

5.1 Introduction

A number of statutory planning controls need to be addressed for the purposes of the project. This section reviews Commonwealth, State and local planning legislation and policies that apply to the proposed project to determine the approvals required to allow the proposed development to proceed.

5.2 Planning and Environmental Assessment Process

The proposed transmission line is subject to the development assessment processes and requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* (EP&A Regulation). This assessment is an REF in accordance with Part 5 of the EP&A Act.

The potential impacts of constructing and operating the transmission line have been assessed and appropriate management strategies, mitigation measures and controls to manage and mitigate potential environmental impacts have been identified within this report.

Section 112 of the EP&A Act requires that if an activity is assessed as likely to have a significant impact on the environment, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is to be prepared. The project has been assessed as likely to have a significant impact on Yellow Box, White Box, Blakely's red gum woodland listed as endangered under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act). However, Section 112 (1C) enables an SIS to be prepared without an EIS in circumstances when the only significant effect on the environment is because the activity is to be carried out on land that is, or is part of, critical habitat, or is likely to significantly affect threatened species, populations or ecological communities or their habitats.

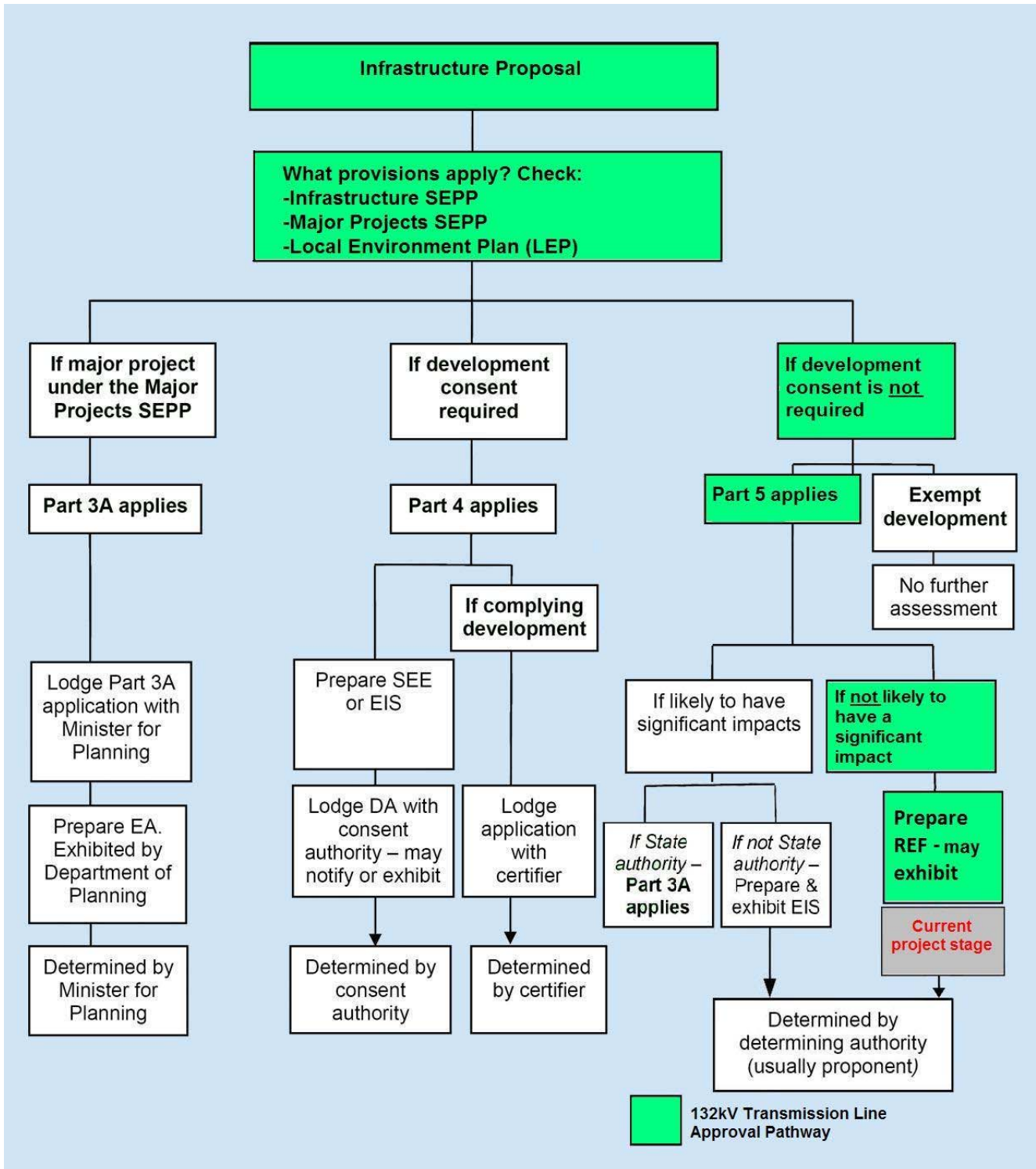
Following public exhibition of the REF, TransGrid will consider the REF and submissions, and then formally decide whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the environment within the meaning of Section 111 of the EP&A Act. TransGrid will determine whether or not to proceed with the project on the basis of the information provided in the REF and the accompanying SIS.

