

# Draft Terms of Reference

## HumeLink Construction Reference Groups - Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

### Terms of Reference

#### Background and purpose

HumeLink is one of Australia's largest energy infrastructure projects connecting renewable energy sources to the grid, increasing availability and market competition - helping to put downward pressure on energy prices in Australia.

The project consists of 365 kilometres of 500 kV overhead transmission lines connecting Wagga Wagga, Bannaby and Maragle, and new or upgraded infrastructure at four substations.

HumeLink is critical to bringing more affordable, reliable and renewable energy to the grid and is a priority project for the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and the Commonwealth and NSW governments. Subject to government approval of HumeLink, the proposed construction will occur in two sections known as HumeLink East and HumeLink West.

To view HumeLink's interactive route map go to [transgrid.com.au/humelink](https://transgrid.com.au/humelink)

The HumeLink Construction Reference Groups (CRGs) will be one of many channels Transgrid will use to engage with the community and stakeholders during the delivery stage of the project. The purpose of the forums will be to:

- bring together Transgrid representatives, local community groups, landowners and councils to provide an opportunity for two-way communication about the HumeLink project
- provide a forum for Transgrid to keep the community and stakeholders informed about the project, seek community and stakeholder views and respond to matters raised by the community
- share progress updates on community investment and project legacy contributions along the corridor
- provide feedback and guidance to Transgrid about its community and stakeholder engagement approach.

Transgrid will facilitate, chair and provide secretariat services for the CRG.

The CRGs will be held at:

- Yass and Upper Lachlan LGAs (HumeLink East)
- Wagga Wagga LGA (HumeLink West)
- Snowy Valleys and Cootamundra Gundagai LGAs (HumeLink East and HumeLink West)

## Membership

Each forum will consist of a maximum of 12 members including community members and representatives from key community interest groups and local governments.

The organisations and people below are the inaugural members of the HumeLink CRGs:

Local council (1 member per council)
Local businesses representatives (1 member per LGA)
Local Aboriginal Land Councils / First Nations representatives (up to 2 members based on LALC boundaries)
Emergency services and government agencies (up to 4 members)
Peak bodies and stakeholder organisations (up to 2 members)
Local community representatives (2 members)

## Other participants

If CRG members or alternative members cannot attend a meeting, they may provide comment on documents prior to the meeting or propose an alternative attendee. Should alternative representatives be included in the forum, Transgrid would require the nominated member to notify the facilitator, who will discuss appointed alternate representative invitation with Transgrid and delivery partners.

The facilitator may request the replacement of any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings.

Other guests may attend the meetings at the discretion of the facilitator. The facilitator may invite other individuals or groups to present to or observe the meetings. Where agreed by the facilitator, CRG members may also invite other guests to attend meetings to provide expert advice and support to a specific topic raised. They may include:

- representatives of government agencies
- technical experts or consultants
- members of the general public.

The facilitator will consult with the other members of the group before issuing an invitation to a guest. If there is any disagreement between the members about the invitation, the facilitator will have the final say on the matter. Alternative attendees can participate in the business of a meeting and have voting rights unless advised otherwise by the facilitator. Guests are observers and cannot participate in this way.

A guest's attendance is limited to the duration of discussion on the nominated specific topic. CRG members will be advised in advance of a meeting where additional guests may be requested. Ideally this will be a minimum of one week in

advance. CRG members have the right to refuse a guest's attendance, based on the majority view of the CRG.

### **Working together – Code of conduct**

One of the first tasks of the CRG will be to agree a code of conduct. The below code of conduct is draft for discussion and will be finalised in consultation with CRG members. All members and guests will need to sign agreement to the code of conduct before attending CRG meetings.

