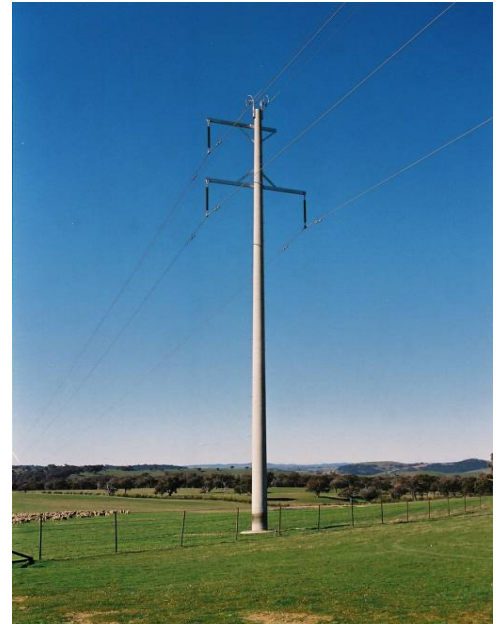


## Executive Summary

### ES 1 Introduction

TransGrid is the State Owned Corporation responsible for the safe, efficient and reliable transport of electricity from power generators to electricity distributors. TransGrid has identified the need for an additional connection between Manildra and Parkes, in Central NSW. The proposed line would meet increasing power demands in the region, directly benefiting residents and businesses in the Parkes, Manildra, Forbes and Cowra areas.

The transmission line would be a single circuit, single pole, 132kV construction, linking the Manildra 132/11kV substation to the Parkes 132/66kV substation (**Figure 1**). The poles would be approximately 200 to 250m apart and would be up to a maximum height of 26m. The total distance of the line is approximately 81km. An easement along the length of the transmission line would be maintained to allow TransGrid to access the line for ongoing routine maintenance. Access tracks for construction and to provide access for ongoing maintenance would also be required where these do not already exist along the proposed easement.



**Figure 1: Typical Pole Structure for a Single Circuit 132kV Transmission Line**

TransGrid has commissioned URS Australia Pty Ltd (URS) to prepare a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the proposed transmission line pursuant to Section 111 of Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (EP&A Act) and a Species Impact Statement (SIS) in accordance with the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act). This document comprises an Executive Summary of the REF and SIS.

#### ES 1.1 Project Description

##### **Location**

The study area (**Figure 2**) is defined by the location of the two existing substations in proximity to the townships of Parkes and Manildra. The proposed transmission line route heads south from the Parkes substation and then turns east passing across the Eurow Mountains and to the south of Cookamidgera, then approaching the Manildra substation from the south.

##### **Route Selection**

Land within the easement of the proposed transmission line is predominantly privately owned property used for cropping and grazing. The impact on agricultural cropping and pastoral grazing would be minimal in the majority of cases. Despite the large expanses of cleared land, preliminary biodiversity studies identified a number of constraints including areas of box gum woodland, an Endangered