Figure 5-1 details the planning process for NSW infrastructure proposals and the current project stage.

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Figure 5-1 NSW Infrastructure Planning Process



5.3 Commonwealth Legislation

Part 3 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* states that an action which *has, will or is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance* may not be undertaken without prior approval of the Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Heritage, as provided for under the provisions of Part 9 of the EPBC Act. The Act identifies the following as matters of national environmental significance for which Ministerial approval is required:

- World heritage properties;
- Wetlands of international significance;
- Listed threatened species and communities;
- Listed migratory species protected under international agreements;
- National Heritage Places;
- Protection of the environment from nuclear actions; and
- Commonwealth Marine environments.

Threatened ecological communities and threatened species were found to exist within the study area (refer to **Section 7** of this REF and the Species Impact Statement). Because of this, the proposal was referred to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for consideration under the EPBC Act. The determination was received on the 17th March 2009, and the proposal was not deemed to be a controlled action. As such, the proposal does not require assessment and approval by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts before it can proceed. The EPBC Act determination is provided in **Appendix C**.

5.4 NSW State Legislation

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The EP&A Act forms the legal and policy platform for development assessment and approval in NSW and aims to, inter alia, 'encourage the proper management, development and conservation of natural and artificial resources'.

Projects proposed to be undertaken by a public authority with environmental impacts not deemed significant within the meaning of Section 111 of the EP&A Act are assessed via a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) under Part 5 of the EP&A Act. The proposed 'activity' is being determined by TransGrid under Part 5 of the Act, with an REF and Species Impact Statement (SIS) as the documents to assist in the determination. TransGrid, as the determining authority, must 'examine and take into account to the fullest extent possible all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment by reason of that activity' pursuant to Section 111 of the Act. The SIS will require concurrence from DECC before the REF is determined.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000

Clause 228 of the EP&A Regulation identifies the factors that must be taken into account concerning the impact of an activity on the environment for the purposes of Part 5 of the EP&A Act. In accordance with the Regulation, the REF reviews environmental impacts as part of the '*Is an EIS Required*' evaluation provided in **Appendix H** and summarised in **Section 8 Environmental Management and Conclusions**.

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Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995

The *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act) provides legal status for biota of conservation significance in NSW. The TSC Act aims to, inter alia, 'conserve biological diversity and promote ecologically sustainable development'. It provides for:

- the listing of 'threatened species, populations and ecological communities', with endangered species, populations and communities listed under Schedule 1, 'critically endangered' species and communities listed under Schedule 1A, and vulnerable species and communities listed under Schedule 2;
- the listing of 'key threatening processes' (under Schedule 3);
- the preparation and implementation of Recovery Plans and Threat Abatement Plans; and
- guidelines for the preparation of SISs.

Assessment against the TSC Act has been addressed in a Species Impact Statement, the results of which are presented in **Section 7 Environmental Assessment**.

As part of the SIS, database searches for threatened species, populations or communities previously recorded within the locality were undertaken. Field studies were undertaken to identify any species identified as likely to occur within the area. Under Schedule 3 of the Act, 'key threatening processes' relevant to the proposal have been identified as part of the assessment of potential impact to threatened species, populations and endangered ecological communities. The SIS has been prepared with regard to the requirements given by the Director-General of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Heritage Act 1977

The *Heritage Act 1977* provides for the conservation of environmental heritage defined as places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects, and precincts, of State or local heritage significance which are at least 50 years old. The Act provides for the listing of heritage structures on the State Heritage Register and Orders can be made under the Act to protect relics from removal or alteration. This Act applies to non-Aboriginal relics only. Aboriginal relics are protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

Heritage structures listed on the State Heritage Register have been reviewed as part of the desk-based and field survey works undertaken as part of this REF. No State Heritage Register items were identified within the proposed alignment or associated working areas. The heritage impact assessment report is presented in full within **Appendix D**.

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act) is administered by the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) and provides the basis for the legal protection of flora and fauna in NSW. Unless a licence is obtained under the Act (or the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*), it is an offence to harm any animal that is protected or is a threatened species, population or ecological community. It is also an offence to pick any plant that is protected or is a threatened species, population or ecological community. In addition, a person must not, by act or omission, damage any critical habitat.

The NPW Act also provides the basis for the legal protection and management of Aboriginal sites within NSW. Sections 86, 90 and 91 of the NPW Act provide statutory protection for any physical/material evidence of Aboriginal occupation of NSW and places of cultural significance to the Aboriginal community.

The Heritage Assessment (**Appendix D**) has identified a number of Indigenous sites within or in close proximity to the proposed alignment. A number of sites will be impacted by the proposed project. Under the NPW Act, an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) will be required to impact these sites, as the project is being assessed under Part 5 of the EP&A Act. TransGrid must apply to the Director General of DECC to obtain a Section 90 certificate or a Section 87(1) permit, before any disturbance occurs to identified sites. Once survey of all of the line is complete and all heritage items are identified, TransGrid will apply for a whole of development AHIP permit at the project outset, to cover all monitoring, test/salvage excavation and partial/full site destructions.

