Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

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HumeLink Modification 1

State Significant Infrastructure Modification Assessment Report (SSI-36656827-Mod-1)

October 2026





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Contents

1 Introduction 1

2 Proposed modification 2

3 Strategic context 2

3.1 Scope of modification and assessment pathway 2

3.2 Mandatory matters for consideration 3

4 Engagement 4

5 Assessment 4

6 Evaluation 6

7 Recommendation 7

8 Determination 7

Appendices 8

Appendix A – Modification Report 8

Appendix B – Instrument of Modification 8

Appendix C – Consolidated Infrastructure Approval 8

1 Introduction

HumeLink is an approved project comprising approximately 365 kilometres (km) of 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line and associated infrastructure between Wagga Wagga, Bannaby and Maragle. The transmission line would transfer renewable energy generated by Snowy 2.0 and other wind and solar projects from southern NSW to consumers across the National Electricity Market (NEM).

The approved project also includes associated infrastructure, including substations and construction facilities such as construction compounds, access tracks, laydown and material sites, temporary accommodation camps, site offices and helicopter facilities.

On 13 November 2024, the Minister for Planning approved the critical State significant infrastructure (CSSI) application to develop the project, subject to conditions. These conditions require Transgrid (the proponent) to prepare and implement a Biodiversity Offset Package to offset the residual biodiversity impacts of the project in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme.

Transgrid commenced enabling works for HumeLink on 13 January 2025, and construction is currently underway.

