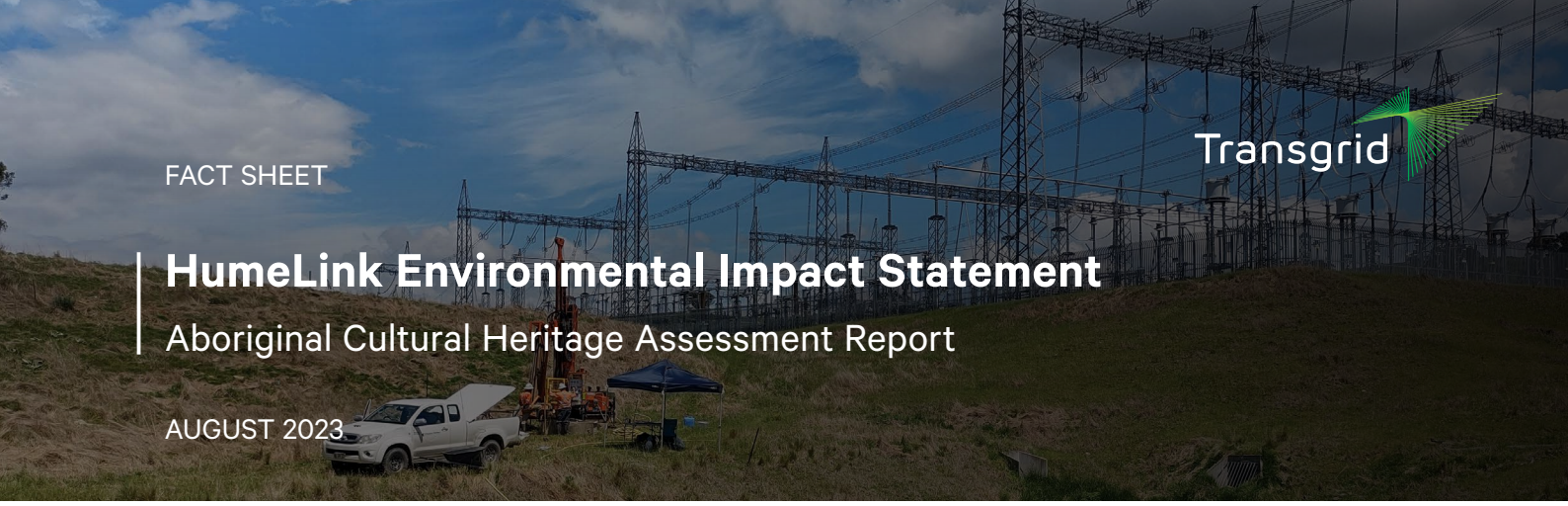


FACT SHEET

HumeLink Environmental Impact Statement

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report

AUGUST 2023

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The HumeLink project has been classified by the NSW Government as Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI). All CSSI development applications must be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The purpose of the EIS is to identify and assess the potential environmental, economic and social impacts of the project to help government agencies, relevant authorities, community and stakeholders make an informed decision or provide an informed submission on the merits of the project.

EIS project footprint

The HumeLink project extends from the existing Wagga Wagga 330 kV substation to the existing Bannaby 500 kV substation and the future Maragle 500 kV substation.

The EIS footprint is based on an indicative 200 metre corridor and is defined as the area directly affected by the construction and operation of the project. It includes the indicative location of project infrastructure, the area that would be directly disturbed during construction and any easement required during operation.

The final location of all proposed infrastructure will be confirmed during detailed design.

HumeLink planning approvals and EIS

As part of the planning approval process for HumeLink, Transgrid is preparing an EIS in accordance with the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). The SEARs identify matters which must be addressed in the EIS and essentially form its terms of reference. It includes the requirements from both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

A series of technical studies and reports to assess potential impacts are completed as part of the EIS. This includes the Aboriginal heritage topic covered in this fact sheet.

Can I provide feedback?

Once the EIS is finalised, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) will place the EIS on exhibition and call for public submissions. You will be able to provide feedback on the EIS directly to the DPE during this public display period. More information on how to make a submission will be provided closer to the EIS exhibition period.

To learn more about the HumeLink EIS, please visit the EIS Frequently Asked Questions on our website.