Contaminated Land Management Act 1997

Under Section 60 of the Contaminated Land Management Act TransGrid is required to notify DECC if contamination is discovered and the contamination presents a significant risk of harm. No contamination has been identified to date.

Noxious Weeds Act 2003

The Noxious Weeds Act provides for the identification and control of noxious weeds and specifies the duties of public and private landholders to control noxious weeds. The Act stipulates that an occupier of land must take steps to control noxious weeds on their land. Appropriate methods for controlling noxious weed species are defined under the control category or categories for particular species of weeds.

Personnel working along the line would implement noxious weed control measures to prevent the spread and occurrence of noxious weeds along the easement and access tracks, as described in **Section 7 Impact Assessment**.

Fisheries Management Act 1994

Under Section 199 of the Act, the Minister is required to be consulted over any dredging or reclamation works carried out, or proposed to be authorised, by a public authority. Dredging and reclamation works are defined to include any excavation or any filling in land that is permanently or intermittently submerged by water and would include any works undertaken for the purpose of improving vehicular crossings of creeks or watercourses along the transmission line.

Section 218 requires that a public authority that proposes to construct, alter or modify a dam, weir or reservoir on a waterway must notify the Minister of the proposal, and, if the Minister so requests, include as part of the works for the dam, weir or reservoir, or for its alteration or modification, a suitable fishway or fish by-pass.

The Department of Primary Industries must be consulted regarding any activity that will result in the temporary or permanent blockage of fish passage within a waterway (Section 219) and a permit may be required for these activities. Floodplain or in-stream works that may impede the flow of water at any time can be addressed by this provision.

The *Fisheries Management Act, 1994* through Fish Habitat Protection Plan No. 1, requires public authorities to notify the Minister for Primary Industries of any proposal to remove or relocate snags, in particular fallen trees or rocks.

As per the requirements of the Act, under Sections 199, 218 and 219, TransGrid or its contractor would advise the Minister for Primary Industries of the proposed water crossing upgrades and construction works when final details have been determined and field inspections have been carried out following the detailed design stage of the project. The removal or relocation of snags is not anticipated, however should such activities be deemed

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necessary following examination of each required water crossing location, TransGrid would provide the requisite notice to the Minister and consider any matters raised in response.

Native Vegetation Act 2003

TransGrid would not require development consent under this Act as a result of the exclusion in Section 25(g) for activities undertaken by a determining authority under Part 5 of the EP&A Act.

Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997

TransGrid must not pollute waters, as defined in S. 120 of this Act.

The proposed activity is not a scheduled development work or scheduled activity and would not require an Environment Protection Licence.

Rural Fires Act 1997

A permit must be obtained for any open burning of cleared vegetation where required. Burning shall be carried out only with the permission of the local council and local fire authority (Rural Fire Control Centre or NSW Fire Brigade) and in accordance with the Rural Fires Act 1997 and all Regulations thereunder and any necessary permits shall be obtained. Burning-off in State Forests also requires the permission of the District Forester.

Water Management Act 2000

The *Water Management Act 2000* (the Water Management Act) contains provisions relating to water access licenses, water use approvals, water management work approvals and activity approvals. This Act supersedes the *Water Act 1912* (the Water Act) should a water sharing plan apply to the affected water source. It is unlikely that any water sources will be affected since no water extraction from the creeklines would be required.

The Water Management Act now also incorporates the Controlled Activity Provisions which replaced the *Rivers and Foreshores Improvement Act 1948*. A controlled activity approval under the WMA is now required for works carried out on waterfront land, defined as within 40m of the bed and banks of a river, lake or estuary. The proposed alignment crosses a number of ephemeral creek lines and water courses, including two permanent creeks Goobang Creek and Mandagery Creek, however public authorities (other than Landcom) are exempt under Section 39A. As such, TransGrid is exempt from the need to obtain a controlled activity approval for works within 40m of water features present along the proposed route. In accordance with Section 39A (3) however, there is a requirement that any work carried out must comply with any direction that the Minister may give, and so the Minister would be duly notified prior to the commencement of any proposed works.

5.4.1 State and Regional Planning Policies

The following section examines State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) that are relevant to the project.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007

The aim of State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007 (SEPP Infrastructure) is to facilitate the effective delivery of infrastructure across NSW. Electricity transmission or distribution networks are listed in SEPP Infrastructure as a division of infrastructure.

Clause 41 of the SEPP Infrastructure states that "Development for the purpose of an electricity transmission or distribution network may be carried out by or on behalf of an electricity supply authority or public authority without consent on any land." Clause 40 defines the component of an electricity transmission or distribution

network as "above or below ground electricity transmission or distribution lines (and related bridges, cables, conductors, conduits, poles, towers, trenches, tunnels, ventilation and access structures)".

