Meeting Minutes

HumeLink Construction Reference Group – Wagga Wagga

Meeting Title:	HumeLink West Construction Reference Group	**Date:**	21 September 2026
Location:	Online	**Time:**	4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Chairperson:	Reem Nasr (RN), Transgrid
Attendees:	David Stratton (DS), Community member Sally Manning (SM), Wagga Business Chamber Laura Young (LY), Transgrid Vince Newton (VN), UGL-CPB Joint Venture Chantelle Garrett (CG), UGL-CPB Joint Venture Katia Salazar Reviakina (KSR), Transgrid Shaun DaCosta (SD), Transgrid Rachel Whiting (RW), Regional Development Australia – Riverina
Apologies:	Scott Gray (SG), Wagga Wagga City Council Max Gordon-Hall (MGH), Inspector of Ranges (Ambulance) Superintendent Stewart Alexander (SA), Fire and Rescue

Agenda items

Agenda item	Notes	Decisions / actions
1. Acknowledgement of Country & Welcome	Reem Nasr acknowledged the Wiradjuri people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which a significant portion of HumeLink is being built and acknowledged the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands of all those joining via Teams. RN paid respects to Elders past and present.	
2. Welcome and housekeeping	Reem Nasr welcomed attendees, outlined the agenda, and encouraged questions throughout the session.	

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3. Confirmation of previous meeting minutes and review of action items	Reem Nasr reviewed action items from the previous meeting: 1. Share the LO guideline. (Completed) 2. Confirm if contractor,Garry Gillespie Constructionswas local. (Complete – contractor is considered local) 3. Further information on rehydration program (In progress). RN organising an information flyer to be provided. Reem Nasr invited questions and comments from attendees.	Action: RN to include Landowner Easement guidelines in meeting minutes distribution email Action: https://mulloonsinstitute.org/learning-events/communities-of-practice/ This was the original CoP Program that was set up with funding from the Federal *Future Drought Fund*. The only difference being, instead of a Professional Program offering, under the Transgrid funding we are setting up the Demonstration Sites in each CoP. Additionally, we have not partnered with Soils for Life on the HumeLink project.
4. Construction update and three-month look ahead	Vince Newton provided a HumeLink project update and lookahead. Project overview: • 125+ towers. Tower erection is moving towards southern end of the project. • 500kV HumeLink upgrades to the 330kV Wagga Wagga substation. • Energisation of Line 6.	

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	• Cullinga Park Lane, Tarcutta batch plant decommission. Construction activities are now focused on the southern section of the project, with works progressing along Line 1 towards Maragle. • Installation of the three monopoles at Gregadoo. This work was part of the energisation of Line 6. • 81% clearing, 90% access tracks and tower pads, 60% tower foundations, 33% towers. Construction works over the coming months: • Blasting and excavating with piling rigs and excavators for the tower foundations, concreting foundations. • Deliveries of foundations steel reinforcements, tower steel, stringing steel. • Assembling and lifting tower segments into position using cranes. • Hurdles and road crossings, including Hume Highway. • Helicopter stringing in the coming months to pull conductor cables through and connect to insulators. • Vegetation clearing, excavation and earthwork. • Installing nesting boxes for wildlife and poles for glider mammals. • Electrical equipment installations, testing and commissioning at Gugga and Maragle Substations. Foundations and gantries are completed at Gugga and Maragle. • Proposed Kunama worker accommodation facilities expansion. A video showcasing the latest construction activities was presented.	
5. Local Capacity	Chantelle Garrett provided a workforce, accommodation, and local capacity update. • Since the June CRG meeting, the total number of contracts has increased from 156 to 175. Growth in contract is expected to slow as most contracts have been awarded. • The number of local contractors has remained the same. • Garry Gillespie Constructions confirmed as a local supplier. • HLW engaged a local candidate to host onsite trivia. • Since the June CRG meeting, expenditure with local and regional businesses has increased from $82m to $108m.	

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	• Since the June CRG meeting, expenditure with local and regional businesses has increased from $13.4m to $17m. David Stratton asked whether there was a breakdown of project expenditure, specifically for roadworks. Note, project expenditure is commercial-in-confidence. David also raised concerns about damage to local roads resulting from project activities and asked whether repairs would be funded by the project or by taxpayers. Chantelle Garrett advised that road condition surveys are undertaken before works commence and that roads are restored to their pre-construction condition. Ongoing discussions are held with Wagga Wagga City Council and the Snowy Valleys Council regarding road management agreements and maintenance responsibilities.	
6. Community investment and engagement	Chantelle Garrett provided a community investment and engagement update. HLW Community Investment and Benefit Program HumeLink West funded four projects: • Tarcutta Recreational Grounds Infrastructure Improvement Plan: Currently assessing DA requirements. Design pending completion of Batlow design, expected this week. Grid connection design submission to Essential Energy expected early October. • Batlow Multi-Purpose Leisure Hub: Development application submission expected by end September. • Adelong Golden Gully Caravan Park Accommodation: Development application re-submission with fire and flood studies expected by end September. • Carcoola Children's Centre at Tumbarumba: Pending approval by Snowy Valleys Council, work starting September, completion end 2026. Noted recent community initiatives • Wagga NAIDOC basketball • CWA defibrillator donation • Ladysmith and Humula Memorial Halls fundraisers sponsorship • Wagga Wagga Show • $5,000+ worker donations and return and earn initiative to Tarcutta Public School • Batlow Central School and Tumbarumba High School STEM and careers sessions • Tarcutta Pony Club 60th anniversary cookbook and event	