Aboriginal heritage

HumeLink Environmental Impact Statement Specialist Studies

- Aboriginal heritage
- Agricultural land
- Air quality
- Aviation safety
- Biodiversity
- Bushfire risk
- Economic
- Electric and magnetic fields
- Greenhouse gas and climate change risk
- Historic heritage
- Hydrology and flooding
- Landscape character and visual amenity
- Land use and property
- Noise and vibration
- Social
- Soils, geology and contamination
- Surface water and groundwater
- Sustainability
- Traffic and transport

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation Transgrid acknowledges Wiradjuri, Ngarigo, Wolgalu and Ngunnawal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Country where the HumeLink project corridor traverses.

We recognise and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first explorers, scientists, farmers, astronomers and story tellers.

We pay our respects to the people, Elders both past and present and celebrate the diversity and successes of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing connections to the lands and waters where we work and live.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report

As part of HumeLink's EIS, Transgrid completed an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) to assess potential impacts on Aboriginal heritage within the study area, and provide mitigation strategies to address these impacts.

Transgrid's Yura Ngura Indigenous Advisory team have been engaging with local Aboriginal stakeholders including relevant Local Aboriginal Land Councils. In April 2021, Transgrid put a call out to Aboriginal stakeholders who may have an interest in the project and hold knowledge around the cultural significance of Aboriginal heritage sites within the project footprint. The organisations or individuals who expressed an interest now form the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) for this project.

The RAPs have been actively engaged in the development of the ACHAR by providing input on survey coverage, assessment methodology and test excavation approach, as well as participating in field work associated with the ACHAR.

Cultural Values Assessment

In addition to the ACHAR prepared as part of the EIS, Transgrid is preparing a separate Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) report that will be provided to Heritage NSW. The CVA seeks to further understand the potential impacts to Aboriginal cultural values, with a particular focus on **intangible cultural values** including:

- cultural knowledge
- oral history
- intangible cultural heritage values or places
- Aboriginal associations with the project footprint.

Pictured: Transgrid Stretch RAP launch at Wagga Wagga in March 2023. From left to right: Riverina Murray Regional Alliance chairperson John Fernando, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Wagga Wagga Vice President Chris Harris, Aunty Gail Manderson, Australian Education Consultative Group Wagga Wagga President Mark Cunningham, Transgrid CEO Brett Redman and Transgrid Yura Ngura Indigenous Advisory Manager Sherrie Anderson.

How was the ACHAR prepared?

The ACHAR assessment involved the following:

- conducting a search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) for recorded sites within one kilometre of the project footprint
- reviewing heritage registers and schedules, local histories and archaeological reports
- preparing a preliminary archaeological predictive model to identify potentially sensitive areas for further investigation. This model was based on:
  - » previously recorded AHIMS sites and archaeological investigations
  - » topographic contours, slope and hydrology
  - » land disturbance and land use
- undertaking detailed surveys and test excavations, completed between November 2021 and November 2022
- engaging with Aboriginal stakeholders and other key stakeholders
- refining the predictive model to determine the potential for Aboriginal heritage sites to be present in the study area
- assessing potential direct and indirect impacts on Aboriginal heritage and recommending mitigation and management measures to minimise potential impacts.

Direct impacts

These relate to direct harm or disturbance to potential surface and/or subsurface heritage items within the project footprint as a result of vegetation clearing, construction of transmission line structures, substations and associated temporary or permanent infrastructure including access tracks.

Indirect impacts

These relate to impacts that may result in a loss of heritage value such as impacts on the views to and from heritage items.

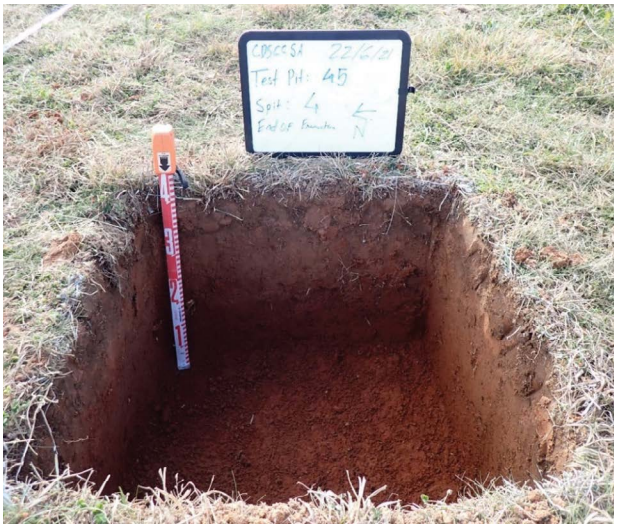
What are the potential impacts?

