messaging. The process on receiving, acknowledging, considering and responding to enquiries, complaints and feedback was reviewed and updated. This is documented and tracked within Transgrid's consultation management platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The guidelines for property visits and process for feedback are captured internally within Transgrid, implemented and reviewed in regular cycles to ensure they reflect best practice engagement principles. Transgrid is continuing to improve our tools where possible, including an improved consultation management platform.

<p>9. Re-examine how it represents key features on the maps it provides to landowners so as to explain how data is sourced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All base maps were reviewed and updated against feedback collected to date. • The interactive map was relaunched on HumeLink’s website after a comprehensive review and update with the ability to highlight comments and the sources of information for particular features, and for users to provide comments and feedback. • The maps are checked on a regular basis and linked to the interactive map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given feedback on the interactive map, the Engagement Team is currently developing additional documents to provide information on the interactive map. This will include information on how to use the map, the process and timelines for receiving comments and updating information as well as the source of the aerial maps.
<p>10. Review its consultation documents to remove excessive irrelevant images and marketing material and to provide a less clinical and impersonal tone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive review of all collateral and consultation documents was conducted to ensure they are appropriate and provide a less clinical and impersonal tone. • The Landowner Advocate was included in the document review process prior to distributing and/or publishing online on the HumeLink website. • The AEIC Andrew Dyer has and will continue to provide feedback on materials. • Training on tone of voice and writing in plain English is included in the minimum requirements for the team members involved in engagement activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These reviews are embedded in our engagement approach as business as usual.
<p>11. Utilise its website more to provide a ‘source of truth’ for responses to questions that arise and to share presentations that are given to one group of landowners with all the affected landowners so that all are aware of the same information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HumeLink website was relaunched in a format where it is easy to access key documents, as well as a section dedicated to landowner resources. • The following items are published on the website to ensure all landowners, the community and stakeholders have access to the same information: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HumeLink website will continue to be updated with documents and relevant information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCG presentations and associated meeting minutes (with details on the Q&A section) and list of participants; ○ Webinars/information sessions summaries; ○ Newsletters that have been distributed; ○ Relevant fact sheets; and ○ Regulatory documents, such as the Project Scoping Conclusions Report, Project Assessment Draft Report and Project Assessment Conclusions Report. 	
<p>12. Consider the use of a newsletter to provide progress reports on the consultation process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular newsletter issues have been planned in alignment with project phases and milestones to provide timely information to landowners. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The August issue introduced the Engagement Reset, reaffirmed Transgrid’s commitment to improving the quality of engagement, introduced the CCGs and provided other information on the project; ○ The September issue introduced the Place Managers, provided information on the updated study corridors (where some of the previously scoped corridors are no longer required for HumeLink, other corridors were narrowed and new study corridors emerged), introduced the field investigations and surveys (including the Ecological Survey and the Cultural Heritage Survey), and promoted the Landowner Assistance Program and the Community Partnerships Program; and ○ The upcoming February issue will focus primarily on introducing the narrowed corridor. ● These are all published on the HumeLink website. ● The team continues to actively seek suggestions from landowners on what they want to see in the next newsletters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of regular project newsletters is now embedded in our business as usual engagement approach.
<p>13. Revised project maps, reflecting appropriate information provided by</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All maps were assessed against previous feedback gained from landowners, stakeholders and the community prior to relaunching the interactive map on the HumeLink website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The updated process is embedded in our

<p>landowners, be uploaded at relevant intervals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team updated and implemented a new process to review feedback and comments on the online interactive map (i.e. review and post all comments unless they are specified to be private). • Land Access Officers and Place Managers have met and will continue to meet with each landowner on the narrowed corridor with up-to-date maps with all information from previous interactions with the landowner and relevant info from the online interactive map. 	<p>engagement approach as business as usual.</p>
<p>14. Q and A be prepared on the question “Why doesn’t the information I provided about my property and/or surrounds not appear on the map?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQs are published on the HumeLink website, which provide a response to the question. • The team have discussed map features specific to landowners at CCGs and Action Group meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FAQs will continue to be updated and published on the HumeLink website.
<p>15. In individual discussions with potentially impacted landowners, Transgrid staff have regard to feedback received about the specific property and explain why landowner requests can/cannot be acceded to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process for receiving, addressing, considering and responding to feedback from landowners has been updated and is embedded in the team as a business as usual process. For example, we have considered alternative route options based on feedback provided by landowners, stakeholders and the community and provided detailed information on how these options have been considered and if not progressed, why this is the case. • Land Access Officers and Place Managers have met and will continue to meet with each landowner to discuss concerns regarding their property, including the use of maps that accurately reflect their property, how their property will be impacted and the next steps in the process. • A list of negotiables and non-negotiables has been developed for the Engagement Team to use when corresponding with landowners, stakeholders and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgrid is publishing the list of negotiables and non-negotiables on the HumeLink website to be available to all parties.
<p>16. Formally respond to the matters raised by Kyeamba landowners at the meeting of 31 March 2021.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team formally responded to Kyeamba queries in July 2021, and we continue to engage with Kyeamba landowners as part of the consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The updated process in responding to queries is embedded in our engagement approach as business as usual.

<p>17. Advise affected landowners of its intended response to the Advocate's recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our commitment to achieve the Advocate's recommendations was discussed and outlined with all landowners and stakeholder groups through check-ins, meetings and letters at the beginning and continuously throughout the six-month period. • It is also publicly stated on HumeLink website and through various media releases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -
<p>18. Consider making a limited EAPS like service available to potentially impacted landowners who might be experiencing anxiety during the route selection process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Landowner Assistance Program (through Assure) was introduced and continues to be offered to all landowners through property visits and phone calls. • Information on the Program is available via the HumeLink and Transgrid website and printed in newsletters (which are also available on the website). • Affected landowners and community members have free access to the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The offering of a Landowner Assistance Program is embedded in our engagement approach as business as usual.
<p>19. Consider the use of a landowner from a previous project to speak with the landowners who are potentially affected by HumeLink.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has discussed and explored internally within Transgrid the appropriate platform and medium to potentially use landowners from other projects. We have found that there is a lack of willingness for this to occur. • We are actively looking at other options to achieve similar outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgrid is continuing to explore suitable options, potentially through a formal survey at the end of the process to collect feedback (both positive and negative) on the consultation and acquisition process. • Survey insights and case studies could be shared anonymously with landowners.
<p>20. Consider the establishment of one or more reference groups to provide input into the consultation process for the HumeLink project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGs were established where members can engage in the project planning process and on issues of key community concern. • Bespoke reference groups will be established where possible. The steering committee for the independent undergrounding study provides the model for this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgrid is continuing to establish reference groups as needed throughout the engagement process.

Conclusion

We thank everyone who has supported Transgrid in our six-month process to improve our engagement practices. In particular, we thank the Landowner and Community Advocate Rod Stowe and his team, in their continuous review of our approach. We also thank the landowners, stakeholders and community representatives who have continued to engage with us and challenge us to improve our practices.

We appreciate and encourage ongoing engagement with the Advocate, landowners, stakeholders and the community as we continue to embed the recent learnings and improvements into our standard practice.