The proposed transmission line and easement installation complies with the provisions of Clauses 40 and 41 which allows for the development to be assessed under Part 5 of the EP&A Act without Part 4 consent from Council. Parkes, Forbes and Cabonne Regional Councils have been notified of the development via meetings and mail correspondence and the affected landholders have been consulted by TransGrid.

Construction and operation of an electricity line is not listed on Schedule 3 of the SEPP as a 'Traffic generating development to be referred to the RTA'. Therefore a referral to the RTA is not required.

SEPP 44 - Koala Habitat Protection

SEPP 44 is applicable to transmission projects where development consent is required under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003* for vegetation clearance. The Native Vegetation Act does not apply to vegetation clearing in regards to this proposal as 'any clearing that is part of an activity carried out by a determining authority' falls under the jurisdiction of Part 5 of the EP&A Act and is therefore excluded.

It is also noted that SEPP 44 does not apply to projects being assessed in regards to State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007. Koala's are a threatened species and have been assessed appropriately as apart of the impact assessment processes established under the SIS and according to the requirements under the TSC Act and the EPBC Act.

SEPP (Major Projects) 2005

In 2005, the Minister for planning published an order that projects undertaken by a state authority likely to significantly affect the environment must be determined by the Minister under Part 3A of the EP&A Act 1979. SEPP (Major Projects) 2005 facilitates the implementation of Part 3A which aims to streamline the approval process for 'Major Projects'. This project is not considered to significantly affect the environment and consequently Part 3A does not apply under the Ministerial order.

In addition, projects that are classified as Major Projects are listed under Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of the SEPP. The type of project being assessed is not included in the Schedules and therefore is not automatically considered to be a 'Major Project'.

5.5 Local Environmental Planning Instruments

The proposed transmission line lies wholly within the Local Government Areas of Forbes, Parkes and Cabonne. The respective planning instruments are the Forbes Local Environmental Plan 1986, the Parkes Local Environment Plan 1990 and the Cabonne Local Environmental Plan 1991. The proposed transmission line will traverse land which is zoned 1(a) Rural. This zone permits the construction of transmission lines with consent, however given that SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007 applies, consent is not required. Electricity transmission or distribution networks are listed in SEPP Infrastructure as a division of infrastructure. Clause 41 of the SEPP Infrastructure states that "Development for the purpose of an electricity transmission or distribution network may be carried out by or on behalf of an electricity supply authority or public authority without consent on any land."

6.1 Introduction

In order to undertake a comprehensive environmental assessment of the proposed 132kV transmission line, appropriate emphasis needs to be placed on those issues likely to be of greatest significance to the local environment, land owners and the wider community. To ensure this has occurred, a program of community, land owner and government consultation was undertaken to assist in the identification of relevant issues and potential impacts. This section of the REF provides a summary of the consultation program implemented by Comur Consulting, URS and TransGrid. The Consultation Report is provided in full in **Appendix B**.

The key objectives of the consultation program were to ensure key stakeholders were:

- appropriately informed of the project;
- aware of the approvals process; and
- provided with an opportunity to ask questions and to identify areas of concern with respect to the project.

The steps and procedures that were carried out to ensure that the project consultation principles were adopted and implemented, and the objectives achieved, are outlined in this section. Copies of letters sent and received as part of the consultation program are provided in **Appendix B**.

6.2 Consultation Activities

Stakeholders, including government agencies and local residents, can have intimate knowledge of local issues and the consultation process aimed to identify these issues. In identifying a route for the proposed line, TransGrid faced the challenge of balancing the needs and expectations of a number of stakeholders and as a result, stakeholder input was a key element in the identification and refinement of a route for the proposed alignment.

A summary of consultation activities to date is presented in **Table 6-1** and further discussed below.

Table 6-1 Consultation Activities

Consultation Activities	Dates
Project Announcement	
Meetings with Councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forbes Council and Cabonne Council • Parkes Council 	12/2/08 13/2/08
Letters sent to Regulatory Stakeholders requesting identification of issues to be considered in the corridor selection process.	22/2/2008
Formal feedback period	25/2/08-28/3/08
Newspaper Advertisement for Information Sessions and Fixed Displays	25-29 th February 2008
1800 number operational	25/2/2008 – present
Fixed Community Displays (Parkes Council and Manildra Store)	26/2/2008 – 28/3/2008
Community Consultation Information Sessions	4/3/2008 (Cookamidgera) 5/3/2008 (Manildra)

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Consultation Activities	Dates
Preferred Corridor Announcement	
Route Selection Report placed on TransGrid website	26/6/08
Corridor announcement letters sent to affected lot holders and registered community members	4/8/08
Corridor announcement letters sent to regulatory stakeholders requesting identification of issues to be considered in identification of nominated alignment and associated environmental assessment	4/8/08
TransGrid liaison directly with affected lot holders including one on one meetings	4/8/08 - present
Nominated Alignment Announcement	
Letters sent to affected lot holders	12/12/08
TransGrid Media Release	17/12/08
Continued consultation with affected lot holders	4/8/08 - present

6.2.1 Identification of Stakeholders

Stakeholders were identified through:

- discussions with Cabonne, Forbes and Parkes Shire councils;
- an online search of the council's community services directories and the NSW Community Services Directory; and
- a review of stakeholders known to have been previously interested in such projects.