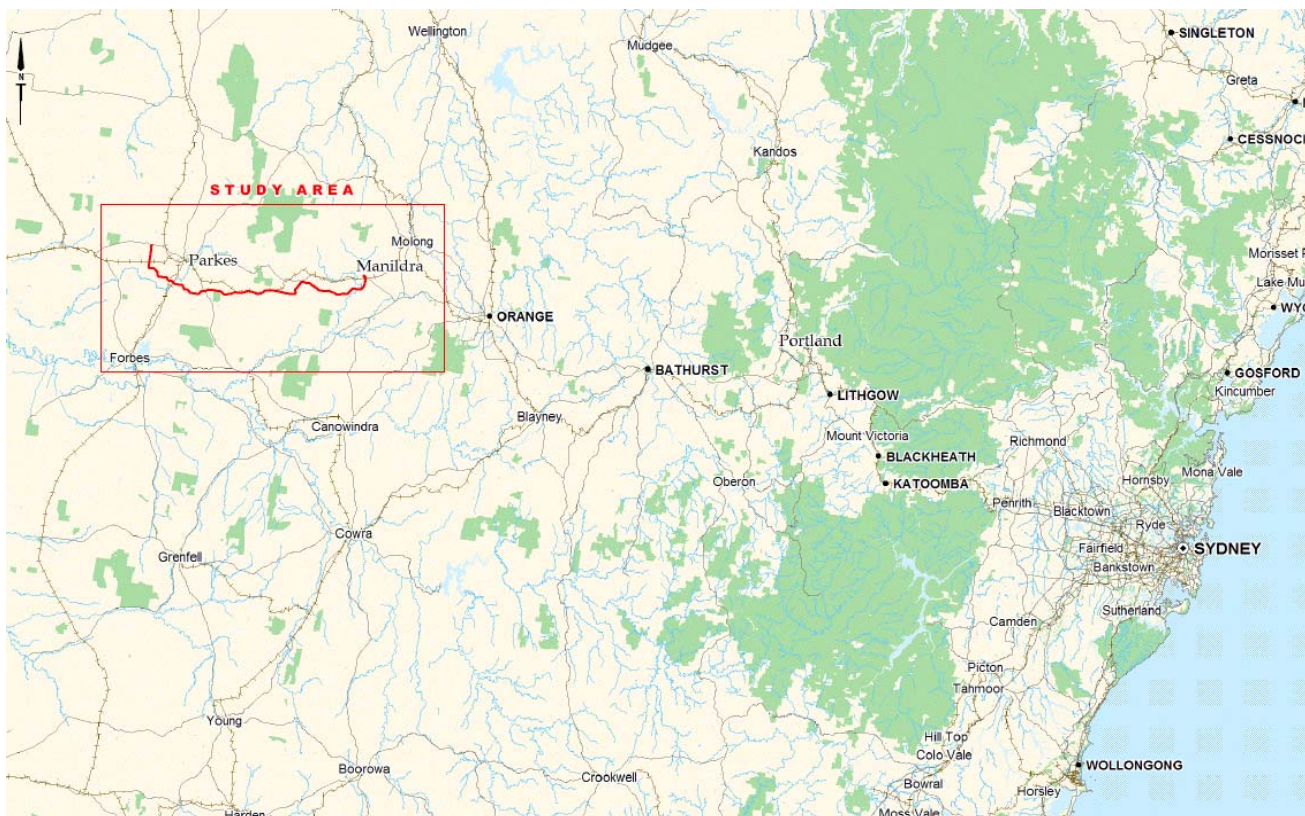
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Ecological Community (EEC) and potential habitat for threatened flora and fauna. The proposal necessitates the permanent removal of vegetation from areas along the alignment to facilitate construction and maintain safety clearances during construction and operational phases of the project.

The route for the proposed transmission line was selected as a result of a consideration of the environmental constraints identified during the corridor selection process and initial stages of the REF preparation. Locations of the angle positions were then further refined through consultation with lot holders and on-going detailed environmental studies in order to avoid as far as practicable, potential adverse ecological, heritage, social, land use, and land management impacts.

The approach has been iterative, based on a close relationship between technical specialists, field investigations and results, TransGrid's engineering design team, lot holder feedback on alignment position, and the TransGrid property team. The focus was on avoidance of significant constraints in the first instance wherever possible. Where constraints were identified and crossed by the proposed alignment, appropriate management and mitigation measures were recommended for implementation.

**Figure 2: Study Area Location**



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### ***Proposed works***

The construction works would be undertaken over a number of successive stages, comprising:

- pre-construction activities including site inspections; centre-line and easement surveys; line pegging; and identification and marking out of existing underground services across the proposed alignment;
- access track upgrading and/or construction as required. Temporary access tracks will be established for construction phase purposes and permanent access tracks for ongoing operation;
- vegetation clearing along the 45m wide easement as required for access and safety clearance purposes. TransGrid must maintain adequate clearance between transmission line conductors and vegetation;
- site preparation and pole foundation work including any necessary benching and excavation for establishing work pad sites;
- installation of pole structures;
- conductor and earthwire stringing between each of the erected poles; and
- rehabilitation including slope stabilisation works and revegetation at work site areas and construction access tracks not needed for future maintenance of the line.

Subject to approvals, it is anticipated that construction of the proposed transmission line would commence in early 2010 and be completed by early 2011 following completion of detailed design and tendering. Total construction time would be approximately 48 weeks.