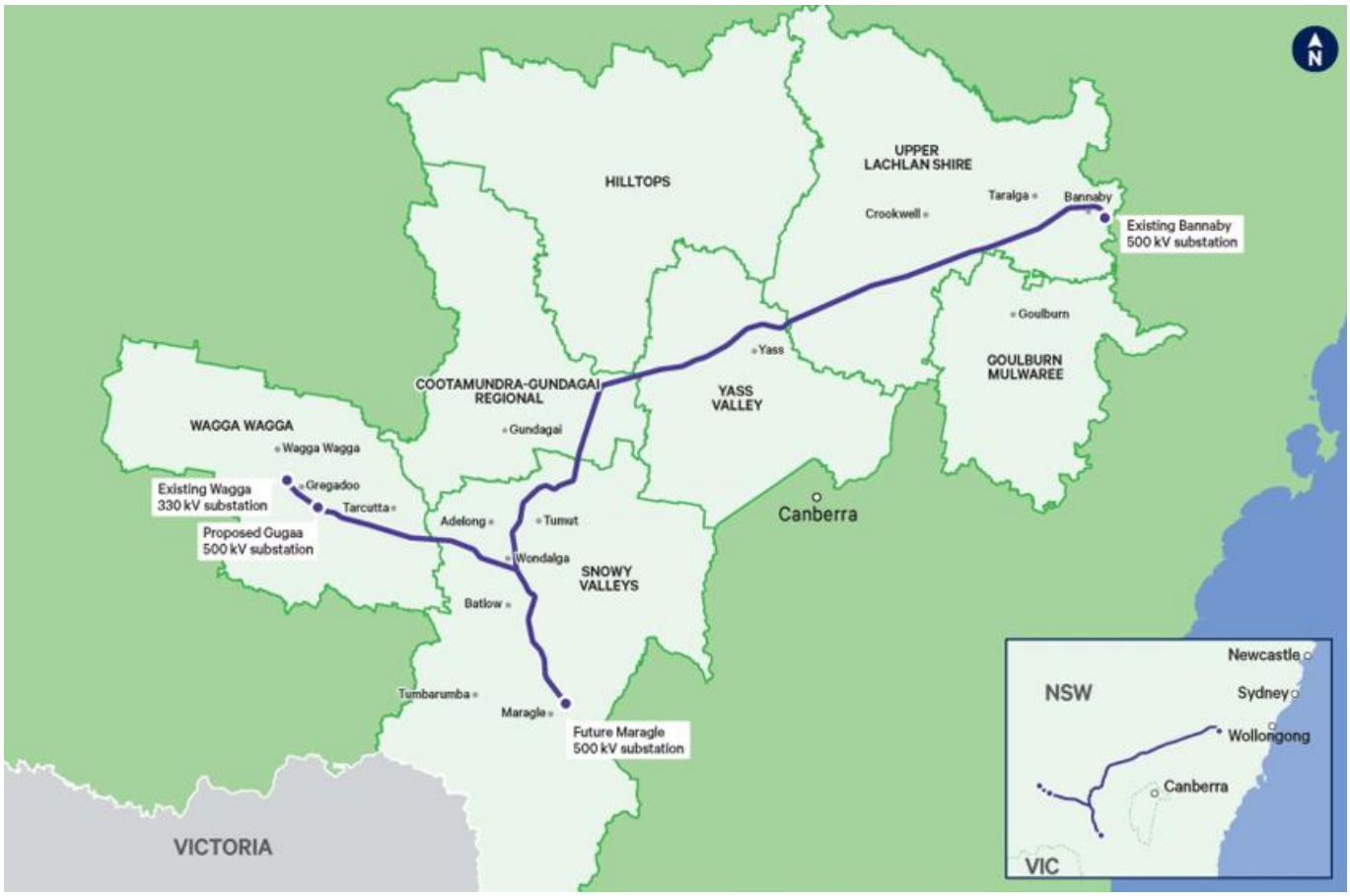


Figure 1 | Regional context map

2 Proposed modification

The *Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017* (BC Regulation) was recently amended to allow proponents of eligible projects to enter into a 'Strategic Offset Delivery Agreement' (SODA) with the NSW Government as a means of satisfying their biodiversity offset obligations.

The Conservation Programs, Heritage & Regulation group (CPHR) of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) acknowledged that when the project was approved, entering into a SODA was not available as an offset delivery option and that Transgrid has since commenced consultation with CPHR. On 15 September 2026, the Secretary of DCCEEW signed a Notice of Intention to enter into a SODA..

Because this mechanism was not available at the time the project was approved, Transgrid is now seeking a modification to the conditions of HumeLink to clarify that it may enter into a SODA in order to satisfy all (or any part of) the credit liability obligations in the current infrastructure approval.

Importantly, the modification does not amend the number or class of biodiversity credits required to be retired under the conditions of the current infrastructure approval .

The proposed modification is described in further detail in the Modification Report (see **Appendix A**).

3 Statutory context

3.1 Scope of modification and assessment pathway

Details of the legal pathway under which the modification is sought are provided in **Table 1** below.

Table 1 | Permissibility and assessment pathway

Consideration	**Description**
Scope of modification	In accordance with section 5.25 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), a proponent may request the Minister to modify the approval for SSI. The Department has reviewed the scope of the modification and considers it a minor modification involving administrative amendments to the infrastructure approval. The Department is satisfied the proposed modification is within the scope of section 5.25 of the EP&A Act.

Consideration	Description
Approval authority	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces The Minister will be the approval authority under section 5.25(4) of the EP&A Act unless the Minister has delegated his determination functions to the Department.
Decision maker	Director, Energy Assessments The Director, Energy Assessments, may determine the application in accordance with the Minister's delegation dated 9 March 2022, as there were no public objections, the proponent has not disclosed any reportable political donations and the relevant Councils: Wagga Wagga City, Snowy Valleys, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional, Upper Lachlan Shire, Yass Valley and Goulburn-Mulwaree Councils did not object.

3.2 Mandatory matters for consideration

3.2.1 Objects of the EP&A Act

In determining whether to modify the approval, the approval authority should consider whether the modified project is consistent with the relevant objects of the EP&A Act, including the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD).

The Department is satisfied that the development is consistent with the objects of the EP&A Act and the principles of ESD.

3.2.2 Biodiversity development assessment report

Section 7.17(2) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) requires all CSSI modifications to be accompanied by a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) unless the authority, or person determining the application, is satisfied that the modification will not increase the impact on biodiversity values (as identified in the BC Act and in the BC Regulation).

Given the modification involves only administrative changes to the conditions, the Department is satisfied that it would not increase the impact on biodiversity values. Consequently, a BDAR is not required to accompany the modification application.