Groups identified included the general community of the area, community groups, electricity providers and government agencies. Meetings were held with each of the local councils during the week of 11th February 2008. Councils identified key issues of concern and assisted the team in identifying local groups to be included in the consultation process.

Relevant agencies consulted via letter (refer **Section 6.2.2**) for their inputs and requirements comprised:

- Cabonne Shire Council;
- Forbes Shire Council;
- Parkes Shire Council;
- Central West Catchment Management Authority;
- Country Energy;
- Department of Environment and Climate Change;
- Department of Lands;
- Department of State and Regional Development;
- Department of Planning;
- Department of Primary Industries;

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- Department of Water and Energy;
- Lachlan Catchment Management Authority;
- NSW Fire Brigades;
- NSW Rural Fire Service;
- Civil Aviation Safety Authority;
- AirServices Australia;
- Rail Infrastructure Corporation; and
- Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW.

Relevant community groups and industry bodies were also contacted via letter, and written responses were sought in relation to key environmental aspects of the area to be taken into consideration. The groups contacted comprised:

- Parkes & Districts Landcare Steering Committee;
- Back Yamma Landcare Group;
- NSW Farmers Association;
- Manildra District Improvement Association (MADIA);
- Telstra;
- Optus; and
- AGL Energy Limited.

Meetings were also held with International Power (Australia) Pty Ltd in regard to the proposed Peaking Power Plant located to the south of the existing Parkes substation.

6.2.2 Letters to Stakeholders

Project Announcement

Letters were sent to regulatory stakeholders on the 22nd February 2008 outlining the project and asking for comment on the proposal via letter, the 1800 number or direct contact with Comur Consulting.

Preferred Corridor Announcement

Letters outlining the preferred corridor were sent to potentially affected lot holders, registered community members, Parkes, Forbes and Cabonne Councils, Community Groups and other identified regulatory agencies on 4th August 2008.

The letters sent to potentially affected lot holders also indicated that an alignment within this preferred corridor would be nominated for further environmental study and that a TransGrid representative would contact them to discuss the project further.

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Nominated Alignment Announcement

Following further environmental studies, engineering design and one on one discussions with lot holders, letters were sent to affected lot holders on 12th December 2008 indicating that a preferred alignment had been identified and that their property was affected. They were provided with a map of the alignment through their property with assurance of further consultation as the project progressed.

6.2.3 Newspaper Advertisements

Advertisements announced the proposal and invited the community to have an input into the selection of a preferred corridor. The advertisement provided details on the information displays, the 1800 number for further contact and how to make submissions.

Newspaper advertisements were placed in local newspapers comprising:

- Parkes Champion Post (25th February 2008)
- Forbes Advocate (25th February 2008)
- Central Western Daily (25th February 2008)
- Molong Express (28th February 2008)
- Manildra Matters (29th February 2008)

In addition to the local print media, the advertisement was run in the Manildra School magazine.

6.2.4 Open Community Consultation Days

Information sessions were held on the 4th and 5th of March 2008 in Cookamidgera and Manildra, respectively. These provided an opportunity for the community to meet with the project team, discuss the project and provide the team with local information and issues. These sessions enabled information to be presented to the community including:

- the need for the line in the area;
- the process involved in constructing a transmission line including route selection, environmental assessment, and authority approval requirements;
- the history of the project to date, including the key outcomes of the feasibility study; and
- the known constraints in the general study area.

As part of this process, feedback forms were prepared to allow the community to readily provide the project team with their comments and issues of concern to them. These forms were made available at both the fixed display sites and the information sessions and were also sent out on request to members of the community that rang the 1800 number. The forms included a pre-paid address where people could send their responses. In addition, Parkes Council and Manildra Store collected responses and forwarded them on to the team.

A summary of issues raised as part of this process is presented in **Section 6.3**.

6.2.5 1800 Number

An 1800 number was established to enable the community to raise any concerns or questions they had about the proposed transmission line. The details of this number were provided in newspaper advertisements, letters to stakeholders and at the open community consultation days. The feed back received from this was collated in a database. A summary of issues raised as part of this process is presented in **Section 6.3.2**.

6.2.6 Fixed Community Displays

Two fixed display sites were established and information leaflets and posters outlining the proposed development and information sessions were provided, together with the map of the corridor options identified and images of a typical transmission line. The fixed displays were set up at Parkes Council and Manildra Store/Post Office.

As part of these displays, feedback forms were provided to allow community members to register their interest in the project and raise any concerns.

6.2.7 Liaison with Potentially Affected Lot Holders

Liaison with potentially affected lot holders throughout all stages of the project has been a major priority. Consultation has included:

- letters to potentially affected lot holders updating them at each new stage of the project;
- provision of a 1800 number to allow feedback;
- direct response to letters, emails and 1800 number enquiries by TransGrid representatives; and
- ongoing extensive field visits by TransGrid representatives to meet with lot holders and discuss the position of the transmission line on their property.