Operational Activities would comprise:

- accessing existing formed roads and tracks by various vehicles required for carrying out of inspection and maintenance activities in the transmission line corridor (4WDs, trucks, cranes/borers, elevated working platforms and tractor/slasher);
- inspection and assessment of infrastructure (poles, conductors and ancillary components) and vegetation;
- managing vegetation to maintain safety clearances from transmission lines. The maintenance of safe clearances from conductors to vegetation is essential to eliminate the risk of lines causing bushfires, to ensure the safety of the public, and to maintain high levels of system reliability;
- managing weeds;
- repairing or replacing elements of transmission lines; and
- maintaining associated access tracks. Passage must be maintained for all weather access to transmission lines and structures for emergency repairs, routine maintenance, inspection or construction. Access tracks to and along the proposed easement would be maintained to all weather 4 wheel drive standard throughout the operational phase of the project.

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### ES 1.2 Project Justification

Currently a 132kV transmission network between Yass and Wellington supplies Cowra, Forbes and Parkes and their surrounding areas with electricity from the NSW grid. When the Wellington-Parkes line experiences outages it results in the supply for the area being solely sourced from Yass. This puts a high demand on the Yass-Cowra line which can become overloaded, particularly in times of high demand during winter and summer. The proposed Manildra-Parkes line would take pressure off the Yass-Cowra line and generally help the network function at a more efficient level.

A growing population and increasing industrial output means that Parkes and the surrounding region requires an ongoing secure supply of electricity. The proposed line would ensure that the growing demands of electricity supply across the Central West could be met currently, as well as into the future.

### ES 1.3 Planning Context and Environmental Assessment Process

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.

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).

Assessment in accordance with the TSC Act has been addressed in a Species Impact Statement. Section 112 of the EP&A Act enables a 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 and SIS, TransGrid will consider submissions received 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.

### ES 1.4 Community Consultation

In order to undertake a comprehensive environmental assessment of the proposed 132kV transmission line, appropriate emphasis was placed on those issues likely to be of greatest significance to the local environment, land owners and the wider community. To achieve this, a program of community, land owner and government consultation was undertaken to assist in the identification of relevant issues and potential impacts. 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.

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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 impact of the line on land use was a key issue for many members of the community. Specific issues included concerns that the line would impact with existing cropping practices, potential impact on organic certification and impacts to the use of existing airstrips. 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 line and how TransGrid would manage bushfire.

The proximity of the line to residences was an issue identified by a number of members of the community, together with safety associated with the construction and operation of the line. 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 project consultation program included close liaison with government stakeholders, local Council, registered interested parties, and affected lot holders. Issues raised were documented in a Project Database before being reviewed and responded to by the environmental technical specialists or by the TransGrid property team as appropriate. The REF includes a summary of key consultation issues raised and associated response.

### ES 1.5 Assessment of Environmental Impacts

Desktop and/or field based Environmental studies were carried as part of the REF to determine the existing environmental baseline conditions across the proposed development footprint and to identify the likely impacts of the project on the surrounding environment.

#### ***Geology, Topography and Soils***

The soils along the alignment and in the lower valley regions generally have a deep soil profile that increases with clay content at depth. There is potential for erosion and sedimentation to occur in association with all works requiring disturbance to the ground surface. These impacts are associated with the establishment of work sites, erection of poles, and establishment of access tracks. The likelihood of impact is greater in areas with moderate to steep slopes and in areas where the soils are fragile and readily erodible. The primary risk associated with soils in the study area is the disturbance of sodic soils. The combination of dispersive soils and high water run-on has the potential to cause gully erosion.

Careful route selection has ensured that the proposed transmission line route would not pass through the higher elevation regions. This enables most of the steep shallow soil areas to be avoided, greatly reducing the potential impact of the proposed development upon the soils of the area. A range of appropriate erosion control measures have been identified in the REF and have been incorporated into an Outline CEMP.

