

HumeLink Project Update

February 2023

What is HumeLink?

HumeLink is a once in a generation investment in Australia's energy capability, increasing the amount of renewable energy that can be delivered to consumers and helping Australia to move towards a net zero future.

This proposed 500 kV transmission line will connect Wagga Wagga, Bannaby and Maragle and will be one of the nation's largest energy infrastructure projects, with about 360 km of proposed new transmission lines 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.

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What's coming up in 2023?



To view HumeLink's interactive route map go to transgrid.com.au/humelink

HumeLink proposed route





Project updates and announcements

The Environmental Impact Statement is coming in mid-2023

This year marks a pivotal stage in the planning and approvals process for HumeLink's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS describes the environmental, economic and social impacts that could arise from the project during construction and operation, and proposes measures to reduce, minimise or mitigate those impacts.

The project team is currently progressing the technical reports that form part of the EIS. Once the environmental assessments are completed and the EIS is finalised, the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) will place the final EIS on public exhibition in mid-2023 and call for public submissions. This will be an opportunity for landowners, community, government agencies and other interested organisations to make a written submission and provide feedback on the project. The submissions received will help shape the government's determination on whether the project will proceed.

The HumeLink project team is engaging with the community and other stakeholders to share information on the EIS process, the planning approvals pathway and the technical reports that form part of the EIS.

Please see our upcoming EIS community information sessions in this edition. Further details about upcoming sessions will be provided on the HumeLink [webpage](#).



Scan the QR code to subscribe to receive project updates on upcoming engagement

Heritage excavations

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 took place in October and November 2022 and is now complete.

Transgrid would like to thank the traditional custodians for sharing their wealth of knowledge, values and customs with the project team.

For more information on the heritage test excavations please see HumeLink's [webpage](#).

Pictured: Project team member undertaking field investigations



Biodiversity offsets and stewardship agreements

Many of our landholders have native vegetation that they wish to protect for conservation purposes and, in some cases, for generating income. This can be done by establishing a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (BSA) on land to generate biodiversity credits, which can then be sold.

Transgrid works with its landholders to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity values wherever possible. When a project or activity impacts native biodiversity after avoidance, minimisation and mitigation, an offset liability may be incurred. To offset these impacts Transgrid is required to retire biodiversity credits. The framework for assessing, generating and trading biodiversity credits is the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS).

What is a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement site?



A BSA is a legal agreement between the landholder and the Minister administering the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). The agreement is registered on the property title and runs with the land in perpetuity. A BSA site is the area of a property that will be used to generate biodiversity credits under the BOS. The area included typically only covers native vegetation and threatened species habitat to be managed as part of the BSA.

The credits generated by the BSA site are then purchased by organisations like Transgrid who are carrying out projects which have an impact on biodiversity that needs to be offset.

What does the Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement cover?



A BSA has no restriction on size, shape or layout (i.e. can be spread across multiple separate land parcels), as long as all the land it applies to is owned by the same landholder(s). There are some key factors that determine whether an area of land is suitable and whether the Minister will consider an agreement in the first place:

- The quantity, condition and configuration of the biodiversity values on the land will determine its suitability
- The typical minimum size for a BSA for Transgrid is about 250 hectares
- Typically, larger sites with good condition vegetation provide the best value.

A 'sponsored' BSA means that Transgrid would cover the costs of survey, assessment and establishment of the BSA. Landholders can enter into a BSA independently and create credits that can be sold on the credit market, or with Transgrid's 'sponsorship' and sell the credits to Transgrid.

If you would like to get involved, or would simply like more information on how you could participate and what it means for you and your property, please contact the Land and Property Team:



1800 31 73 67 (free call)
humelink@transgrid.com.au
transgrid.com.au/humelink

Pictured: A sparse canopy due to historical clearing



Green Hills: Alternative (western) option in the Tumut region

As part of the project's ongoing route refinement approach, Transgrid is regularly reviewing and refining sections of the route as more information becomes available.