This final point listed above in particular demonstrates the commitment TransGrid has made to involving the affected lot holders in determining the final location of the transmission line. A considerable effort has been made to meet affected lot holders. From August 2008 to April 2009, the TransGrid liaison team conducted interviews and property inspections on 12 separate occasions, each for 2 to 4 days and involving 2 to 4 officers. A total effort of 71 working days, spread over 31 days, has been a key factor in TransGrid being able to identify and address issues in the process of finalising the transmission line alignment.

A summary of issues that were raised during this consultation are presented in **Section 6.3**.

6.3 Issues Raised During Consultation

6.3.1 Project and Corridor Announcement Stages

New transmission lines can be the cause of concern within communities even if the benefits of such projects are recognised. As a result of the consultation carried out, issues of interest and concern to stakeholders were identified.

Of the feedback received during the corridor selection stage (**Table 6-2**), four people expressed strong support for the proposal and one objected strongly to the proposal. No critical constraints were identified through the consultation though valuable information was provided on items that needed consideration during the choice of a preferred corridor.

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In general terms, stakeholders were interested in the line with some expressing support for the project as they desired the electricity in the area, and others expressing concerns about having the line on their properties.

Table 6-2 Stakeholder Contacts Summary – Corridor Selection Stage

Method of Contact	Number of Contacts
Calls to project team	6
Stakeholder groups contacted via letter and phone	22
Visitors to information sessions	25
People present at Manildra District Improvement Association Progress Meeting Presentation	28
Feedback forms returned	10
Letters received	8

Issues Raised by the Community

Environmental and social considerations were both important to the local community. Of the responses received from the community through calls, letters, meetings and feedback forms, the following issues were identified as important. The numbers in brackets indicate how many of the community specifically raised the issue.

- land use impacts (15)
- no concerns or in favour of the project (12)
- fire management (10)
- weed management (9)
- proximity to residences (7)
- safety during construction (7)
- security of supply (7)
- safety during operation (6)
- power for growth (6)
- visual impacts (5)
- flora/fauna protection (5)
- soil erosion control (4)
- dust management (3)
- noise and vibration (3)
- compensation (3)
- access issues (3)
- water quality (2)
- proximity to villages (2)
- aboriginal heritage (1)

The issues of concern that received the most attention are discussed below.

The impact of the line on land use was a key issue for many of the community. Specific issues included concerns that the line would fit in with existing cropping practices, would not impact on organic certification and would not affect the use of existing airstrips. Some farmers use electronically guided farming regimes that are controlled by GPS navigational equipment. Concern was expressed that placement of structures within cropping land may make using these regimes difficult due to potential disruption of the cropping lines that are established and guided using the GPS system.

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Fire management was also a high priority for the community given recent severe fires and the community's experiences fighting these fires. Concerns were raised over the possibility of fire due to the lines and how TransGrid would manage bush fire.

Concerns regarding the spread of weeds were raised with farmers seeking assurances that weeds would be adequately controlled.

The proximity of the line to residences was an issue identified by a number of the community, together with safety associated with the construction and operation of the line. At the same time, many recognised the value of security of supply and the provision of power for growth in the area. Visual impacts associated with the line were raised as an issue for some.

Other issues raised included flora and fauna protection, soil erosion control, dust and noise management, and access issues. Of concern to one or two members of the community were water quality issues, proximity of the line to local villages and aboriginal heritage.

The majority of the community did not dispute the need for the line and were willing to engage in constructive discussions with the project team to assist in identifying issues of interest or concern. The majority of potentially affected landholders expressed a desire to be informed as soon as possible once a decision regarding the proposed route was made.

Issues Raised by Government Stakeholders

Government stakeholders identified a number of matters and environmental issues to be taken into consideration as part of the REF process. Issues identified assisted in determining the scope of a number of the environmental studies undertaken. The feedback obtained from Government stakeholders is provided in **Appendix B Consultation** and is summarised in **Table 6-3** below.

Table 6-3 Government Stakeholders - Summary of Issues Raised

Stakeholder	Issue
Local Government	<p>No particular constraints were identified and general support for the project was indicated as the project will cater for the additional growth already planned in the area and provide reliability of supply. Specific issues identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support from Parkes Shire Council in light of proposed developments in the area. • Planning processes to be followed. Project to be assessed under Part 5 (TransGrid would determine project) or Part 3A (Minister for Planning would determine project). Council determination will not be required. • Requested consideration be given to contribution to local organisations such as the Rural Fire Service. • Potential route with respect to other proposed developments discussed. • Identified bushfire concerns on northern route. • Notified team of dispersive soils in some areas and identified the need for access tracks to be well designed to prevent erosion. • Noted that higher visual impacts would occur where greater clearing of vegetation is required.

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Stakeholder	Issue
Department of Environment and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DECC identified a number of issues to be considered when assessing the options and carrying out the environmental assessment. DECC is interested in biodiversity (particularly threatened species), Aboriginal cultural heritage, noise, air and land pollution, sediment/surface water control and waste management. DECC would prefer the chosen corridor to avoid or minimise the need for clearing of native vegetation. Offsets will need to be provided where impacts to native vegetation cannot be avoided. Consultation with local Aboriginal Communities is required and an analysis of the likely scenic impacts of the transmission line on the Goobang National Park. In addition DECC stated that the corridor should avoid dividing the Bumberry Sector of Goobang National Park from the northern sectors of the Park. DECC would prefer a route that passes south of all sectors.
Department of Primary Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Primary Industries raised a number of issues, all of which are relevant to any option chosen. These included fishery impacts, permits and approvals, NSW forests, minerals and agricultural impacts.
Department of Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Lands indicated that an initial review of the proposed corridors shows that there is potential impact on a number of Crown Parcels, including reserves and leases and they would like to make further comment when more detail on the proposed route is made available.
Federal Government Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil Aviation Safety Authority identified that the location of the proposed power line has the potential to create an impact on the Obstacle Limitation Services or PANs OPS surfaces associated with Parkes Aerodrome and its instrument approach procedures. To determine the actual impact they suggested contact be made with Parkes Shire Council and Air Services Australia. AirServices Australia noted that at a maximum height of 26m AGL the power lines will not affect any sector or circling altitude, nor any approach or departure from Parkes Aerodrome. The proposed Transmission Line will not impact on Precision/Non-Precision Navigational Aids, HF/VHF Communications, Radar or Satellite/Links.
Central West Catchment Management Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CWCMA want the chosen route to limit environmental loss and the perception of loss for biodiversity through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - avoidance of intact remnant vegetation; - avoiding cutting and burning native vegetation; - replanting native vegetation and offsets for impacts; - installation of public signage acknowledging minimisation of environmental harm.
Telecommunications providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optus noted that they had no assets in the area. Telstra noted that the various options ran through 11 telephone exchange areas. For all options telephone exchanges are likely to have Earth Potential Rise (EPR) and Low Frequency Induction (LFI) impacts but the magnitude of these cannot be determined until the location of the line is known.
Country Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised no concerns but requested that consultation occur if assets were to be impacted. Keen to be distinguished from TransGrid in the eyes of the community.

6.3.2 Nominated Alignment Stage

Finalisation, ground truthing and mapping of the constraints identified within the preferred corridor along with a series of one on one meetings with lot holders and the integration of the environmental constraints with engineering, lot holder and design considerations allowed a nominated alignment to be developed during August to December 2008.

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Lot holder consultation focused on identifying issues of concern and property constraints to allow development and design of the 132kV alignment including identifying appropriate locations for Angle Positions. Lot holder feedback was received through letters, 1800 calls, emails and notes from the one to one meetings. A summary of the key issues raised by lot holders is presented in **Table 6-4**. Issues identified predominantly relate to the implications and impacts of the line on land use, property values and the continued operation of agricultural practices.

Table 6-4 Nominated Alignment Consultation Summary

Aspect	Issue Raised	Response/Section of the REF in which Issue is Addressed
Property/Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative impact on intensive agricultural/tourist/environmentally friendly focused business. Dissection of agricultural land will result in it being impossible to use GPS guidance systems and large efficient farming machinery. Reduction in the capital value of land as a result of both impacts to agricultural production and aesthetic value. Lack of consideration to the future impacts for farmers and livelihood. Concern over the lack of emphasis put on the current agricultural land use when choosing the route. Impact on the use of some farming equipment or construction of silos/sheds etc. A lot of weight for route selection was placed on minimising the disturbance to threatened native vegetation and yet little weight put on the impact on 'cropland'. 	<p>These issues were discussed during meetings between lot holders and TransGrid staff. Where possible issues were addressed and the proposed alignment amended to achieve the best possible outcome when considering all factors.</p> <p>Issues regarding land use impacts, easement restrictions and compensation are addressed in Section 7.14 – Socioeconomic Impact Assessment within this REF.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed route would prevent the use of take/off landing area for aircraft used in agricultural operations. 	<p>The alignment has been designed to avoid Parkes Airport and all known agricultural landing strips, a number of which were identified during the Information Sessions held in March 2008. Refer to Section 1 of the Route Selection Report presented in Appendix A of this REF.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transmission line may result in changed wind conditions. Protection will be needed to stop moisture loss for crops. Proposed line traverses paddocks where irrigation practices are used. Changes to cropping practices. Concerns that poles will add more work to farming program. 	<p>These issues were discussed during meetings between lot holders and TransGrid staff. Where possible, issues were addressed and the proposed alignment amended to achieve the best possible outcome when considering all factors.</p> <p>Issues regarding land use impacts and compensation are further discussed in Section 7.14 – Socioeconomic Impact Assessment within this REF.</p>