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### **Surface Water**

Surface water within the study area is characterised by a number of small to medium sized farm dams and third-order streams which comprise the tributaries and drainage lines of the Lachlan River. Watercourses and associated tributaries either crossed by, or in close proximity to, the alignment comprise:

- Ridgely Creek;
- Goobang Creek;
- Crooked Creek;
- Bartleys Creek;
- Quart Pot Creek;
- Waterhole Creek;
- Reedy Creek;
- Dirt Hole Creek;
- Markeys Creek;
- Mandagery Creek; and
- FlashJacks Creek.

The greatest potential for environmental impact with regard to surface waters relate to the crossing of watercourses and gullies at approximately 38 locations along alignment, as well as potential soil erosion impacts from activities to be undertaken during the construction phase of the project. The proposed alignment has considered the location of waterways and the design has ensured that pole locations would avoid surface water features where possible. In addition, riparian vegetation would be maintained wherever feasible in order to limit the disturbance to the bank and riparian environment. Providing that the recommended erosion controls are in place, the potential impact of construction work (with associated work pad sites and laydown areas) on waterways is considered to be minimal.

### **Terrestrial Biodiversity**

The biodiversity assessment undertaken for the proposed alignment involved:

- a desktop assessment;
- preliminary field survey to identify potential constraints within the corridor options investigated as part of the route selection process;
- targeted field surveys;
- an assessment of impacts on the biodiversity of the study area; and
- a determination of appropriate measures to avoid, mitigate and offset impacts on biodiversity.

The proposed alignment traverses land predominately used for cropping and grazing. Despite the large expanses of cleared land, preliminary biodiversity studies identified a number of constraints including areas of box gum woodland, an Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) and potential habitat for threatened flora and fauna. One of the key considerations in the selection of the preferred alignment was to avoid or minimise the impact to areas of high ecological value.

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Following preliminary studies an Assessment of Significance was carried out to address requirements within Section 5A of the EP&A Act. The assessment concluded that the proposed transmission line is likely to have a significant impact on the endangered ecological community Yellow Box, White Box, Blakely's red gum woodland, which is listed as endangered under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act). As such, a SIS for the 132kV transmission line proposal was prepared in tandem with the REF.

The SIS concluded that the proposal would have the following impacts on Box-Gum Woodland:

- approximately 11 ha of Box-Gum Woodland will be partially cleared as part of the proposal; and
- there will be an increase in the impact of a number of key threatening processes.

Box-Gum Woodland within the study area has been extensively cleared or degraded for agricultural development (**Figure 3**). Very few areas cover extensive tracts of land, and much of the community occurs as already isolated and fragmented remnants.

The proposal is considered to contribute to an increase in the impact of a number of key threatening processes (in accordance with the TSC Act) including clearing, degradation and fragmentation of remnants, grazing pressure, soil degradation, weed invasion, feral animal invasion resulting in loss or alteration to habitat, firewood collection and removal of woody debris.

Given the extent of the EEC and the habitat associated with it, along with the impacts identified, the proposal is considered likely to result in a significant impact on the Box-Gum Woodland EEC.

**Figure 3: Degraded Box Gum Woodland within the Study Area**



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A number of mitigation measures have been recommended to ameliorate the proposed impacts of the proposal on EEC's. These include:

- avoidance wherever possible; and
- restrictive clearing in areas of EEC.

Vegetation clearing would be associated with installation of poles and access tracks. Permanent clearing of canopy and shrub layers would only be required within a 15m diameter of each pole along the line, rather than broad scale clearing of all vegetation within the easement area.

For fauna species, the degree of impact will depend upon the extent of clearing and the ability, or inability, of individuals to relocate to other suitable habitats within the locality.

A range of mitigation measures have been incorporated into an Outline CEMP. It is recognised that in themselves, mitigation measures would be unlikely to meet the 'improve or maintain' principle established under the EP&A Act. As such, an offset strategy for the project has been identified.

### ***Indigenous Heritage***

The Indigenous and non-Indigenous assessment undertaken along portions of the alignment involved:

- a desktop based investigation into previous heritage finds in close proximity to the proposed development;
- physical survey at specific areas along the proposed alignment (these areas were chosen according to the results of an assessment of archaeological sensitivity along the route);
- assessment of the significance of recorded sites; the potential significance of the heritage resources identified and the formulation of general and specific management options; and
- completion of documentary evidence (including DECC AHIMS Site Cards, NSW Heritage Council Inventory sheets) for any sites/objects located during the survey for the notification of the relevant authorities.

