Time	12 - 2pm
Date	23/11/2022
Attendees	Chair: Brian Elton
	Secretariat: Ella Burgess
	Transgrid CCG members: Naomi Rowe, Nathan Rhodes
	Transgrid project member attendees: Tammy Sinclair, Cameron Walters, Daryl White, Samantha Willoughby
	Community members: Cr Adrian Cameron, Andrea Strong (via telephone), Catriona McCauliffe, Dave Banham, Pam Kensit
Apologies	Tyronne Bell, Dave Banham, Russ Erwin, Rene Lundardello, Rod Stowe, Barbara El Gamal
Meeting location	Yass Council Chambers
Meeting materials	Presentation
Purpose of meeting	Meeting 8

1.1 HumeLink Upper Lachlan Yass Valley Community Consultative Group: 8th Meeting 23 November 2022

Item	Discussion Summary	To note
Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country	 The meeting commenced at 12:03pm. The Chair welcomed all and gave an Acknowledgement of Country. The Chair asked the community CCG members and the team from Transgrid to introduce themselves and their role in the HumeLink project. 	
Minutes and Matters Arising	 Previous comments received on the minutes were taken into account in the revised minutes from CCG meeting 7. The minutes of the previous meeting have been endorsed by the Chair and will shortly be posted to the Transgrid website. 	
HumeLink Progress Update	 Nathan gave an overview of HumeLink's progress to date. See slide 6 of the presentation for an update on HumeLink's progress. Program update Transgrid received feedback from the CCGs that there was a desire to see where HumeLink is positioned in the 	

broader energy market to give context on the key drivers of the project.

- Transgrid is in constant dialogue with AEMO, who are focussed on ensuring the electrical system is able to sustainably operate.
- There are a number of major projects Transgrid is currently developing:
 - Project Energy Connect \$1.8 billion (800MW). Runs from South Australia to Wagga Wagga and has just begun construction. Energy Connect must be commissioned by 2024 due to the current instability in the market which is being caused by the closure of coal fire power stations . For that reason, several projects have been accelerated.
 - HumeLink \$3.3 billion (2400MW) is due for energisation in 2026.
 - VNI West \$1.6 billion (TBC MW). Connect north western Victoria to Wagga.
- Transgrid is working hard to streamline the projects, to secure energy supply in NSW. Currently, there is limited capacity in the Australian market to deliver these projects.
- The key reason for the three projects is to connect the renewables that are being generated in South Australia into the system to provide market stability. There is pressure on the current system to ensure that increased energy generation can be brought into the market.
- VNI West in Victoria has been brought forward by several years.
- A CCG member requested the document from AEMO that accelerates HumeLink to 2026. In the 2022 ISP, it is stated that it's a rules based timing to be delivered in 2028/2029.
- Nathan noted that AEMO's document can be distributed, it is a public document and has been subsequent to the 2022 ISP.
- ACTION: Transgrid to supply the CCG with AEMO's document outlining the acceleration of the HumeLink project.

Regulatory and Contingent Project Application update

- Transgrid has met with and been working with the relevant consumer advocate group.
- As noted in previous CCG meetings, 10% of the project funding has been released by the AER. This is the first time that this process has been used on a major project such as HumeLink.
- The release of the preliminary funding is referred to as CPA-1. The objectives of CPA-1 are to develop the project to ensure there is a quality CPA-2 submission to the AER. The submission must demonstrate prudency and efficiency with a high degree of confidence of total out turn costs.
- Key areas of the submission will include concept designs, preliminary investigations, delivery contractor engagement and early works, EIS, booking production slots of long lead equipment and property option agreements. The expectation is the achieve Class 2/3 estimates.
- The program schedule must be adhered to meet the accelerated timeline of July 2026.

Key CPA-1 activities include:

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Not Started In progress	omplete
Key CPA-1 Activities	STATUS
CPA-2 Preparation (includes Financial Modelling & AEMO feedback loop)	•
Procurement of Delivery Contractor (EOI\ECI)	\bigcirc
Procurement of Long Lead Equipment and Materials (booking of production slots and commence early design and prototyping works)	•
Delivery Contract (SP1) – Detailed Designs & Early Works	•
Community and Stakeholder Engagement Activities	\bigcirc
Environmental Impact Statement (all technical studies for preparation and subsequent approval of EIS)	0
Concept Designs	•
Investigations (Geotech and other studies)	\bigcirc
Detailed Land Valuations & Landowner Negotiations	\bigcirc
Land Option Agreements in place	\bigcirc
Wagga Wagga 500kV Substation ('Gugaa') land acquisition	0

 The Chair asked if the progress is status as displayed above is common practise for reporting progress?