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	• Mulloon Institute workshops. Reem Nasr explained that the recent bootcamps focused on the theory and practical application of techniques to improve water retention in the landscape and enhance soil health. The two-day bootcamps include hands-on learning to help landholders understand how these techniques can be implemented on their own properties. Bootcamps have been held at Tooles Creek, Bookham and Taralga. RN noted that the Tooles Creek event was particularly well attended and received strong support from local landholders. Noted a number of upcoming community engagement: • Emergency Services briefings, Tarcutta & Kunama • Henty Field Days • Tarcutta community garden initiative • Snowy Valleys Cycle Challenge sponsorship • Humula, Rosewood, Talbingo, and Khancoban primary school's excursion support • Wagga Business Chamber Tarcutta WAF tour • Tumbarumba Business Chamber Maragle tour Ongoing community initiatives: • Tumbarumba High School Breakfast Club sponsorship • Snowy Valleys Resilience Hub community space • Return & Earn fundraising for Tarcutta Public School and Batlow Rotary Club • Community gym use of Worker AF gyms. 27 people are inducted regularly using the gyms. David Stratton noted that, through community discussions, he had heard positive feedback and a sense of excitement regarding use of the gym. Sally Manning acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Wagga Golden Crow. Reem Nasr asked members to share this recognition with their networks where possible. Reem Nasr noted that she had received requests from community members seeking contact details for CRG members. RN asked whether members were comfortable with their email addresses being shared. David Stratton, Rachel Whiting and Sally Manning confirmed that they were happy for their email addresses to be provided for community contact purposes.	

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	Reem Nasr invited members to raise any other matters for discussion. David Stratton raised concerns regarding road damage associated with the project, noting that his primary concern was not Livingston Gully Road but the roads leading towards Tumbarumba. David asked how road repairs and maintenance would be funded and sought further information on the process. David also referred to a recent enquiry he had submitted regarding capacity overbuild within the project. He noted that the response indicated that additional capacity had been incorporated into the design. David expressed concerns about the rapid pace of technological change and future electricity demand forecasts, citing developments such as battery storage technology, renewable energy generation, and investments in projects such as Snowy 2.0. He questioned whether the future need for higher transmission capacity and larger transmission structures could change over time. David stated that he was concerned about building infrastructure to meet future demand when there is uncertainty regarding future energy use. He noted that current transmission demand is significantly lower than the network capacity for which HumeLink has been designed. Reem Nasr noted that this matter was outside the scope of the HumeLink project. However, Reem advised that this year's Integrated System Plan (ISP) had recently been published and that interested members could review the published material. Reem explained that the ISP outlines a range of future energy demand and generation scenarios used to inform transmission planning. Reem further noted that the current ISP is expected to include consideration of emerging factors such as data centres, battery storage, and changing energy consumption patterns, and that these matters should be addressed in greater detail within the published documentation. David Stratton noted that the ISP is based on forecasts and assumptions about future energy demand and expressed the view that infrastructure should not be built for future scenarios that remain uncertain.	

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	Reem Nasr acknowledged David's comments and advised that his concerns would be recorded in the meeting minutes. David Stratton then asked whether there was an updated project completion date. Vince Newton advised that the project is maintaining its current contractual completion date at this stage. David Stratton asked whether the project team remained confident in achieving the 2027 completion date. Vince confirmed that 2027 remains the target completion date currently being maintained.	
7. Transgrid Community Partnership Program	Laura Young provided update on Transgrid Community Partnership program. • Transgrid's Community Partnerships Program (CPP)is now open for Round 2, 2026, offering grants of up to $5,000 for not-for-profit and community organisations delivering projects that create real benefits for the communities where we operate. • Through CPP, Transgrid partners with local organisations to support the projects, services and initiatives that matter most to them, from improving safety and emergency response capability to supporting health, wellbeing, education and community connection. • Round 2, 2026 of the Transgrid CPP is officially open from today and closes Sunday 25 Oct (midnight).	
8. Next steps and close	Reem Nasr asked for any final questions. David Stratton raised concerns regarding lighting at the Gugaa Substation, noting that it had caused disturbance to residents. David referred to earlier discussions with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) team regarding the possibility of reducing or switching off lighting when the project becomes operational. Katia Salazar Reviakina confirmed that once operational, the substation lighting will be controlled by motion sensors and referred David to the existing Gugaa Substation factsheet. Chantelle Garrett thanked members for their feedback and noted that the project team appreciates concerns being raised to help inform project planning and operations. Chantelle also reiterated that, should members wish to see specific videos, images, or other project information, they	

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	are encouraged to let the project team know so that future CRGs can be tailored to their interests and information needs. Reem Nasr thanked members for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.	

Actions

Agenda item	Description	Responsibility
3. Confirmation of previous meeting minutes and review of action items	To include Landowner guidelines in meeting minutes distribution email	Reem Nasr
3. Confirmation of previous meeting minutes and review of action items	To provide rehydration program flyer	Reem Nasr