The heritage survey determined that the proposed alignment has undergone various levels of disturbance along its 81km length. A total of 18 Aboriginal sites were identified during the current assessment, comprising 14 open sites, two scarred trees and two isolated finds examples shown in **Figure 4**.

Of the open sites recorded, all are considered to have potential, albeit varying, for subsurface deposits (referred to as Potential Archaeological Deposits or PADs). Some have the potential for intact archaeological deposits to occur, while for others sub-surface deposits are likely to have been impacted to some degree by ploughing or scarification.

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Figure 4: Example Indigenous Heritage Finds



*Hand axe showing both edges of the axe have been ground down to produce a sharp edge.*



*The tree is a grey box (*eucalyptus macrocarpa*) with an elongated scar indicating the bark was probably removed to make a shield.*

Impacts of the transmission line would occur along its entire length with varying intensity. There would be ground surface disturbing activities around the angle position poles and intermediate poles, as well as the use of existing access tracks, tracks requiring upgrade and possibly the construction of new access tracks. To date, not all the impacts of the project are known, although the alignment is now fixed and the angle position pole locations are set.

The heritage assessment outlines a tiered mitigation strategy based on the significance of the heritage finds and the potential for avoidance of disturbance wherever possible. In terms of the management options for the current project based on known impacts to date, the mitigation measures that will apply comprise:

- Group 1 – Sites to be avoided during further project design and to be fenced off during construction works;
- Group 2 – Sites requiring a Section 87 / 90 permit for test/salvage excavation, surface collection and monitoring; and
- Group 3 – Sites requiring a Section 90 AHIP permit for destruction.

### ***Non Indigenous Heritage***

No items of non-Indigenous heritage have been identified within those portions of the easement assessed to date. One possible item of heritage significance, a Cobb & Co staging location, has been identified through landholder consultation. The location includes no physical evidence and verification has not been possible to date. It is nonetheless outside the impact footprint for the transmission line.

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As identified within the recommendations for Indigenous Heritage, it is recommended that assessment of the remaining portions of the proposed easement and other impact locations (access tracks) should precede construction. Work should stop if any unidentified archaeological finds or evidence is uncovered during construction of the transmission line.

### *Visual Amenity*

The methodology for the visual assessment comprised the following activities:

- desktop study addressing visual character of the proposed alignment and associated activities and immediate surrounding area;
- site inspection and fieldwork;
- assessment of impact and identification of mitigation measures.

A primary objective of the assessment was to determine the likely visual impact of the transmission line on people living and working in, or travelling through surrounding areas.

The potential visual impact of the transmission line would result primarily from the combination of two factors:

- the degree of visual contrast between the transmission line and the surrounding landscape that would form a background to potential views from receptor locations; and
- the extent to which the transmission line would be visible from surrounding areas.

A total of 57 receptor locations were identified as part of the visual assessment process, and included views from rural residential properties, road corridors and railway lines. An example view location is provided in **Figure 5**.

An assessment of the visibility rating for each receptor location indicated that:

- 10 of the 57 view locations have been determined to have a NIL visibility rating;
- 38 of the 57 view locations have been determined to have a LOW visibility rating;
- 5 of the 57 view locations have been determined to have a MODERATE visibility rating; and
- 2 of the 57 view locations have been determined to have a HIGH visibility rating.

The visual assessment determined that the potential visual impact for motorists and rail passengers travelling along local roads, main highways and portions of railway lines would be low. Overall, the transmission line would tend to have a low visual impact on people travelling through, or residing in areas surrounding the transmission line and the project would be unlikely to create an unacceptable level of visual change to the surrounding landscape.

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Figure 5: Example View Location



### **Traffic and Transport**

A desk-based traffic and transport assessment was undertaken. There is an extensive network of roads in the surrounding region consisting of roads with national, state and local significance. Numerous smaller sealed roads and dirt tracks link up to these main highways providing access throughout the area. An investigation of the local road network determined that while the majority of the main access roads are sealed two lane roads, others likely to be utilised will include a number of sealed one lane roads or unsealed one or two lane roads.