- Nathan confirmed that the progress status occurs across major projects.
- Transgrid has been developing strategies to secure the supply of materials as there is great demand for materials globally and a very disrupted supply chain.
- Transgrid is currently in tender for the first large slot of equipment which includes transformers and shunt reactors. Securing a slot in the equipment supply chain is a big risk for all major projects in Australia.
- Transgrid is proactively purchasing a slot in the manufacturing line to ensure the risk of delivery is mitigated.
- Concept designs have been completed and Transgrid is ready to provide that information to the delivery partners. A key component of the concept designs is getting feedback from the community to further the intensive engineering effort.
- Understanding the ground conditions is key in the design decisions to ensure optimisation.
- \$360 million has been approved for the project, and \$80 million has been used. Transgrid has a big focus on prudent expenditure and being as transparent as possible with the AER.

Procurement and construction

- Transgrid is in week 6 of 10 in the current procurement process.
- Currently there are three bidders competing for the work, including:
 - Acciona Construction Australia Pty Ltd
 - Downer Utilities Australia Pty Ltd and Consolidated Power Projects Australia
 - UGL Engineering Pty Ltd
- Two bidders will then be shortlisted, one to complete the Eastern work, and one to complete the Western work for about \$1 billion each. There is a need to ensure the shortlisted companies are resilient and have a strong understanding of regional NSW and aspects such as supply chain risks.

- Transgrid has launched the HumeLink Local Business Register and want to engage in dialogue at a local level to give contractors visibility of what is available across the regions. Transgrid has put in place the Local Business Register to drive some significant outcomes for regional NSW. Transgrid is looking at what local capabilities are available.
- The register will be used by the project team and major construction contractors as planning progresses and opportunities arise.
- The HumeLink local business register is located on the <u>HumeLink website</u>.
- A CCG member asked where the parent companies of the shortlisted firms are located.
- Nathan noted that Downer is Australian, UGL has international ownership and Acciona is Spanish owned.
- Naomi noted that over the last few weeks she has participated in workshops with each of the three shortlisted firms to dive deeply to expectations around approach and key values. Transgrid is exploring options to ensure their Australian participation plans are being rolled out. This means that the local LGAs and adjacent areas that the project goes through are thoroughly considered and understood by the contractors. Transgrid needs to understand how the contractors will engage various packages of work and size them to be appropriate for local entities. The packaging of these works also needs to consider support for local contractors regarding insurance and various other aspects associated with scale that hinder local entities from being engaged.
- Naomi noted that Transgrid is working through how locals can be provided with opportunities to upskill and partake in training.
- The Local Business Register is one part of a larger local industry participation drive. The register is important because it's the first thing Transgrid is asking the contractors to refer to regarding local procurement.

- Nathan commented that Transgrid wants feedback on the approach they should take to make sure everyone is aware of the local opportunities.
- A CCG member commented that in the Upper Lachlan Transgrid should go through Council's local planning department and get their advice.
- Naomi noted that Transgrid's specialist in local business has been engaging with local chambers of commerce and various business associations.
- A CCG member commented that the business associations in the Upper Lachlan area are now defunct.
- Naomi responded that there are informal alliances that exist within LGAs Transgrid is looking to engage with as well.
- A CCG member reiterated that for the Upper Lachlan, the best resource would be the Planning Department within Council.
- A CCG member asked where the transmission lines crosses into the Upper Lachlan from Bannaby. TAKEN ON NOTICE
- A CCG member asked why there has not been a CCG formed from Bannaby towards Sydney.
- Naomi responded that there has been no CCG formed from Bannaby towards Sydney because HumeLink will connect into the existing substation at Bannaby. There is an existing line from Bannaby to Sydney
- A CCG member asked if those lines are 500KV.
- Darryl confirmed they are 500KV. He noted that you can drive along the Bannaby Road and see the actual towers.
- Nathan added that there are many components that have been specified to the contractors regarding training, First Nations engagement and others.
- A CCG member commented that there is a Business Chamber in Yass and that Transgrid would do well to have a speaker at one of their meetings. The Business Chamber meetings are usually well attended with between 40 and 60

people. It was also suggested that Transgrid should place an article in the local paper, not an advertisement. It is important to clearly articulate to the community who will benefit from the kind of program. It was further noted that within the Yass Valley Council, there is an Economic Development Committee that meets every few months.