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Aspect	Issue Raised	Response/Section of the REF in which Issue is Addressed
<p>Visual</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered that the visual constraints analysis undertaken as part of the Route Selection Report was largely broad scale and did not focus on the smaller scale impacts. 	<p>The purpose of the Rouse Selection Report was to identify constraints across the 3 corridors. The level of study was designed to allow an objective comparison across the corridors and their components. The Route Selection Report is presented in Appendix A. The subsequent visual impact assessment is summarised in Section 7.8 of this REF.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not want multi pole structures or structures with guide wires on cropping land. A proposed house site is located in the area to be impacted by the project. The proposed route would have a significant detrimental impact on the major views from the proposed house site. 	<p>These issues were discussed during meetings between lot holders and TransGrid staff. Where possible issues were addressed and the proposed alignment and design were amended to achieve the best possible outcome when considering all factors.</p>
<p>Community Consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over lack of community consultation. 	<p>An extensive community consultation program has been implemented as summarised in this Section of the REF and in Appendix B.</p> <p>TransGrid has continued an extensive consultation with all affected lot holders and has conducted detailed inspections on 41 of 42 properties affected by the line in order to have one to one discussions regarding the position of the transmission line on the individual properties.</p>
<p>Water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed route traversed a dam on a property used as a non potable water supply and recreation and would have a significant impact on the utility value of the property. The proposed route would follow a water course that carries significant amounts of flood waters. Proposed line would impact on a large capacity dry dam. 	<p>These issues were discussed during meetings between the lot holders and TransGrid staff and the proposed alignment was adjusted where feasible.</p> <p>The assessment of potential impacts on water bodies is provided in Section 7.4 of this REF.</p>
<p>Biodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed line would interfere with a project proposal with the 'Box Gum Grassy Woodlands Project' (Commonwealth Government Program: Caring for our Country). 	<p>The issues raised in the submission concerning the Box Gum Grassy Woodlands Project have been addressed by an alignment adjustment from the northwest to the southeast of the subject property as a result of negotiations with the landowner concerned and their neighbours. Box Gum Grassy Woodland was identified and addressed in the Biodiversity Assessment presented in Section 7 of this REF and within the SIS.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of weight for route selection was placed on minimising the disturbance to threatened native vegetation and yet little weight put on the impact on 'cropland'. 	<p>Table 7-1 of the Route Selection Report identifies all aspects considered within the corridor analysis and includes Lot Density and Land Use.</p>

Aspect	Issue Raised	Response/Section of the REF in which Issue is Addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property contains several known breeding sites of the Superb Parrot. 	This species was identified during URS field surveys. The significance of the proposal upon the Superb Parrot is summarised within Section 7.3 and assessed in full within the SIS.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed route ran along a fence line that is protected by an electric fence. Belief that a dangerous current could be induced in the electric fence by the proposed line, and potentially result in electrocution if contact was made. Concern over how much compensation will be received. 	Section 7.14 Socio-Economic of the REF discusses the interaction of transmission lines with electric fences. This section also summarises the easement compensatory process which will require further consultation between each of the affected lot holders and the proponent.

6.4 Exhibition of the REF

This REF will be placed on exhibition with the SIS. The purpose of the exhibition is to provide the public and government stakeholders with an opportunity to review and comment on the environmental studies undertaken. Following public exhibition of the REF, TransGrid will consider the REF and submissions, and then formally decide whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the environment within the meaning of Section 111 of the EP&A Act. TransGrid will determine whether or not to proceed with the project on the basis of the information provided in the REF and the accompanying SIS.

6.5 Conclusion

The route options consultation undertaken from February to June 2008 identified a number of issues raised by consultees in relation to the proposed transmission line between Manildra and Parkes, including environmental and social issues.

The local Councils generally supported the development, with Parkes Shire Council strongly supporting the proposal to improve reliability of supply to the area in light of proposed developments in its area. No critical constraints were identified by the Councils though future development proposals were discussed. Specific items raised for consideration included proposed developments, bushfire concerns along the northern corridor, dispersive soil management and visual impacts where greater areas of vegetation clearing are required.

State government agencies offered constructive comments on issues to be considered and the nature of data to be collected by the project team. Issues raised included biodiversity (particularly in relation to threatened species), visual impacts, Aboriginal cultural heritage, noise, air and land pollution, sediment/surface water control, waste management, fishery impacts, permits and approvals, NSW forests, minerals and agricultural impacts. DECC would prefer the chosen corridor to avoid or minimise the need for clearing of native vegetation and noted that offsets will need to be provided where impacts to native vegetation cannot be avoided (refer to the Species Impact Statement).

The local community that provided feedback during the consultation is largely an agricultural community involved in both cropping and grazing. The main issue of concern, particularly through the design of the nominated alignment, was land use impacts associated with the line, including impacts on cropping regimes, airstrips and operation of farming enterprises. Fire management was also a key concern to the community, as was weed management. The proximity of the line to residences and safety issues were also of concern to some of the community.

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In conclusion, the consultation undertaken for the proposed Manildra to Parkes 132 kV transmission line identified key issues of concern to the stakeholders associated with the line. The majority of the community did not dispute the need for the line and were willing to engage in constructive discussions with the project team to assist in identifying issues of interest or concern. The majority of affected landholders raised issues of concern predominantly in relation to property values and the continued operation of agricultural practices, each of which were discussed as part of the on-going meetings with TransGrid.