

Information for Landowners on Heritage Test Excavation Program

HumeLink Environmental Impact Assessment

OCTOBER 2022

1 Heritage assessment

As part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the HumeLink Project, Transgrid is required to conduct a heritage assessment which includes desktop research as well as field surveys.

Preliminary work has identified a number of sites as areas of Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) and areas of archaeological sensitivity.

The next step in the assessment process is to conduct a subsurface test excavation program that will concentrate on testing PADs, and a selection of additional areas of archaeological sensitivity that may be impacted by the project.

The outcomes of the test excavation will be documented as part of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR), which will form part of the EIS and will be put on display during the EIS public exhibition period as required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment and Heritage NSW.

Test excavation work started on 10 October 2022 and will run for approximately eight weeks.

2 Test Excavation

Location and number of test pits

Testing will take place only within the boundaries of the project footprint in areas that were identified through desktop study and predictive modelling as areas of moderate and high Aboriginal archaeological sensitivity.

PADs

- Test pits measuring 0.5 metres x 0.5 metres will be dug using hand tools along a straight line (transect) across the extension of the PAD.
- Test pits will be dug using hand tools at intervals of 5 to 10 metres within transects measuring less than 100 metres in length. For transects measuring more than 100 metres in length, test pits will be dug using hand tools at intervals of 10 to 20 metres.
- The number of test pits and distance between each test pit within an established transect may vary if required in order to avoid hazards and obstructions that may be encountered when placing the pits.

Additional sites for investigation of archaeological sensitivity:

- Additional test pits will be dug using hand tools at intervals of 10 metres along a straight line (transect) established within the project footprint. Test pit interval location may vary if required to avoid hazards and obstructions.

Excavation Method

Test pit excavation

The test excavation program will be carried out in accordance with requirement 16 of the Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales¹ (made under Part 6 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*).

- The size of an individual test pit will generally be 0.5 x 0.5 metres. This may be expanded to up to 1 x 1 metres at test pits where artefacts are found.

- Pits will be excavated by shovel and trowel using by-hand archaeological methodologies in line with the Code of Practice outlined on the previous page.
- Where present, Aboriginal artefacts are generally found within the soil layer. As such, test pit excavations will be dug within the soil layer and cease once clay, rock or water is reached.
- Archaeological investigation will not go beyond 150 cm in depth or beyond a depth considered unsafe based on field conditions.
- Photographic and scale-drawn records of the soil profile will be completed for each of the test pits.
- Other samples may be obtained for the potential analysis of paleoenvironmental (or past environmental) indicators such as pollen, plant matter and microfauna.
- All excavated material will be sieved through at least a 5 mm mesh. Where appropriate, the team will with use a larger mesh (10 mm x 10 mm). All identified or suspected cultural material recovered from sieving will be retained, bagged and labelled in line with the Code of Practice.



Excavated pit (0.5 m x 0.5 m pit size)



Project areas set up

3 Environmental Safeguards

- The team performing test pit excavation will endeavour to minimise vegetation removal where possible. Where necessary, pits will be moved to avoid trees, boulders etc.
- All pits will be backfilled as soon as practicable after completion of test excavation using material that is excavated from the pits to prevent possible sediment contamination from backfilling with introduced soil.
- Test excavation areas will be accessed using existing formed tracks where practicable.
- Test pits left open overnight when the team is off site will be fenced to avoid impact from and to stock or passers-by.
- The team will comply with biosecurity protocols when moving within and across properties.

4 Number of workers involved and length of time

- Two teams may be working on a property at any one time. Teams are expected to include:
 - One primary archaeologist: Excavation Director (from Navin Officer Heritage Consultants (NOHC)).
 - Three assisting archaeologist/field assistants (NOHC).
 - Up to four Aboriginal Site Officers (from Registered Aboriginal Parties who have previously registered with the project).
- Each team will have one 4WD vehicle. Every two teams will also have a trailer (to transport equipment and some cases a port-a-loo).

The overall program is expected to take approximately eight weeks to complete, and the teams may be within each location for up to three days. Inclement weather (such as wet weather, storms, heat, fire rating) or COVID restrictions may delay or extend the program.

Place Managers and Land Access Officers will communicate any program changes to landowners as required.

Connect with us

If you have any questions or would like to talk to the project team, please reach out.



Contact the project team:
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Find out more at:
[Transgrid.com.au/humelink](https://www.transgrid.com.au/humelink)