- A CCG member commented that Transgrid has a responsibility to ensure that this messaging is impactful in the community. It was noted that a lot of people in the community do not even know what HumeLink is. It needs to be clearly communicated what local businesses can get out of the project.
- The Chair noted that if particular sectors can be identified, Transgrid can then go through the peaks for each of those sectors in the community.
- A CCG member asked if there is funding from Transgrid to address the damage to local roads and infrastructure.
- Nathan responded that yes, Transgrid would be responding to damage to roads and infrastructure in the regions caused by the project. It is also a crucial element of the EIS and a key factor in the final funding decision.
- A CCG member asked what amount of dollars will be allocated to road and infrastructure repair and maintenance.
- Naomi noted that a dollar figure has not yet been deduced as Transgrid is currently going through road impact workshops with Government stakeholders to get a better understanding of impacts to local roads. Traffic investigations and current maintenance schedules for planned routes need to be taken into account.
- A CCG member noted that with windfarms, councils have an agreement with the proponents as to how the roads will be maintained and asked if that will extend to how Transgrid maintains the roads – TAKEN ON NOTICE.
- Cameron asked if councils have a certain level expected regarding road maintenance.

	 A CCG member confirmed that councils often do and the Infrastructure Department within council would be able to share details.
	 A CCG member noted that windfarms have been a big learning curve for councils, all of which has had a big impact on local residents. The negative impacts on roads are driven by an increase in traffic, the routes taken by workers, the speed at which workers drive at and their approach to using the roads, eg. speeding and not respecting rural roads. The size of most roads in the area is not conducive for heavy loads, access everywhere is very important.
Design update	Design update
	 Tower locations Nathan noted that there is still a lot of
	work to be completed before tower locations can be 100% confirmed.
	 Nathan confirmed that Transgrid has come up with a process to disclose tower locations.
	 In determining the final tower locations, Transgrid has some flexibility which is important for several reasons, including working with landowners and respecting First Nation's sites.
	 The exact tower locations are still to be confirmed. The Property Management Plans will be used to optimise placement along the easement.
	 The Chair noted that Place Managers are having conversations with landowners around easement access etc as the tower locations are determined.
	 The Chair emphasised the importance of including the most accurate tower locations as possible in the EIS. If tower locations are not disclosed in the EIS, then the reason why not must be clearly articulated.
	 Naomi noted that there will be more than 800 towers across the route. The average distance between each tower will be approximately 400m, depending on the gradient of the land. Some towers will be closer together and others spread out, and there will be flexibility determining the locations of those towers. If Transgrid discloses the estimated tower locations to the public, it will be a case of spreading misinformation in the community. The
	misinformation in the community. The

locations of the towers will be changing based on feedback from landowners. Transgrid is trying to work with landowners to find the best locations, but there are also tensions with neighbouring landowners that need to be worked through as well.

- One reason for the Geotech studies is to understand the ground conditions and ensure the best possible constructability. In the end, it will come down to the design and the way the contractor constructs the towers, within that scope there will be options to move the towers. Not all the information will be available until the actual construction period so only then will towers be able to be moved. Transgrid is hesitant to release the current tower locations, as they will not be the final locations of the towers. The Land Access Managers are working with landowners to discuss the indicative tower locations.
- Transgrid understands that unless landowners know the locations of the towers, it is hard to determine the actual impacts of the projects, but those details are not known yet.
- The Chair noted it was his personal view that disclosing the tower locations is an education process for the community as well. Transgrid should take the community and landowners through the process of determining the tower locations, explaining why the locations are indicative. It is very important that anything that goes into public arena is defined as being interim. Taking people and the community on that journey is powerful and is an important education piece so people understand why the towers may move.
- A CCG member asked if there is a timeframe in which the actual tower locations will be confirmed. It was noted that the Land Access Managers have been talking to landowners about the tower locations for a long time, however everything is very vague, and they do not know how many towers will be on the property or even roughly located.
- Naomi noted that with the formal acquisition paperwork, the landowner will be provided with a detailed valuation that will outline the number of towers, however not the exact locations.
- Darryl commented that the compensation assessments included the