Following considerable feedback from landowners, community members and other stakeholders on route options for HumeLink, Transgrid is now investigating the viability of an alternative (western) route option for the Tumut region through the Green Hills State Forest.

We are assessing the alternative (western) option in parallel to the EIS, and if it proves feasible then we will proceed with that option. We have consulted with the Department of Planning and Environment on the approval pathway.

It is possible that the alternative (western) option could:



Remove some private landowners from requiring an easement



Reduce community impact



Reduce the visual impact of transmission towers for some landowners



Align with principles announced by the NSW Government on placing transmission infrastructure on public land where feasible.

Impacted landowners have been contacted by their Land Access Officer or Place Manager to discuss this option.

An indicative route for the alternative (western) option is on the interactive map on HumeLink's [webpage](#).

Local business register

The HumeLink Local Business Register was launched in November 2022 to boost project spend within the HumeLink area. We are interested in hearing from sole traders and businesses in the region that could provide products and services including engineering, design, general trades, administration, Indigenous and support services, catering, accommodation, graphic design and printing.

The Register will be shared with major construction contractors as planning progresses and opportunities arise. The Register will also be the project team's first port of call when looking to procure goods and services at various stages of the project.



To register your business scan the QR code or go to [HumeLink's webpage](#).

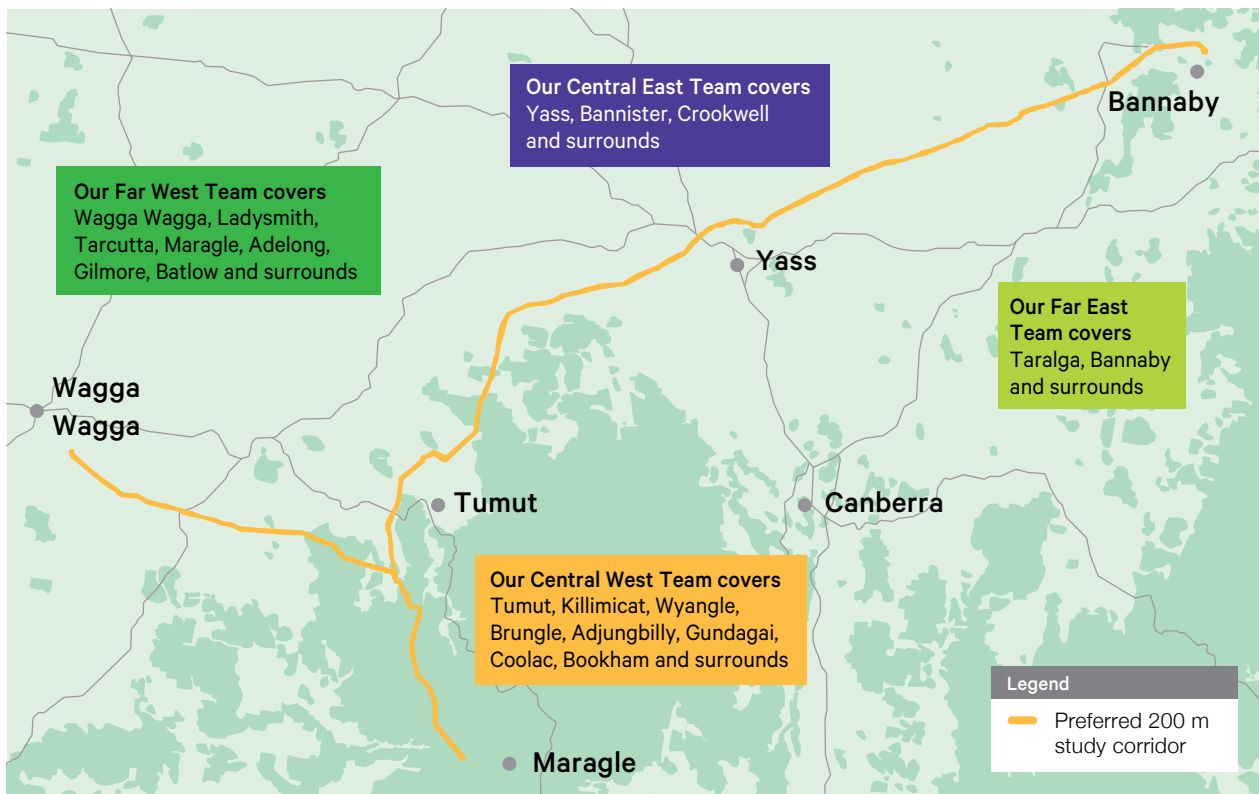
The HumeLink property team

HumeLink has a team dedicated to supporting affected landowners.