#### **Members of the CRG agree to:**

- Attend meetings at dates and times agreed by the CRG.
- Advise the facilitator in advance if they are unable to attend.
- Work collaboratively and constructively. Be respectful of all members, guests and the facilitator.
- Openly communicate relevant concerns, interests and ideas and make reasons for any disagreement clear in a constructive and thoughtful manner.
- Actively work with the members of the group to try to resolve any issues that may arise.
- Respect confidentiality and not discuss or share information outside the meeting about matters that are confidential.
- Not represent Transgrid or its delivery partners in the media.
- Undertake to fairly present the information provided at the CRG to their local community/stakeholder group.
- Immediately advise the facilitator during meetings of any potential or actual conflict of interest relating to matters under discussion.
- Abide by the reasonable directions of the facilitator during meetings.

#### **Meeting structure and operations**

- Meetings will be workshop style, and all members will have the opportunity to contribute.
- Meetings are intended to be held quarterly at each of the proposed locations. Any additional ad-hoc meetings will be decided by consensus of the CRG.
- Two hours will be allocated for the meetings.
- A call for agenda items will be issued by the facilitator two weeks before a meeting, with the final agenda determined by the facilitator and distributed one week before the meeting.
- Recording of the meetings by an electronic device is not permitted without prior agreement of the facilitator, all CRG members and any guests in attendance.

- If a stakeholder group representative leaves the CRG, then the facilitator will ask that group to nominate a new representative. If community members leave the group, then the facilitator will seek to replace them through a process agreed by the CRG.

### **Media/social media protocols**

To encourage open discussion at the meetings, members of the CRG agree to adhere to the following media/social media protocols:

The minutes are the authoritative record of the meeting.

- Members of the CRG are not authorised to provide written or verbal statements to the media/social media representing the views of the CRG.
- CRG members are entitled to use media/ social media on project matters in an individual capacity, and in doing so must ensure that their views are understood to be personal views and not the views of other CRG members or the HumeLink project team.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidential information will be shared with the CRG. CRG members are required to respect confidentiality and not discuss or share information outside the meeting about matters that are confidential. Members can share information with members of the group or organisation they are representing however confidential information should only be shared with their board or leadership team. CRG members should respect the opinions of other CRG representatives on confidential issues and not discuss or share their views outside the meeting.

To support an environment of trust and the sharing of information, it is requested that members sign a non-disclosure agreement. Should members need to seek input from their membership or stakeholders, this is to be discussed and agreed with the facilitator, Transgrid and the Delivery partners.

### **Conflicts of interest**

Members must declare through the facilitator any conflicts of interest before each meeting and manage those conflicts in consultation with the facilitator. A conflict may relate to a position a member holds, personal relationships, pecuniary interests or to the content of a specific item for deliberation.

### **Grievances**

If a member of the CRG has a concern with any aspect of the group (e.g. members, team cooperation, peer conflict), they should approach the facilitator with their concerns. The facilitator will record the complaint and determine if further action needs to be taken to rectify the problem. The identity of any individual filing a concern or complaint will be kept confidential.

### **Review**

Once final, the Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement with CRG members.

The CRG will be formed in Q4 2025 and will run for the duration of the construction stage of HumeLink. Following the first four meetings, the facilitator and CRG members will assess the purpose and effectiveness of the CRG and evaluate if a need to replace members is required. Transgrid and the delivery partners will then consider the outcomes of this assessment to decide if the CRGs should continue. The CRG Terms of Reference will also be reviewed at this time.

### **Secretariat**

The Secretariat will be responsible for managing the administrative functions, including:

- preparing meeting agendas and keeping and distributing meeting minutes
- maintaining action lists
- distributing information to and from other groups as applicable; and
- distributing papers within the agreed timeframe ahead of the meeting

The minutes of each meeting shall be recorded live and agreed by CRG members at the end of each meeting. Meeting minutes will include:

- a summary of the discussion
- endorsements or recommendations and a record of any dissenting views
- actions, including who is responsible for these actions and a timeframe to resolve them
- Agendas and minutes of meetings will be made publicly available on HumeLink's website.