number of towers on a property based on the worst-case scenario. If the number of towers ends up being reduced, the landowner will still be compensated based on the larger number of towers. It has been communicated to the landowners that the tower locations may change. Most people understand that the tower locations may change but they do not understand why the locations cannot be firmed up at a faster rate.

- A CCG member asked how sensitive terrain and consequential impacts can be addressed in submissions made to the EIS.
- Naomi responded that in the EIS Transgrid has to identify all dwellings along the route. The ecological and field surveys are mapping areas such as creeks and water sources. There is already a lot of information in the public domain, however the team on the ground is trying to fill in the gaps in the available information.
- Transgrid is aiming to develop a digital EIS that will bring together information about a particular location. The digital EIS will be a summary but will provide context. The digital EIS will also act as a medium to facilitate finding the relevant information with the EIS.
- A CCG member asked if the tower locations of the existing lines can also be made available in any maps. It was further asked if Transgrid has made any effort to minimise the aesthetic impact by lining the towers up - TAKEN ON NOTICE.
- The Chair noted that the cumulative impact of the existing and proposed lines need to be illustrated by Transgrid.
- Naomi noted that aligning the lines to minimise aesthetic impacts is something that has been received by Transgrid. There will be a chapter in the EIS regarding the visual impact assessment. The design of the lines, where they parallel each other and where they may need to zig zag will be taken into account.
- A CCG member asked if there will be compensation for public land.
- Darry noted that it is outlined in Section 45 of the Just Terms Act.
- A CCG member noted that it is not clear why Transgrid is not disclosing the

indicative tower locations. All impacted landowners and neighbours should be notified of the indicative tower locations. It was noted that it's frustrating for community members to spend time attending CCG meetings in the knowledge that legitimate information that Transgrid has is not being shared with landowners. If Transgrid does not act on anything said in the CCG meetings, they are a waste of time.

- Nathan responded that Transgrid has asked the team to be open and transparent with the information they can share. Transgrid is taking a personal approach and speaking one on one with every landowner. Nathan noted he is taking an action as to how those conversations with landowners are conducted. Nathan noted it is his view that the best way for this information to be disclosed to landowners is via personal conversations rather than sending out a mass email.
- The Chair noted that timing is essential. Unless all the landowners are contacted, the first time some of them may see the tower locations is in the EIS which will come as a shock to them.
- Darryl commented that when the Property Management Plan is worked through with the landowners, indicative tower locations are shared with landowners then.
- The Chair commented that this must be done with all landowners before the EIS is submitted.
- A CCG member noted that the indicative tower locations are outlined online with dots on a map, it is clear they are indicative. If those tower locations are going in the EIS, why does it matter whether they are shared with the community or not.
- A CCG member noted that one way to solve the issue of tower locations would be to underground the line.
- A CCG member asked how many landowners are impacted along the route.
- Nathan responded that 359 landowners are impacted along the route.
- A CCG member requested that Transgrid makes a commitment to contacting all impacted people along the route in the next week with an outline of the indicative tower locations. It was noted

	-	that there will be very significant things that may not be taken into account if Transgrid does not engage with them now, because time will run out. It seems as though Transgrid is not disclosing the indicative locations so they can be optimally positioned for the project. This information needs to be shared in the next week. Naomi noted that there are a number of landowners currently being engaged with, however some landowners have specific requirements about how they are communicated with, so a mass email is not appropriate to disclose the information.	
	-	A CCG member noted that if Transgrid has already had conversations with some landowners, then there should be enough resources to contact those who have not yet been spoken to.	
	-	The Chair requested that Transgrid develops a process between now and the submission of the EIS that ensures all the landowners are engaged regarding tower locations. TAKEN ON NOTICE	
	-	The Chair further commented that it is frustrating that some landowners know, and others do not know. The inequality needs to be addressed.	
	-	A CCG member asked if Transgrid can provide a timeline. TAKEN ON NOTICE.	
	-	Nathan noted that Transgrid has committed to no surprises in the EIS and time needs to be taken to ensure that is the case.	
Undergrounding	Underg	rounding	
	-	Nathan noted that since the last CCG meeting, there has been a HumeLink Undergrounding Steering Committee meeting.	
	-	The report from GHD has been modified to address more of the 52 outstanding issues. Transgrid has requested a copy of the modified report with track changes and this will be distributed to the Steering Committee when it is received from GHD.	
	-	Transgrid will be providing their responses in a letter by the end of November along with the modified report with track changes.	

 Nathan noted that Transgrid recognises the various views on the contentious points within the report and that it is important to emphasize that Transgrid is operating within the confines of the AER and AEMO. Undergrounding does have benefits but there are limitations that do not make it feasible. The report remains to be an important advocacy piece. Naomi noted that once the Steering Committee had seen the amended report with the tracked changes, the final version of the report will be published on the website, along with Transgrid's response. Nathan added that because the report is independent, the integrity of the document is very important. Naomi reiterated that Transgrid's response would be circulated by the end of November. A CCG member noted that by the end of November. A CCG member noted that the last Steering Committee meeting, the need for a balanced non-market benefits table was needed. Has Transgrid engaged Amplitude to do that? At the last Steering Committee meeting Les from Amplitude to GHD. Naomi noted that terange to GHD. Naomi noted that example to GHD. Naomi noted that the solut of that table - ACTION A CCG member commented it was their opinion that Transgrid was going to create that table as GHD have proved themselves incapable. The Chair noted that there were calls from the community or review the route between Tumut and Bannaby, for that reason the Red Hat Review was conducted by MacroPlan. There has been a lot of behind the scenes work completed to senue the needs of the community are incorporated and some 		
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potentially viable options have been deduced.

- Nathan has met with the Department of Planning and Environment for clarity on these potential options before Transgrid can finalise its view.
- DPE has committed to coming back to Transgrid with advice on the options in the near future.
- There were many difficulties to overcome to start considering other options this late in the project, DPE's advice will be key to moving forward.
- Naomi noted that if the advice from DPE is released before the next CCG meeting in December, it will be shared with members.
- A CCG member commented that at the last meeting it was raised that Nathan made a commitment to revise the route in Yass.
- The Chair responded that Nathan is open to considering it, but did not make a commitment to it and that is reflected in the minutes. Transgrid is making it clear they are not proposing to review the route in Yass.
- Naomi noted there may be micro-siting but it would be unlikely to extend from that.
- A CCG member commented that in the most recent Senate Estimates Hearing, Andrew Dyer commented that Transgrid should just pick a route and get on with it. The comments were deemed appalling when the routes are impacting people's properties, the land they love and their livelihoods.
- The Chair noted that no one can comment on the Commissioner's comments.

Stakeholder engagement Stakeholder engagement

- Transgrid has been working with Rural Fire Service to further develop the bushfire steering committee. At the moment, the RFS' resources are tied up responding to the flood crisis.

	 The Chair noted that it would be good to have a representative from the RFS at the CCGs. Naomi noted due to resourcing, it would be best to have a local RFS volunteer fire 	
	 fighter. Transgrid has politely escalated the importance of the issue with a long term view but respect the need for the RFS to resource the floods in NSW. 	
	 Several community information sessions have occurred since the last CCG meeting along the route. 	
	 A CCG member commented that the last community information sessions took place in the Memorial Hall in the Upper Lachlan and they have been described as a white wash. The community was told they would be engagement sessions, however the community were told information rather than were engaged with. 	
	 Naomi noted that was good feedback, however the sessions were advertised as information sessions to establish a baseline understanding of the project for all. In all of the correspondence sent out, it was aimed at making clear that was the objective of the sessions. 	
	Strategic benefits payments	
	 Various government stakeholders would like feedback on the payments. Please provide the feedback to Transgrid to be passed on. 	
EIS update	EIS update	
	 Naomi noted that the 8-week heritage test evacuation program is continuing to progress. 	
	Biodiversity offsets	
	 Joel noted there has been a lot of work done in the biodiversity offset space, particularly around how they can be applied and the strategy needed to procure them. 	
	 There will be webinars occurring to provide further information on the topic. 	
	 Transgrid would like to determine the opportunities that landowners can benefit from. 	

	 Transgrid needs to access certain types of credit and they must take people through the process of how they are doing so. A CCG member commented that the budget for the biodiversity offset credits was hugely inflated, could that money go to undergrounding. Nathan commented that Transgrid needs to lock in the last 90% of funding before decisions like that can be made.
Biosecurity	 Biosecurity update Naomi noted that the CCGs requested an illustration of what the biosecurity protocols will look like on the ground. The current field work and Geotech studies are the best examples of how biosecurity will be managed on the ground. From a policy point of view, Transgrid has updated their corporate biosecurity procedures that are in line with the current legal obligations, the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015, that need to be met. Those procedures are then passed onto the contactors as the minimum requirements to be met. Daryl provided an overview of the biosecurity measures taking place on the ground. Regarding survey and field work, a consent to enter doc must be obtained from the landowner. In the construction phase, the Property Management Plan (PMP) will include the biosecurity requirements from both the landowner and Transgrid. Transgrid will sit down with the landowner and cover items such as access requirements, operational constraints and timeframes etc. Naomi noted that biosecurity is taken very seriously, even within the property so if there are areas of concern, they cannot be spread to other parts of the property. Darryl noted that Transgrid has their own biosecurity measures in place as a minimum standard. If a landowner wants to add more to the measures, they definitely can and they will be added to the PMP. Biosecurity measures are an ongoing and stringent process.

	 The PMP will be a compliance tool for contractors and will remain iterative. A CCG member asked if there is an end date to the PMP regarding biosecurity. Darryl noted that at this stage, it's about two years but will last until the end of the construction period. Landowners can implement whatever actions they choose whenever they choose to ensure adherence to the PMP. Naomi noted that one contractor has discussed an option to tag all vehicles using mobile phone tracking so a landowner can see at any time where a contractor is on their property. The tool is currently being considered by Transgrid. The Chair noted that enforcement and compliance with contractors is crucially important. Darryl noted that the main thing to realise is that Transgrid will be in the area for at least the next 30 years, and ensuring this is done correctly from the beginning is important. 	
Agenda items for the last meeting of 2022	Agenda items for the last meeting of 2022-Outline of EIS consultation activities-Report the outcomes of the last Steering Committee meeting-Update on bushfires-Actions for recruitment for additional CCG members-Route refinementThe next meeting will be held on 14 December at 12pm.	

Action	Status or comment
Secretariat is to follow up with members on administrative details including signed Code of Conduct Agreements and sharing of contact details.	Ongoing
Transgrid to institute the \$50 reimbursement for eligible members	Ongoing
Transgrid to follow up with GHD for more insight into their value scoring methodology and reasoning, including the difference in value between agricultural land compared to State Forest.	Underway
Transgrid to follow up with GHD for more insight into the social and environmental matters included in its model InDeGo (Infrastructure Development Geospatial Options), how they are weighted and the scoring methodology.	Underway
Transgrid to request the value of the multiplier from GHD used in their report.	Underway
Transgrid to determine if there are barriers to technological advancements with undergrounding cables	Underway
Transgrid to respond to the Steering Committee's letter and the 52 outstanding issues within 4 weeks of the meeting.	Underway
Transgrid to check the parameters for covering ecology studies for landowners	Underway
Nathan to follow up with particular CCG member about tower locations	Underway
Transgrid to consider sending draft tower locations to all directly impacted land owners	
Once revised, circulate the Department's Guidelines for CCGs	Underway
Transgrid to supply the CCG with AEMO's document outlining the acceleration of the HumeLink project	Underway
Transgrid to confirm where the transmission line crosses from Bannaby into the Upper Lachlan	Underway
Transgrid to confirm how they will be working with councils to ensure roads are upgraded and maintained	Underway
Transgrid to supply maps that show the existing transmission lines as well as the proposed HumeLink lines	Underway
Transgrid to develop and share a process of how landowners will be engaged with about tower locations before the EIS	Underway

Transgrid to follow up the table of non-market benefits associated with the	
undergrounding report.	