The team is made up of Place Managers and Land Access Officers, who work one-on-one with landowners to request and organise access to their properties to complete planning studies, such as biodiversity and heritage surveys for the EIS, and geotechnical investigations for the project design.

They also work with landowners to discuss and negotiate compensation and Property Management Plans (PMPs). These plans are tailored to the specific requirements of each property and landowner. PMPs address matters such as biosecurity, property access, livestock movement, and aviation requirements.

The team is divided geographically:



Dividing by region ensures that our Place Managers and Land Access Officers are able to learn the local nuances in their geographical area.

Landowner support

The Office of the Landowner and Community Advocate has been established within Transgrid to help us implement the best possible landowner and community engagement practices across our major transmission projects.

We recognise that our transmission projects may have increased the level of stress and anxiety experienced by landowners. Transgrid has engaged an external service provider – Assure Programs – to provide landowners with short-term support and counselling.

If you are a landowner, and would like confidential support and counselling, we encourage you to access the services Assure Programs provides.

The service is confidential and anonymous. Transgrid does not receive any information about who uses these services. There is also no cost to landowners in accessing this service.

For more information please see Transgrid's landowner support and advocacy [webpage](#).

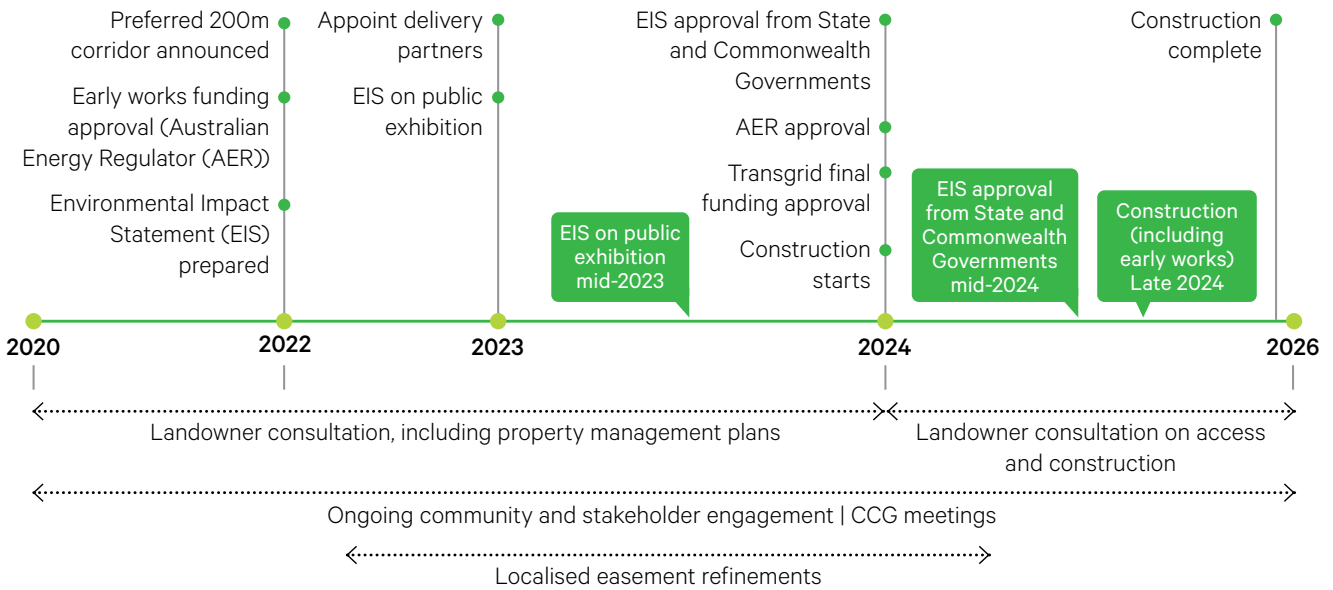


What's coming up in 2023?