Transgrid aims to avoid impacts to heritage as a first principle. Where impacts cannot be avoided, surface artefacts and subsurface deposits will be salvaged as a measure to mitigate harm.

The ACHAR identified 90 Aboriginal heritage sites, including eight potential archaeological deposits (PADs), within the project footprint that may be directly or indirectly impacted by the project, mainly during construction. A PAD is an area where Aboriginal objects may occur below the ground surface. The majority of the sites identified are stone artefact scatters and isolated finds.

However, the Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment adopted a conservative approach that assumed direct impacts would occur throughout the project footprint. It is likely that the final directly impacted area would be much smaller than the project footprint assessed.

For example, the transmission line easement would generally be 70 metres wide, which is substantially smaller than the project footprint that is approximately 200 metres wide. In addition, not all the land within the transmission line easement will be directly disturbed during construction. The number of heritage sites to be impacted will be confirmed during detailed design and construction methodology and will consider opportunities to avoid or minimise impacts.



Pictured: Excavated test pit dug by hand in Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) area (50 x 50 centimetre pit size).

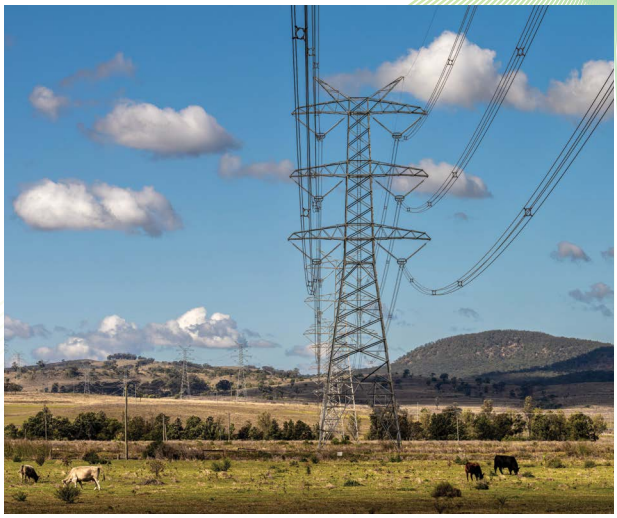
What mitigation measures will be applied?

The project will also develop a Heritage Management Plan (HMP) in consultation with the project's RAPs. The HMP will be included in HumeLink's *Construction Environment Management Plan* and will outline potential mitigation measures to minimise impacts to heritage sites during construction. Mitigation measures will include:

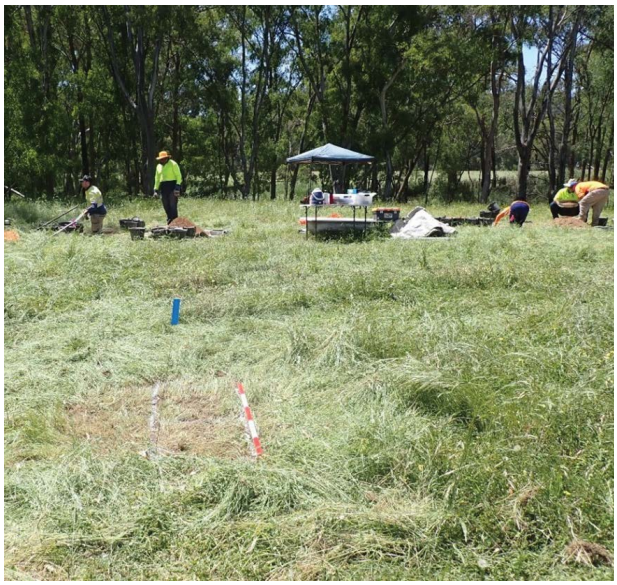
- avoiding identified Aboriginal sites where possible, through detailed design and construction methodology
- training all construction workers in cultural heritage awareness and informing them of heritage significance within and adjacent to project work sites
- additional desktop and field assessments of previously unassessed areas, where required
- implementation of an unexpected finds protocol
- collection, salvage, mapping and recording of heritage artefacts
- appropriate storage of retrieved archaeological materials in consultation with RAPs.

As the project progresses through the development of the EIS and detailed design, more information about the identified impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage values as well as the proposed mitigation and management measures will become available.

For more information on Transgrid's commitment to reconciliation please visit our Reconciliation Action Plan and Transgrid's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.



Pictured: Example of a 500 kV transmission tower.



Pictured: Aboriginal heritage test excavation program area set up.

Connect with us

Transgrid is committed to working with landowners and communities through the development of HumeLink. Please connect with us for more information.

Transgrid

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