The major impacts on the majority of properties associated with the construction traffic would occur over a period of 2-3 days during the pole construction works. Additional visits would occur on an occasional basis for a period of approximately 6 weeks until the stringing process was completed along the length of the line.

Where construction works are undertaken in close proximity to residential properties, there may be a temporary impact on the local amenity of the area due to increased traffic and plant noise, however the impacts would be short in duration. Construction traffic would only be a minor portion of the total traffic in the area over the period of construction, and inconvenience would be limited to one or two days at any location.

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During the operation of the line, few vehicles would access the line on a regular basis. Routine maintenance would likely involve 1-2 vehicle movements annually along the road networks to the line, then along the designated access routes within the 45m easement (and any off-easement access tracks required). Vehicles associated with the ongoing maintenance of the 132kV transmission line would have a negligible impact on the existing local road network.

### **Noise and Vibration**

The existing acoustic environment in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line consists predominantly of rural areas with low density human activity. The noise assessment determined that according to the conservative methodology employed, the predicted noise levels for proposed construction activities exceed the construction noise limit at receptor locations within approximately 300m of the construction sites, of which eight were identified: seven inhabited and one uninhabited.

For receptor locations greater than 300m from the proposed alignment, exceedences of 5dB to 9dB would be expected during vegetation clearing activities only. Minor exceedences (~3dB) may occur during conductor and earthwire stringing activities and structure foundation works. Exceedences would not be expected from the structure erection activities.

It should be noted that the predicted noise levels presented above result from a conservative approach where it has been assumed that all equipment and plant items would operate continuously and simultaneously during the whole assessment period. Furthermore, no shielding from topography or ground absorption have been assumed in the calculations and noise levels are expected to be lower for the receptors located greater than 100m from the construction sites.

Noise management strategies such as engineering noise controls and work practices are considered to be the best environmental management options for the construction phase.

Operational noise associated with the proposed transmission line is expected to be negligible as transmission lines are typically silent in operation and are not normally a source of noise complaint. There would be a small number of vehicular movements and occasional helicopter patrols during inspections and routine maintenance along the easement. These practices have generally been considered acceptable across other areas of TransGrid lines.

### **Air Quality**

The construction and operation of the proposed transmission line would not be considered a significant source of air pollution. Local air quality has the potential to be marginally affected during the works as a result of occasional burning of vegetation, minor dust generation and exhaust emissions from construction vehicles.

The proposed transmission line would contribute to the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere through the operation of mobile plant and vehicles and through clearance of vegetation across areas of the 81km easement length. While the proposal involves some clearance of vegetation, where vegetation is removed, these disturbed areas would be restored by seeding,

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fertilising and rehabilitation. Revegetation would permit the land to again play a role in CO<sub>2</sub> absorption from the atmosphere.

In addition to this, the project would act to reduce line transmission losses in the Central West of New South Wales, through increased efficiency of the network.

### **EMF**

TransGrid has a strong commitment to health and safety in all of its activities and as part of this commitment, in addition to working within Australian Health Guidelines, TransGrid adopts a prudent approach to the EMF issue. This approach involves taking EMF into account in the design and location of new facilities; closely monitoring ongoing research and reviews by scientific panels and international policy developments; continuously reviewing policies and practices in light of the latest scientific information; measuring field strengths in and around TransGrid installations and other places where appropriate; and providing information to interested people.

The field strengths created by powerlines are dependent upon the height of the wires above ground and their geometric arrangement. The strength of both the electric field and the magnetic field falls away rapidly with distance from the line.

The electric and magnetic fields associated with the proposed line have been calculated in accordance with standard protocols. The predicted values were found to be well within the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines for public exposure and are commensurate with typical fields associated with such developments.

### **Waste Recovery and Utilisation**

The proposed transmission line would adopt the principles of avoidance and resource recovery during site preparation, installation works and operation/ ongoing maintenance. Any waste that could not be avoided or recovered would be disposed of at a licensed waste facility.