HumeLink's timeline

In 2023, the HumeLink project team will continue to engage with communities, stakeholders and landowners and meet with HumeLink Community Consultative Groups (CCGs). The proposed corridor will continue to be refined based on findings from the EIS specialist studies and engagement with landowners, government agencies and communities. The HumeLink EIS will be on public exhibition in mid-2023.

HumeLink project key dates



Community Partnerships Program

Transgrid's Community Partnerships Program offers grants of up to \$5,000 for not-for-profit organisations that are local to our planning, operations, and major project areas.

Not-for-profit groups provide a range of invaluable resources for their communities. Our Community Partnerships Program was created to give a boost to the people who live and work in the regions local to Transgrid assets or construction.

Since 2020, Transgrid has awarded grants to more than 60 organisations for a range of initiatives spanning from community infrastructure to workshops, along with inclusivity and accessibility projects.

The next round of Transgrid's Community Partnerships program will open in March 2023. For more information on the program and past beneficiaries, see Transgrid's Community Partnerships Program [webpage](#).

HumeLink community information sessions



If you are interested in learning more about the HumeLink project and the EIS, please join the team at our upcoming drop-in community information sessions.

In these sessions, you will have the opportunity to hear from key members of the project, ask questions, provide feedback, and learn about the technical studies which make up the HumeLink EIS.



If you are interested in attending a session, please register using the QR code below. If you are unable to make these sessions, we will also be hosting community information webinars during March 2023.

For more information on our webinars and drop-in community information sessions, please see HumeLink's webpage.

Proposed community information session dates and times

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Tumut 21 Feb, 11.00am–1.00pm, 4.00pm–6.00pm	Tarcutta 27 Feb, 4.00pm–6.00pm	Crookwell 7 Mar, 11.00am–1.00pm
Adelong 22 Feb, 11.00am–1.00pm	Tumbarumba 28 Feb, 11.00am–1.00pm, 4.00pm–6.00pm	Gunning 7 Mar, 4.00pm–6.00pm
Wagga 23 Feb, 11.00am–1.00pm, 4.00pm–6.00pm	Batlow 1 Mar, 11.00am–1.00pm	Yass 8 Mar, 11.00am–1.00pm, 4.00pm–6.00pm
	Gundagai 2 Mar, 11.00am–1.00pm	Taralga 9 Mar, 11.00am–1.00pm, 4.00pm–6.00pm

Community Consultative Groups

Transgrid has established CCGs to encourage and facilitate community participation in the HumeLink's project planning. Each CCG group is made up of representatives from local councils, community groups and organisations as well as individual community members. Members are selected through an independent application process.

CCG representatives bring perspective and insights from the group, area, industry they represent.

The CCG is governed by a terms of reference and each member commits to a code of conduct.

In February 2023, HumeLink's CCGs will be meeting during the year in the Snowy Valley, Yass and Wagga Wagga on the following proposed dates:

February

Wagga 14 Feb, 5.00–7.00pm	Upper Lachlan 15 Feb, 11.30am–1.30pm	Snowy Valley 15 Feb, 5.00–7.00pm	For more information on the CCGs, the CCG presentations and meeting minutes, please see HumeLink's webpage .
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Acknowledgment of Country

Transgrid acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this great land. We recognise and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first explorers, scientists, farmers, astronomers and storytellers.

We pay respects to the people, the 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.

Connect with us

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



1800 31 73 67 (free call)
humelink@transgrid.com.au
transgrid.com.au/humelink

HumeLink Community Engagement Team,
PO BOX A1000, Sydney South, NSW 1235

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