4 Engagement

Due to the minor nature of the proposed modification, the application was not publicly exhibited. However, the Department made the application publicly available on the Major Projects website and sought advice from CPHR, which confirmed the proposed amendments to the conditions of approval were reasonable and did not request any changes.

5 Assessment

In assessing the merits of the proposed modification, the Department considered the existing infrastructure approval, the original EIS for the project, the modification application, applicable government policies and guidelines, and the requirements of the EP&A Act.

Transgrid entered into a Deed of Agreement with the Planning Secretary, executed on 10 October 2024, to secure the biodiversity offset obligations associated with the project. The Deed required Transgrid to provide a $502,332,107 bank guarantee, equal to the value of the offset liability, which acts as financial security until the required biodiversity offsets are retired.

The proposed modification would not materially change the approved project and would provide minor administrative clarifications regarding the applicability of the recent amendments to the BC Regulation, confirming that Transgrid can enter into a SODA to meet its biodiversity offset obligations.

Importantly, the SODA mechanism was established in recognition of the urgency of the transition to renewable energy, and to maximise biodiversity outcomes through the strategic investment and delivery of biodiversity offsets. Further to this, as outlined in Section 2, the Secretary of DCCEEW has already signed a 'Notice of Intention' to enter into a SODA with Transgrid, confirming that the project is eligible to utilise this mechanism to satisfy its offset obligations.

By entering into a SODA, Transgrid agrees to provide funding for the NSW Government to deliver the biodiversity offsets for the project either through the retirement of like-for-like biodiversity credits or funding conservation actions targeted at species or ecological communities impacted by the project. This mechanism allows a strategic approach to identifying suitable offsets for major projects, consistent with the requirements of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.

The SODA would enable Transgrid to meet its offset obligations for the project before 13 November 2026, as required by condition B26 of the infrastructure approval and the Deed of Agreement with the Planning Secretary (dated 10 October 2024). After the modification is determined, Transgrid would need to update the current Biodiversity Offset Package to reflect the SODA process.

The Department has recommended several changes to the conditions of approval, including:

- clarifying the option for Transgrid to enter into a SODA to meet all or any part of its biodiversity offset obligations;
- allowing Transgrid to revise its Biodiversity Offset Package following consultation with CPHR and Biodiversity Conservation Trust, and to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary;
- requiring Transgrid to comply with any amendments made to the Deed of Agreement where a SODA is entered into with DCCEEW; and
- minor administrative updates to align with contemporary requirements, including updating references to agency names.

Appendix B outlines the changes proposed to the conditions of approval.

6 Evaluation

The Department has assessed the modification application and supporting information in accordance with the relevant requirements of the EP&A Act.

The Department considers that the modification is largely administrative in nature. The proposed modification is consistent with the original infrastructure approval and would not result in any additional impacts beyond those that are currently approved under the original infrastructure approval.

The Department is satisfied that the proposed modification is in the public interest and should be approved subject to the recommended conditions.

The Department has drafted an Instrument of Modification (see **Appendix B**) and a consolidated version of the infrastructure approval as modified (see **Appendix C**).

7 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Director, Energy Assessments, as delegate of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces:

- considers the findings and recommendations of this report;
- accepts and adopts the findings and recommendations in this report as the reasons for making the decision to approve the modification;
- modifies the conditions of the infrastructure approval for HumeLink (SSI-36656827), subject to conditions in the attached Instrument of Modification; and
- signs the attached Instrument of Modification (**Appendix B**).

Prepared by:

Emma-Rose Cooper, Senior Environmental Assessment Officer

Recommended by:



28 October 2026

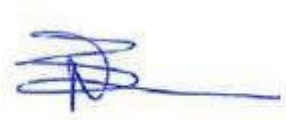
Anthony Ko

Team Leader

Energy Assessments

8 Determination

The recommendation is **adopted**/~~**not adopted**~~ by:



28 October 2026

Nicole Brewer
Director
Energy Assessments

Appendices

Appendix A – Modification Report

Appendix B – Instrument of Modification

Appendix C – Consolidated Infrastructure Approval

Appendix A to C – see the Department's Major Project Website at: Modification 1 Strategic Offset Delivery Agreement | Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment