

## MEETING MINUTES

### 1.1 HumeLink Combined Community Consultative Group Meeting: 23 May 2023

<b>Time</b>	5:00pm – 7:00 pm
<b>Date</b>	23/03/2023
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>Chair: Brendan Blakeley</p> <p>Secretariat: Beatrice Hobson</p> <p>Transgrid CCG members: Naomi Rowe, Nathan Rhodes, Jeremy Roberts</p> <p>Transgrid project member attendees: Sumaya Osman, Naomi Rowe, Joel Annett</p> <p>Community members: Andrea Strong, Rene Lunardello, Rebecca Tobin, Andrew Hamilton, Ian Robson, Paul Sturgess, Pippa Quilty, Clr Julia Ham, Jessica Reynolds, Daniel Brear</p> <p>17 observers were in attendance</p>
<b>Apologies</b>	<p>Michael Johnson (Transgrid), Catriona McAuliffe (NSW Farmers), Phil Clements (Softwoods Working Group), Dean Hawkins, Serena Hardwick, Lee Kingma, Russel Erwin, Clr Pam Kensit (Upper Lachlan Shire Council), Clr Rod Kendall (Wagga Wagga Shire Council), Clr Adrian Cameron (Yass Council), Clr Sue Hanrahan (Wagga Wagga Shire Council)</p>
<b>Meeting location</b>	Gundagai District Services Club
<b>Meeting materials</b>	Presentation
<b>Purpose of meeting</b>	Meeting 12

Item	Discussion Summary
<b>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The meeting commenced at 5:07pm.</li> <li>- The Chair welcomed all and gave an Acknowledgement of Country.</li> <li>- The Chair noted apologies.</li> <li>- The Chair thanked the CCG members and observers for attending and outlined the agenda for the meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Minutes and CCG Action Register</b>	<p>The Chair noted that Naomi would present in place of Michael who was unable to attend the CCG meeting.</p> <p>Naomi stepped through the outstanding actions from previous meetings (See Transgrid's action register attached for actions and responses).</p> <p>The Chair asked if CCG members had any questions on the actions and responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>A CCG member asked why Transgrid has chosen not to use NEARA imaging after showing it to CCG members, after they asked for it over a period of months.</i></li> <li>- Naomi responded that Transgrid believed at the time that NEARA would be a suitable tool for visualisation as they believed it demonstrated a</li> </ul>

## MEETING MINUTES

level of necessary detail. Naomi noted that when they have tried to use it as a visualisation tool it has not been able to provide a clear image which demonstrates the visual impacts of the project.

- *The CCG member responded that when they have seen the NEARA imaging previously, CCG members had thought it gave a better representation than photomontages of the visual impact of the towers. The CCG member noted that it conveyed a much clearer image than a photomontage. They noted that it feels as though Transgrid is withholding information from the public.*
- Naomi noted that these clear images cannot be produced with NEARA consistently. She noted that it is a good tool for engineering however is not sufficient for visual representation and photomontages are a better visual assessment tool.
- *Another CCG member commented that when they asked for a photomontage of the visual impacts of the transmission towers and they were given one in a short timeframe on paper. They noted that other people have asked for a photomontage but Transgrid have chosen not to provide it.*
- Sumaya responded that when people request photomontages, if Transgrid already has them available, they are able to provide the images however any additional requests that come through are being handled individually by the property team.
- The Chair asked what the Department of Planning and Environment will look at in their visual assessment for the EIS.
- Sumaya responded that the Department has guidelines for visual assessment. It does not require photomontages of every property, only a representative selection. The EIS will show photomontages of both public views and private residences (with the permission of landowners). Sumaya explained that the EIS looks at the potential impacts of the overall project on visual character.
- *A CCG member noted that Transgrid should reassess their decision not to use NEARA imaging. They noted that the greatest concern for landowners is the visual impact of the towers on their own property and from where they live. They continued that Transgrid could show the NEARA images but qualify anything they need to underneath the image. They requested that at the next CCG meeting, Transgrid show all the visual representations they have and demonstrate why NEARA does not provide a good representation of the visual impact. They noted that Transgrid is failing to consult with the community by not showing all images they have.*
- **ACTION: Transgrid to show images to CCG members of different visualisation tools, including NEARA to compare visual representation and different tool options. The presentation must provide a large selection of NEARA images where NEARA provides an accurate visual representation and where it does not with a comparison to photomontage.**
- *Another CCG member noted that as a CCG member they get asked by community members what the transmission lines will look like and are unable to provide answers.*
- *A CCG member commented that from Sumaya's information on the EIS, it seems as though the EIS will have general information on visual*

## MEETING MINUTES

*impact. This is a very long linear infrastructure and will have impacts that are specific to each property. The CCG member noted that impacts on properties from many locations is important, not just at the residence of the property. The more information Transgrid can provide on each property, the better.*

- *The CCG member asked whether the 5 instances that Naomi quoted for the number of requests to turn the power off was the number of times it was turned off or the number of requests.*
- *Naomi responded that the number Transgrid records represent the number of requests that come into the operations centre. On the website and on the transmission lines there is a 1800 number to call and those requests are captured when they come in. The number quoted looks at requests between December 2019 and March 2020, during this time there were 5 requests for de-energisation and they were all actioned.*
- *A CCG member confirmed if these requests were in NSW alone.*
- *Naomi confirmed that the information was from Transgrid Network Operations across NSW and the ACT.*
- *A CCG member clarified that there were only 5 requests and the lines were de-energised in every case.*
- *Naomi confirmed that they were de-energised in every case and that all requests were pre-emptive ahead of backburning. She noted that through the 1800 number is the official way that requests are recorded and those are all the requests that came through that number.*
- *A CCG member asked for clarification on Naomi's reference to Section 44. They asked why the lines are de-energised only during Section 44 and not for all fires.*
- *Naomi clarified her statement that the power to request a de-energisation comes under Section 44 of the *Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004* for an un-planned de-energisation, and the Transgrid Network Operations record these as un-planned de-energisation which differentiates this activity from others that may be planned for maintenance.*
- *The CCG member noted that there may have been requests from the local Rural Fire Service that did not go through to Transgrid and noted that these should be checked. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- *A CCG member noted that these requests were for backburning not for unintentional fires, they noted that Transgrid have said they cannot instruct people on fighting fires but asked where there is guidance available on fighting fires under power lines.*
- *Naomi acknowledged that she is not qualified to provide guidance on this.*
- *A CCG member commented on the RFS protocol that outlines that if there is smoke they will start a 25 metre exclusion zone from the transmission lines. The CCG member noted that at the last CCG meeting they discussed where the lines will cross roads. They noted that there are 76 places where the lines will cross roads along the route for HumeLink. This means that if there is a 25 metre no-go zone implemented in the instance of smoke, people will not be able to pass under these lines when they are trying to evacuate from a fire. They*

## MEETING MINUTES

*concluded that it was unacceptable to be so close to finalising the EIS yet Transgrid are not able to provide the community with answers to basic questions about safety during bushfires.*

- Naomi responded that she does not have knowledge in the specific area, however Transgrid have been seeking as much engagement with the NSW RFS as possible to answer those specific questions.
- **ACTION: Transgrid to attempt to obtain more detailed information on fighting fires under transmission lines and on ability to evacuate where routes cross under power lines and there is a 25 metre exclusion zone due to smoke. This includes documenting where there is no evacuation route for landowners because of transmission lines, in the case of a bushfire.**
- *A CCG member asked for confirmation that de-energisation means there will still be residual energy in the lines that pose a threat to human life.*
- Naomi confirmed that the lines are de-energised during heavy smoke to remove the immediate hazard from arcing, but this does not mean the lines have no energy in them.
- *The CCG member commented that where there are people fighting fires, de-energising the lines is not sufficient to keep people safe. They noted that through areas such as Wagga and Tarcutta, there will be parallel lines so both lines will need to be de-energised. They noted that if you de-energise one set of lines there can be a transfer of power between the two lines meaning the de-energised line is re-energised. The CCG member noted that this is a big issue and that they want more answers from Transgrid.*
- *A CCG member asked about what the turnaround time is for a request being made to the de-energisation of lines. They noted that they would like to know the number of RFS requests to de-energise the lines from fire brigade offices on the ground rather than head offices. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- *A CCG member noted that at the last CCG meeting they asked for a map on where the outages occurred. They commented that a map will be helpful to know where the hotspots may be. They also noted that it is not just landowners that are affected but the two townships who should have images to show what the future views from their towns will be when the transmission lines are in place.*
- *A CCG member asked whether Transgrid are required to do photomontages.*
- Sumaya clarified that photomontages are a tool to illustrate the visual impact and responded that Transgrid is not required to do one for every property but rather is required to do a selection that represent a range of areas impacted.
- *The CCG member asked who requires the photomontages.*
- Sumaya responded that there are guidelines from the state government.
- *A CCG member noted that the response received on the Yass Valley route refinement still does not provide any specific detail. They noted that they are not satisfied that Transgrid have considered all impacts. They noted that from their understanding the route is going over an air strip West of Yass. They noted that there is significant risk of bushfires*

## MEETING MINUTES

*with the right conditions and weather. They commented that the route refinement response states that there are riparian zones along the Murrumbidgee River however Fairy Hole Creek also has riparian zones. The CCG member requested that Transgrid pay for biodiversity studies and that Transgrid do a route refinement assessment from Bango Nature reserve to Yass. They noted that Transgrid has done West of Yass but not North-East of Yass. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***

- **ACTION: Transgrid to provide greater detail on the Yass Valley route refinement.**
- *A CCG member noted that they had sent quite detailed questions to the Yass route refinement to the Chair and felt that the response provided by Transgrid was very generic and didn't provide enough detail. They requested that Transgrid reissue a response that addresses the questions that were asked.*
- *The Chair confirmed that they had received those and sent them onto Transgrid for response.*
- **ACTION: Transgrid to review questions sent through by CCG member on the Yass Valley route refinement.**
- *The CCG member noted that they are still not satisfied with Transgrid's response on the Yass Valley route refinement. They noted that the response did not provide any specific detail on why the decision has been made about that route.*
- *The CCG member noted that they had specific questions about the route at Bookham. They noted that the Yass Valley response stated that Landcare areas were taken into consideration. They commented that HumeLink is going over an individual's property that did Landcare work and posthumously received the Landcare award of the year. The CCG member also commented that Humelink is going over important Landcare work so they do not believe that Transgrid has considered Landcare areas. They noted that more work needs to be done on the Yass Valley route refinement. The CCG member also noted that in early 2022 Transgrid proposed a study to assess overseas policy of undergrounding. At the time, Transgrid approached Amplitude consulting who were on the HumeLink Undergrounding Steering Committee. Due to their involvement in the Steering Committee Amplitude told the Committee about the request by Transgrid for Amplitude to be considered for the study. No conflict of interest was identified and the Steering Committee members were happy for Amplitude to be considered for the study. Instead WSP were engaged to undertake the study for Transgrid. The CCG member asked where the study is up to, noting that it was initially only supposed to take a few months? They requested that the study be made available to the CCG. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- **ACTION: Transgrid to respond to community on where WSP's study to assess undergrounding overseas is up to.**
- *The CCG member noted that when they researched the Energy Charter, it stated "The Energy Charter is a national CEO-led collaboration that supports the energy sector towards a customer-centric future". They commented that they believe this group will be focused on electricity consumers and not focused on impacts on local communities having transmission lines imposed on them. Having such a narrow customer focus fails to account for the broader triple bottom line: environment,*

## MEETING MINUTES

*social and financial. They expressed reservations about the Energy Charter being the right group to look at undergrounding.*

- Naomi responded that the Energy Charter have recently done a large amount of work with KPMG around social licence, and they are taking up undergrounding from that perspective.
- *The CCG member acknowledged that social licence is important but reiterated that a body that states its focus is customer centric and not holistically focused on the entire community, including negatively impacted communities, will lead to conclusions that favour overhead lines. The CCG member requested they undertake a more holistic assessment of undergrounding and requested that if the Energy Charter presents, Les Brand from Amplitude be in attendance for that CCG.*
- Naomi agreed that Transgrid would ask the Energy Charter to address the points raised by the CCG member.

### Program Update

Nathan informed CCG members that Barbara El Gamal has resigned from the CCG, he noted that Rod Stowe will remain the landowner advocate for the project.

- *A CCG member asked if there is anyone replacing Barbara.*
- Nathan replied that there is no one tonight, and that Transgrid will contact Rod to discuss if there is an intent to backfill the role. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.**
- **ACTION: Transgrid to discuss with Rod Stowe to determine if there will be a replacement for Barbara El Gamal as Deputy Landowner Advocate.**
- Nathan reintroduced Jeremy as the delivery director for HumeLink. He explained that Jeremy has accountability for the day-to-day operations of the project and noted that Jeremy would share some updates on that.
- Jeremy introduced himself and noted that Transgrid are in the final stages of locking in contractors for the project. This is expected to occur around the end of June or early July. Jeremy explained that the EIS is being submitted to the Department of Planning on June 7 for initial review and will go on public display in early September. He also noted that Transgrid are going to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) in September with a final submission for project funding by the end of the year. He continued that construction is scheduled to start in mid to late 2024 with scheduled completion in mid 2026.
- Jeremy also gave an update on the total cost to date and key activities. See slide 8 of the presentation for more detail.
- *A CCG member asked when the substation land acquisition process will be communicated to stakeholders. They noted that many people living around the substations have not been consulted.*
- Jeremy noted that Transgrid are aiming for July.
- The Chair summarised that the community members were requesting more focused consultation with the surrounding neighbours of the substation, not just those whose land will be used for the substation.
- *A CCG member asked how an EIS can be submitted on a route that has not had a cultural walk done.*

## MEETING MINUTES

- Sumaya responded that based on the concept design the team have walked 70% of the route. For the other 30% of the route there were access issues including topographical, landowner or weather issues. Transgrid have presented their approach to Heritage NSW and the Department of Planning. The heritage specialists have used a predictive model to understand potential impacts. As access becomes available to areas, Transgrid are committed to walking the line. In the interim, other methods have been put in place to understand the impacts.
- Nathan explained that they are using the model where they do have access to calibrate it, they are testing the information that is known so the predictive model is as accurate as possible. This means that where they do not have access the modelling can be more accurate.
- *A CCG member noted that they live on a boundary with a National Park and a Heritage Site and they have never been asked about walking the line. The CCG member noted that the line through their property is up to 5km long and they noted that they did not believe that 70% of the transmission lines had been walked.*
- *The CCG member noted that they would like to get their property privately assessed first for heritage sites and compare this with Transgrid's assessment. They noted that they are on an Aboriginal Heritage Site, they have a creek with animals and are on the edge of a National Park.*
- *A CCG member commented that from their understanding in the Project Assessment Conclusions Report (PACR) as part of the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T), Transgrid assumed that op-ex would be 0.5% of cap-ex. In the Integrated System Plan (ISP) AEMO assumes op-ex is 1% of cap-ex and Transgrid's actual five year average of op-ex as a percentage of cap-ex is 3.5%. If Transgrid had assumed what AEMO assumes (1%) it would have failed the RIT-T and HumeLink would have been a net cost. The CCG member asked for Transgrid to clarify why the 0.5% of op-ex over cap-ex was assumed. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- **ACTION: Transgrid to clarify the percentage of op-ex over cap-ex assumed in the RIT-T and that if assumptions have changed to explain the implications of this for the overall project viability in terms of net benefit/net cost.**
- *The CCG member also commented that since the last meeting, there has been a material change in circumstances for HumeLink with the delay of Snowy 2.0. The CCG member noted that during the PACR process Transgrid should have modelled the impact of Snowy 2.0 being delayed 3 years, 5 years or 10 years to test if Humelink still has a net benefit under these scenarios.*
- Jeremy responded that Transgrid have to submit to AEMO and the project will be assessed again based on the current conditions. This will be submitted in July and will assess whether there are any impacts to the project which increase net benefits or decrease net benefits.
- *The CCG member asked whether this will include sensitivity analysis on delay and that this be reported back to the CCC.*
- Jeremy replied that the report will look at all relevant considerations including the delays in Snowy 2.0.

## MEETING MINUTES

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>ACTION: Transgrid to provide an update on the AEMO review when completed.</b></li></ul>
<b>Community investment and engagement</b>	<p>Joel presented on community investment and engagement.</p> <p>See page 10 of the presentation slides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Joel explained that there is a two-week period of community information sessions around the region focusing on EIS topics. He also noted that there are webinars focusing on EIS specialist studies.</li><li>- The Chair asked how the information sessions are being advertised and how people can attend.</li><li>- Joel responded that they are advertised on the website, local radio, newspaper, newsletter and emails out to distribution lists.</li><li>- <i>A CCG member asked how busy the community information sessions and webinars have been.</i></li><li>- Joel responded that they would like to see more people attending the sessions.</li><li>- <i>A CCG member commented that Transgrid has not given information out on what they are investing in in the communities.</i></li><li>- Joel noted that the primary form of investment is through the Community Partnership Program (CPP). He noted that the team are working with the council around options for investment.</li><li>- <i>A CCG member commented that this had been ongoing for three years and noted that no progress had been seen.</i></li><li>- <i>Another CCG member commented that there has been low uptake of community information sessions because of the location. They noted that if the information sessions were out on the street, uptake would be higher. They also commented that it was difficult to tell who Transgrid were as they were not wearing any identifying uniforms to the meetings. They noted that even a badge would help CCG members to identify who is a community member and who is from the Transgrid team.</i></li><li>- <i>Another CCG member commented that Transgrid should ask CCG members where good places for the community information sessions are to be held. They noted that they are happy to help Transgrid to find places that suit the community.</i></li><li>- Joel thanked the CCG member and noted that the remote access community hub which Transgrid have set up is a trailer which can be moved around to suit various locations. He noted that another member of the project team, had done some work with councils on where Transgrid can set up. He noted that the community information sessions and community outreach activities will increase as the EIS exhibition period draws closer.</li><li>- <i>A CCG member commented that if Transgrid presented information on visual amenity more comprehensively there would be a higher level of interest from community members.</i></li><li>- Joel noted that for landowners who are impacted by the easement, they are going beyond the newsletters and community information sessions to directly and proactively engage with those people within 2km of the route corridor to talk about the impacts of the project.</li></ul>



## MEETING MINUTES

- *A CCG member asked if the project team are doorknocking.*
- Joel confirmed that they are going directly to landowners and seeking face-to-face meetings.
- *A CCG member asked if landowners neighbouring the actual easement will be compensated and noted that in Queensland there is a compensation package for this engagement with landowners.*
- Joel responded that there is not currently a compensation package for this.
- *A CCG member noted that the project is already three years in and Transgrid should have been engaging with neighbours from the beginning.*
- *Another CCG member commented that it is a failure from Transgrid that from their understanding 4322 residences have been identified as being impacted and they are only being engaged with now.*
- Joel responded that there is still adequate time for engagement with landowners prior to the EIS process.
- *A CCG member noted that the EIS process needs to be extended to be longer than a month.*
- *A CCG member commented that route refinement in the Yass region was raised because of the impacts of the project on the community and environment in the area. The CCG member stated that they understand that Transgrid will not be looking at major changes in the route, therefore even if they consult now on the EIS this community has had no opportunity to provide meaningful input on the route decision.*
- *A CCG member asked whether the route in the Yass region has been defined yet. They noted that as the EIS process draws closer, Transgrid should be able to tell the community where the route will be.*
- The Chair summarised that the community would like an update on where the route identification is at and what will be in the EIS.
- **Action: Transgrid to provide an update on route in the Yass region and what route will be in the EIS.**
- *A CCG member noted that Transgrid has sent out letters of offer to people along the route for a 200m wide easement but the specific route is not included in the letter of offer, so landowners do not know what part of the land is being acquired and they do not have a visual representation of what it will look like.*
- *A CCG member asked if there are any guyed towers proposed for HumeLink.*
- Jeremy responded that there are no guyed towers as the landscape does not suit guyed towers. Jeremy continued that from a 200m wide corridor Transgrid are narrowing the route down to a centre line. He noted that the contractors are going through and looking to determine the centre line currently.
- *A CCG member asked how the letter of offer can be made to homeowners.*
- Nathan clarified that the route will be within the identified easements.

## MEETING MINUTES

- *A CCG member commented that it is a 200m wide possible easement rather than a 70m wide easement.*
- Nathan noted that for many landowners this is suited to them as it gives them a degree of flexibility when working with Transgrid on where the transmission lines will exactly go. He noted that for some landowners, Transgrid have been able to work with them to fit around farming operations and minimise the impact on landowners.
- John reiterated that the option agreement which has been issued to landowners defines a 200m corridor. He noted that there is flexibility in that option agreement to vary the location. He noted that landowners that have signed up to the agreement are aware of where the line is likely to be.
- *A CCG member noted that the fact sheet talks about both suspension towers and tension towers and asked for images of those.*
- Joel noted that the fact sheets are currently a draft and will be updated to include images.
- The chair invited Sumaya to present on the EIS topics: noise and vibration and air quality.

### Noise and Vibration

#### Noise and vibration

Sumaya gave an update on noise and vibration.

See slide 14 of the presentation for an update on noise and vibration assessment.

- The noise and vibration assessment looks at construction and operation impacts as well as the impact from the infrastructure and construction activity.
- The methodology used to assess noise and vibration includes a noise logger that collects data on background noise to determine how noisy or quiet background noise is. The noise specialists predict what potential construction noise could be experienced from typical equipment and put it in a model to measure the potential increase to the current background noise levels.
- Construction noise will be managed to reduce the impacts from the project, this includes considerations around equipment selection, work hours and noise screens, where feasible.
- Sumaya displayed an image which illustrated the noise study area, this included the project footprint plus a two kilometre buffer on either side.
- *A CCG member highlighted the need for a Property Condition Survey prior to construction commencement as the tower concrete footing depth was 5.5 to 17 metres with a diameter of 1.5 to 3 metres requiring 17 trucks of concrete for one tower and working pads 50 x 70 metres to support the 280 tonne crane.*
- Sumaya responded that the vibration assessment will look at the vibration levels close to structures and determine whether a dilapidation report would be required. She noted that there have not been any buildings noted in the EIS assessment that would be impacted by vibration however once the final location of the towers is determined, Transgrid will know whether any assessments may be required prior to beginning construction.

## MEETING MINUTES

- Sumaya continued with her presentation and noted that Transgrid have paid particular attention to the location of the construction compounds. This is because there will be significantly higher levels of movement of vehicles and staff in these areas. She noted that they will aim to keep them as far away from sensitive receivers as possible to limit disruption.
- *A CCG member asked if there are only 9 sites for noise monitoring.*
- Sumaya confirmed that this was the case, with 9 sites for monitoring noise for the EIS. She noted that contractors will have to monitor noise once they begin construction.
- *A CCG member asked if there is noise monitoring for houses adjacent to power lines.*
- Sumaya noted that during construction they will be monitoring the noise levels while working and if they are going to exceed noise levels for a period of time, there will be a conversation with landowners to see how they can best do it to minimise impacts.
- *A CCG member asked about noise created by the transmission lines post construction.*
- Sumaya responded that the humming affect (corona) that the lines can create only happens under certain weather conditions. This is during light rain or misty conditions. From the assessment undertaken, it was determined that during these conditions, people will be able to hear the noise up to 300m away and up to 400m away where there are two lines paralleling.
- *The CCG member commented that under the existing 330kV transmission lines they can hear them humming constantly, not just in certain weather conditions.*
- *Another CCG member asked whether noise and vibration has included an assessment on agricultural impacts, including impacts on livestock and animal wellbeing.*
- Sumaya responded that livestock impacts are not covered under noise and vibration requirements for the EIS.
- Naomi added that this question had been asked by CCG members previously and noted that Transgrid engaged in a literature review of any impacts on livestock. The outcome was that no substantial research could be found on the impacts of transmission lines on livestock. The research showed that any impacts on nutrition levels had the greatest level of stress impact. Naomi noted that if a CCG member had seen any research Transgrid would be happy to look at it.
- *A CCG member noted that they had found some literature which they would send through to the Secretariat.*

### Air Quality

### Air Quality

Sumaya gave an update on air quality.

See slide 18 of the presentation for an update on air quality impact assessment.

- The air quality impact assessment looks at the impact during the construction phase and operation of the project and considers any mitigation measures to reduce impact.
- Sumaya showed an image of the study area, she noted that there is consideration of the roads, whether they are sealed or unsealed, what

## MEETING MINUTES

kind of equipment is going to be moved along them. She noted that there are mitigation measures for minimising dust.

- *A CCG member questioned what the yellow area was on the map.*
- Sumaya clarified that the yellow section was the area between Wagga 330kV substation and Wondalga but was perhaps difficult to see on the figure because of the red line.
- The Chair noted that in the discussion on roads there had previously been questions on road safety and dust asked whether Transgrid are looking at safety on the roads.
- Sumaya noted that mitigation for dust from trucks does not include wetting down of council roads (only access tracks) however there will be other mitigation measures such as ensuring loads are covered when transporting dust generating materials.
- *A CCG member noted that when a truck moves along the road it throws up dust. This will not be mitigated by covering a load. They also noted that high volumes of truck and vehicle traffic will further damage already poor roads. Transgrid should be required to bring the roads back to better condition.*
- The Chair noted that discussion in the March CCG had addressed deterioration of roads which included dilapidation reports pre-construction and post-construction and discussions with Councils on use and repair.

### Construction approach

#### Construction approach

Michael introduced himself and outlined the process for construction.

See slide 22 of the presentation for an update on the construction approach.

- He noted that the initial stage is to meet with the landowner and discuss the property management plan to understand where the access needs to be and any operations which Transgrid may need to work around.
- There are then a number of stages that the program moves through including surveying, access tracks and clearing, excavations and foundations, assembly of towers, construction of towers and stringing.
- Michael outlined that there are two types of towers. The suspension tower and the tension (strain) tower. The suspension tower is able to be used when the lines go in a straight direction. The tension towers are required where there is a change in direction.
- Michael noted that the tower height can be between 50 and 76 metres tall. The higher towers allow for the lines to span further and the distance between the towers to be greater.
- *A CCG member asked for clarification around the height of the towers. The CCG member noted that previously they had been told by Transgrid that the heights could be between 50 – 80 metres and Transgrid would not rule out the towers being taller than 80 metres in certain topography. The CCG member asked for confirmation that there would be no towers above 76 metres.*
- Michael confirmed that in the EIS no towers will be going above 76 metres.

## MEETING MINUTES

- **Action: Transgrid to confirm that no tower in HumeLink will be higher than 76 metres.**
- Joel added that it is a concept design for the EIS.
- *A CCG member commented that in Tasmania people are being told the heights could be up to 92 metres. They noted that there was a lack of transparency from Transgrid about heights of HumeLink towers as the ranges and maximums seemed to keep shifting.*
- *A CCG member noted that there is a 500kV transmission line from Bannaby to Mount Piper and asked that CCG members be provided with information on the height of those towers.*
- Jeremy noted that that project is a different age and using different design processes however Transgrid can provide that information.

### **TAKEN ON NOTICE**

- **Action: Transgrid to provide the height of the towers of the 500kV transmission lines between Bannaby and Mount Piper.**
- *A CCG member commented that SecureEnergy has been constructing towers and asked whether it was the same process.*
- Michael replied that those towers were 330kV towers. He noted that the towers are the same basic construction but the HumeLink towers will be bigger.
- *A CCG member asked whether in Transgrid's planning for building access roads, they have gone to the local quarries to see if they can accommodate their requirements. The CCG member noted that Wagga recently lost a quarry and noted that when it rained last year, trucks were being turned away. The CCG member noted that Transgrid should be planning for this now.*
- Michael acknowledged that resources were an issue for construction, he noted that water sources and concrete had already been identified as potentially having resourcing issues.
- *A CCG member also commented that small businesses will be de-prioritised as big businesses such as Transgrid require resources.*
- *A CCG member requested that Transgrid include rehabilitation time in the construction timeline presented. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- *Another CCG member asked whether during the construction phase, workers have to stick to the easement area or whether access tracks may be outside this area.*
- John responded that during construction phase, some access tracks may be outside the easement area.
- *A CCG member asked what happens if landowners do not give access to Transgrid for areas that are not within the easement.*
- John responded that if it reaches that stage, compulsory acquisition will be required.
- *A CCG member commented that with the existing 330kV lines, landowners should be able to charge Transgrid to access the property outside the easement.*
- John responded that Section 34 of the Act allows Transgrid to access people's property.

## MEETING MINUTES

- *A CCG member asked for confirmation on whether Transgrid is allowed to access all of their property.*
- John responded that for existing assets and for 330kV lines, provisions in the Act allow Transgrid to access the transmission lines. If there is off easement required and the landowner will not give access to Transgrid you would compulsorily acquire the land.
- *A CCG member commented that anywhere where Transgrid cannot access the easement, landholders should be compensated for the tracks made and the right for Transgrid to access.*
- John responded that this will all be documented in the property management plan.
- *A CCG member asked whether Transgrid have determined where the suspension towers will be as opposed to tension towers.*
- Michael responded that that process is underway, but not yet finalised.
- *The CCG member asked that once decided, the information is passed onto landowners as the visual impacts of the tension towers are more significant. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- *Another CCG member commented that Transgrid should not be undergoing compensation when they do not know what the visual impact will be for landowners.*
- Michael responded that once Transgrid has finished going through the tender evaluation and a contract is awarded, they will have information on where there will be suspension towers and where there will be tension towers.
- Michael outlined the size of the working pads which are used to construct the towers. He noted that the footprint is 70m by 50m.
- *A CCG member asked about how this will be constructed in steep uneven terrain.*
- Michael responded that in this circumstance, a split pad will be used. He noted that there is a section cut into the hill and the lower pad will have leg extensions to align with the higher pad.
- *A CCG member asked what is done with the land that is not suitable for stepped pads.*
- Michael responded that they built in difficult terrain before and have not yet come across an area where this tiered arrangement is not able to be done.
- *A CCG member asked about the size of the crane set.*
- Michael responded that the crane is a 200-300 tonne crane.
- *A CCG member asked about the size of the crane pad. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- *A CCG member asked about how the site is rehabilitated following the works.*
- Michael responded that once all the works are done, and any compacted ground is removed, Transgrid will cover the area in topsoil and will ensure it aligns with the existing terrain adjacent to the towers.
- *A CCG member asked about areas with limited topsoil.*

## MEETING MINUTES

- Michael responded that from his recollection that has not happened yet, however acknowledged that the topography in this area will be difficult.
- *A CCG member asked about the access track, they asked about how wide it will be and how it is constructed.*
- Michael noted that the access track would be 4 metres wide with a metre buffer on either side. Michael noted that anywhere where there are a number of towers on the one property, the track may be wider to accommodate passing bays to ensure safe access and egress of construction teams, but it is generally 6 metres wide.
- *A CCG member asked what Transgrid will do when they approach gullies or creeks.*
- Michael responded that it will depend on the assessments that happen for each location. He responded that access will be required in all weather conditions.
- *A CCG member commented that if it is a first order stream it must be treated as a first order stream and cannot be driven over.*
- **ACTION: Transgrid to provide some clarification around how creeks or crossings will be managed by contractors.**
- *A CCG member commented that Transgrid should run some information sessions for local contractors to provide service and employment opportunities for people in the local community.*
- Naomi responded that as part of the procurement process, Transgrid assign delivery partners who will deliver major sections of the project. As part of that process, they will develop local industry participation plans and set targets for goals to have local suppliers.
- Naomi continued that Transgrid and the delivery partners will also attempt to source materials locally. She noted that once the contracts are in place with delivery partners, they have a requirement to engage with local suppliers and small businesses to find out what is available and also what assistance they need to bid for the work. Transgrid will work through any gaps with small businesses to assist them to apply for the work. She noted that local industry participation information will come with the announcement of delivery partners in early July.
- *A CCG member requested that there is clarification on the engagement with the Rural Fire Service and how local brigades on the ground know what they can and cannot do and the communication processes between local brigades, RFS Central operations and Transgrid. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- Naomi responded that these specific questions will be taken on notice. She noted that Transgrid wanted to provide an update on the engagement so far. They have been working with the RFS to provide information on the route and to map where there are opportunities for shared communication. She noted that in some areas communication is a challenge for the RFS, Transgrid wants to understand how they can support the RFS. Naomi commented that Transgrid are working with the RFS to cross reference route alignment with areas where there is identified communication priority areas or service lacking.
- *A CCG member commented that it is frightening for landowners when it seems as though there is no way of mitigating the risk for people on the ground. The CCG member noted that the Dunn's Road fire was*

## MEETING MINUTES

*extremely frightening for people and with Humelink there is another hazard being placed in a high bushfire risk area. The CCG member noted that the best solution to mitigating the risk would be to underground the transmission lines.*

### Other business

- *A CCG member commented on the alternative western route going through Green Hills State Forest and Bago State Forest. They noted that there are tourist and recreational sites in the area such as walking tracks, a waterfall, Pilot Hill Arboretum and the forest and wondered whether there will be a visual impact to these tourist areas. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- *A CCG member asked if the route will be going down Old Tumbarumba Road.*
- *Another CCG member responded that the route is west of Old Tumbarumba Road.*
- *A CCG member asked when it will be possible to get clarification on where the line is going.*
- *Joel responded that it will be around two months.*
- *A CCG member asked how the EIS process may be affected by a change in route.*
- *Sumaya responded that this will not affect the EIS. She noted that when the alternative route option arose, Transgrid were already well progressed on the EIS and they are now looking at that option in parallel to the EIS process. The alternative route being investigated is outlined in the EIS. Sumaya noted that if they decide to amend the route, they would have to do another report following the EIS on any changes. At this stage Transgrid are assessing the feasibility of the other option, an update can be provided at the next CCG. If it is determined to be feasible, Transgrid would have to commence other assessments such as ecological and heritage assessments.*
- *A CCG member commented that two months was too long for a decision from Transgrid on how the route may change. The CCG member commented that the project has been ongoing for three years and this is a major decision as it affects which side of the town the transmission lines run through and has a significant effect on landowners and many people in the community.*
- *Another CCG member commented that there has been ongoing indecision on the project and there needs to be clarification from Transgrid.*
- *A CCG member commented that there were emails which were supposed to be sent between Transgrid staff internally but were mistakenly sent to landowners. The CCG member noted that in the emails there were belittling and unempathetic comments made about landowners. The CCG member noted that this speaks to Transgrid's culture and that it indicates Transgrid has no empathy for what landowners are experiencing.*
- *Naomi responded that there was an error made from Transgrid and acknowledged that it was unacceptable. She noted that there was an apology issued by the people involved and also from the manager of that team.*



## MEETING MINUTES

- *A CCG member asked if the apology was in writing.*
- Naomi confirmed that it was both in writing and verbal.
- *A CCG member asked if there are psychologists working on the Transgrid team.*
- Nicole responded Transgrid employees have access to the employee assistance program (EAP) and that there are counsellors available to the community.
- *A CCG member commented that the EIS is a huge document which will take a long time to digest. They noted that a 30 day timeframe is not sufficient for most people affected by the project to make an adequate submission. They noted that it is important that people make informed submissions and asked that Transgrid work on the timeframe for response. They also noted that Transgrid should be focusing on having impactful engagements with people in the area. They noted that Transgrid are running community information sessions but emphasised that it is important that these are impactful engagements being had with community members about the project. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- *A CCG member asked what date the EIS goes to NSW planning.*
- Sumaya confirmed that the team is targeting submitting the EIS in August and exhibition commencing in early September. She noted that they have a 'soft lodgement' to the Department in June, after which they will finalise the document. They will then make it available to the Department 7 days before exhibition. There is four week minimum time for exhibition but the actual length of exhibition is up to the Department not Transgrid.
- *The CCG member asked whether NSW planning get sent the EIS for a period before it goes live to review it.*
- Sumaya responded that they will do what used to be called an adequacy review to ensure it meets the requirements of the secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs). The soft lodgement is not an assessment but is done to ensure that the EIS contains the required information and is thorough enough to be placed on public exhibition.
- *A CCG member commented that at the March CCG Nathan had said that there were electricity sources other than Snowy 2.0 which were feeding into HumeLink. The CCG member asked for a list of other sources that will feed into HumeLink.*
- Nathan responded that AEMO has the information on the network participation rather than Transgrid. He noted that Transgrid have some projects such as VNI West but they do not have complete oversight on what projects HumeLink will be serving. He noted that they could inform CCG members on what they know. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.**
- *A CCG member noted that in the response to the Yass Valley route refinement, the explanation stated that there were constraints in consideration of the Rye Park Wind Farm, they wondered how that impacts on Yass. **TAKEN ON NOTICE.***
- Nathan responded that more information could be provided on the Yass Valley route refinement response.
- The Chair asked whether any observers would like to ask questions.

## MEETING MINUTES

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>An observer asked what would happen if a large number of farmers refused to sign the letter of offer.</i></li> <li>- John responded that there would be compulsory acquisition. He noted that Transgrid would lodge an application with the Office of Environment and Climate Change (OECC) and they will assess the application. It then goes to Treasury and the Minister signs off on the application. John noted that there is 90 days to go through that process, then Transgrid has 30 days after the Minister signs it to gazette it. He noted that the compensation is then sorted by the Valuer General who does an assessment based on his own independent valuation. There is then the provision for landowners to appeal the compensation amount which will be heard by the Land and Environment Court.</li> <li>- <i>A CCG member asked about the timeframe for the appeal to be lodged to the Land and Environment Court.</i></li> <li>- John responded that from his understanding it could be about a 6 month process.</li> <li>- <i>The CCG member asked about the time period on this including the court process and suggested it could take 5-10 years. The CCG member asked about how this could delay the project.</i></li> <li>- John responded that Transgrid would still be able to meet the commission date.</li> <li>- Nicole clarified that once the Minister has signed off on the application, the easement right is transferred to Transgrid. The compensation happens after this process so appealing the compensation will not delay the project.</li> <li>- <i>A CCG member asked whether the landowner can object to the transfer.</i></li> <li>- Nicole confirmed that the landowner can object to the compensation but not the acquisition of the land.</li> <li>- The Chair suggested that Transgrid could provide a flow chart for community members to assist their understanding with the process of compulsory acquisition. <b>TAKEN ON NOTICE</b></li> <li>- <i>A CCG member asked about approaching the government for tax free compensation payments.</i></li> <li>- Naomi noted that Transgrid had responded to CCG members on this and noted that Transgrid raised this with the OECC and Transgrid have not heard back about being able to progress it. Naomi noted that it has been raised by several landowners.</li> <li>- <i>A CCG member asked if Transgrid can follow up. <b>TAKEN ON NOTICE.</b></i></li> <li>- The Chair noted that the minutes will be circulated within a week.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Chair noted that the next meeting will be in July with the exact date confirmed in the coming weeks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Meeting close</b></p>	<p>The meeting closed at 7:30pm.</p>

## MEETING MINUTES

Action	Status or comment
HumeLink EIS and SEARs to be circulated to CCG members	Completed
Transgrid to provide the CCG with technical information explaining how the structural integrity of the transmission lines is maintained in windy conditions.	Completed
Transgrid to respond to the Steering Committee’s letter and the 52 outstanding issues within 4 weeks of the meeting.	Complete
Transgrid to supply the exact number the 2022 undergrounding figures were based on	Completed
Transgrid to check the parameters for covering ecology studies for landowners	Completed
Transgrid to supply their proposed biosecurity processes for the geotech investigations.	Completed
Transgrid to supply revised Option Deed	Completed
Transgrid to supply the revised Property Management Plan	Completed
Transgrid to outline how the procurement process will minimise impact on local communities	Completed
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.	Completed
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.	Completed
Transgrid to determine if there are barriers to technological advancements with undergrounding cables	Underway
Secretariat is to follow up with members on administrative details including signed Code of Conduct Agreements and sharing of contact details.	Completed
Transgrid to institute the \$50 reimbursement for eligible members	Completed
Transgrid to request the value of the multiplier from GHD used in their report.	Completed
Transgrid to supply the difference in route length between the original Bannaby to Tumut option and the alternate option that was considered	Completed

## MEETING MINUTES

Transgrid to email confirmation that Transgrid will not be doing an official review of the route in Yass.	Completed
November meeting minutes to include further detail regarding the biodiversity offset process.	Completed
Transgrid requested to provide summary slides for each topic of the EIS	Underway
Transgrid to provide the CCG with an example of a noise and vibration catchment	Completed
Transgrid to provide an explanation of the noise monitoring process and how the noise machines work	Completed
Transgrid to answer if the noise monitors will remain post construction of the route	Completed
Transgrid to dedicate an agenda item during a CCG in 2023 to noise and bring an acoustic expert in	Completed
Transgrid to determine if the Neara modelling will be ready in time for when the EIS is on public exhibition	Completed
Transgrid to provide a chart of all the different companies involved in HumeLink and what they do.	Underway
Transgrid to provide more information on the tower details	Completed
Transgrid to send through the map outlining the 65 outages that occurred during the Dunns Rd fire and confirm that there were 65 outages.	Completed
First Nations HumeLink stakeholder list to be shared with the CCG	Completed
Pre-reading material will be provided at least a week before each meeting.	Completed
Transgrid to confirm the number of requests for power lines to be turned off during the Dunns Road fire.	Completed
Transgrid to re-distribute correct route map identifying East and West sections of the line.	Completed
Transgrid to review fact sheets reportedly displaying 330kV lines in place of 550kV lines.	Completed
Can landowners be paid for the time spent developing their PMPs?	Completed
Chair to review the questions sent through on the Yass route refinement.	Completed
All future CCG meetings held as combined meetings and open to the public.	Completed
Transgrid to provide the CCG with an update on progress with AEMO at the next CCG	Completed
Transgrid disclose how many lobbyists they have working in Sydney and Canberra.	Completed

## MEETING MINUTES

Transgrid to show images to CCG members of different visualisation tools, including NEARA to compare visual representation and different tool options. The presentation must provide a large selection of NEARA images where NEARA provides an accurate visual representation and where it does not with a comparison to photomontage.	
Transgrid to attempt to obtain more detailed information on fighting fires under transmission lines and on ability to evacuate where there is a 25 metre exclusion zone due to smoke. This includes documenting where there is no evacuation route for landowners because of transmission lines, in the case of a bushfire.	
Transgrid to provide greater detail on the Yass Valley route refinement.	
Transgrid to review questions sent through by CCG member on the Yass Valley route refinement.	
Transgrid to respond to community on where WSP's study to assess undergrounding overseas is up to.	
Transgrid to discuss with Rod Stowe to determine if there will be a replacement for Barbara El Gamal as Landowner Advocate.	
Transgrid to clarify the percentage of op-ex over cap-ex assumed in the RIT-T and that if assumptions have changed to explain the implications of this for the overall project viability in terms of net benefit/net cost.	
Transgrid to provide an update on the AEMO review when completed.	
Transgrid to provide an update on route in the Yass region and what route will be in the EIS.	
Transgrid to confirm that no tower in HumeLink will be higher than 76 metres.	
Transgrid to provide the height of the towers of the 550kV transmission lines between Bannaby and Mount Piper.	
Transgrid to provide some clarification around how creeks or crossings will be managed by contractors.	