Both solid and liquid waste materials would be generated during the construction program. Wastes would potentially include empty conductor and earthwire drums; short lengths of conductors, earthwires and staywires; vegetation debris; excavation spoil; putrescibles wastes; packaging materials; drums and lubricants from machinery services; items replaced such as fences and gates; and contractor depot wastes.

During the construction works, a strategy of minimisation and responsible disposal of waste would be implemented. This would be consolidated in a Waste Management Plan. The Waste Management Plan would provide a checklist of actions to enable separate collection of materials using designated labelled bins. Systems would be established and monitored using checklists and audits to ensure that maximum reuse and recycling of these materials can take place.

### **Socio-Economic Impact Assessment**

The construction of the transmission line would provide short term work for the construction crews, though would not provide any direct additional long term employment in the area. It would contribute

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to potential jobs in the area by supporting the ongoing development of additional industries through the reliable provision of power. The construction work would have negligible impact on social infrastructure and services within the wider project area. Local materials would be used for improving the surface of access tracks and pouring concrete foundations. Maintenance facilities and consumables would also be sourced locally.

The proposed transmission line would have limited impact on agricultural activities. Land located with the proposed easement may be used for agricultural activities such as grazing and horticulture provided that trees and shrubs within the easement do not exceed 4m in height and do not restrict access to a structure.

Grazing and cropping land would not suffer any significant decline in productivity as the proposed easement would not be fenced. The supporting structures would occupy an insignificant amount of the total easement area and the land under the line could be cultivated by mechanical means provided that care is taken with machinery used. There is no evidence suggesting that the line would have any adverse effect on the behaviour or productivity of livestock. Maintenance personnel would need occasional access to the line. Their activities would not interfere with normal agricultural activities.

### ES 1.6 Environmental Management and Mitigation

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would be prepared for the project by the contractor. The CEMP would cover all environmental aspects associated with the construction phase and would include the controls and mitigation measures identified in the approved Review of Environmental (REF), Species Impact Statement (SIS) and Concurrence from the Director General of the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC).

TransGrid maintains high environmental standards when undertaking all its activities and has an Environmental Management System accredited to ISO14001.

This system ensures that:

- all work complies with all relevant environmental statutes, regulations and standards;
- environmental factors are taken into account for each activity; and
- regular audits are performed to confirm compliance with environmental policies and standards.

TransGrid would appoint an appropriate independent Environmental Management Representative (EMR) to regularly audit the work activities to ensure that all mitigation measures are being effectively applied and that the work is being carried out in accordance with the CEMP and all environmental approval and legislative conditions. The EMR will report directly to the Manager Central Region or delegate.

Whilst the easement is finalised and angle position locations have been determined, there remains some flexibility in the final location of intermediate poles and access tracks within and external to the 45m wide easement. The detailed design stage which will identify the position of these intermediate

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poles and required access tracks will take into consideration the location of identified environmental constraints and attempt to avoid them wherever possible.

In accordance with the mitigation measures outlined in this REF, once the location of intermediate poles and access tracks are known, further ecological and cultural heritage surveys may be required. Assessment and identification of survey requirements will also be undertaken for parts of the alignment which were not subject to on ground survey for the REF.

These surveys will be undertaken by specialists and in a manner consistent with the surveys undertaken for the project to date. This will ensure that the impacts of pole locations and access tracks are assessed and that they do not result in a significant impact on biodiversity or cultural heritage values.

### ES 1.7 Conclusion

An REF and SIS of the proposal have been undertaken in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* and the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

On the basis of the studies detailed within the REF and SIS, and with implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, the proposed transmission line is assessed as being not likely to cause a significant impact on the environment beyond the ecological impacts discussed within the terrestrial biodiversity section of the REF and the accompanying SIS.

Environmental impacts have been avoided wherever possible through the route selection process and through an on-going integrated environmental assessment and alignment design process. Where impacts cannot be avoided the suite of mitigation measures and environmental controls identified within the REF and SIS will be implemented.

The proposed transmission line is required to ensure the reliability of electricity supply across the Central West and to meet growing demands into the future. Overall, the proposal is assessed as appropriate in terms of state environmental planning policy and of a design that addresses and responds to the environmental and socio-economic aspects assessed.