

HumeLink SNOWY VALLEYS Community Consultative Group

Meeting minutes

1.1 HUMELINK SNOWY VALLEYS COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE GROUP: 2ND MEETING

Time	5pm – 7pm
Date	16 November 2021
Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Inaugural Chair: Brian Elton– Secretariat: Ella Burgess– Transgrid: Tim Edwards, Fleur Laurence, Matthew Armstrong– CCG: Mayor James Hayes (alternate), Matthew Suter, Lee Kingma, Rebecca Tobin, Phil Clements, Pippa Quilty, Jessica Campbell, Daniel Brear, Johanna Armour– Deputy Landowner and Community Advocate (Observer): Barbara El-Gamal– Observers: Deb Pobije (Transgrid), Cristina De Maria (Transgrid), Emily Eldridge (Transgrid)
Apologies	Clr Julia Ham, Sue Bulger, Jonathon Caffery, Ian Robson, Luke Penrith (attended part meeting)
Meeting location	Tumut River Brewing Co
Meeting materials	Presentation
Purpose of meeting	Second Meeting
Attachments to minutes	Question tracker, presentation

1.2 AGENDA

Item	Agenda topic	Discussion summary	To note
1	Welcome, Acknowledgment of Country and apologies	Welcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The meeting began at 5:01pm.• Welcome from the Chair, introductions, background from community, landowner and organisation Community Consultative Group (CCG) members.• Introductions and involvement in the project from the representatives of the Transgrid HumeLink project team.• The Chair outlined the scope of the meeting and noted that undergrounding, the scoping report, and compensation were all substantial agenda items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apologies: Clr Julia Ham, Sue Bulger, Jonathon Caffery, Ian Robson.• It was noted Ella Burgess was Acting Secretariat in place of Katie Casson.• The Chair noted that the conversations around undergrounding, compensation and the scoping report would serve as opening conversations to be further deliberated with the CCG moving forward.
2	Minutes of the last meeting	General housekeeping: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair talked to the late distribution of the October meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to the atypical timing of the October and November meetings as well as some unforeseen

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minutes, presentation and question tracker.

The Chair called for comments and questions on the previous meeting minutes

- The previous meeting minutes were adopted.
- The Chair noted that the question tracker was sent on 15 November 2021. Detailed questions will take a longer approval process for Transgrid to sign off on.

Expectations for the circulation of meeting materials moving forward:

- The Chair proposed a timeline for the issuing of the meeting minutes and question tracker moving forward.
 - The Secretariat to draft the meeting minutes within four working days of the meeting.
 - The minutes will then be checked by Transgrid for technical accuracy only within two working days.
 - CCG members will then have three working days from receipt for comment.
 - The Chair and Secretariat will then review and incorporate all comments and questions within three working days of receipt.
 - When Transgrid receive the final minutes, they are to be placed on the project website within one day of receipt.

The Chair called for consensus on the proposed timeline for distribution of the meeting minutes.

- The proposed timeline was adopted.

Additional landowner CCG members

circumstances, the distribution of the meeting minutes was delayed.

- CCG members are to respond to the question tracker between CCG meetings.
- As there are three CCGs that occur consecutively, the standard two-week turnaround time for the minutes was agreed to be extended as per the outline of the proposed timeline.
- Any changes Transgrid makes to the meeting minutes of a technical nature are to be tracked and noted to provide the community with transparency.
- Brendan Blakeley's contact: Brendan.blakeley@wsp.com.

- The Chair proposed a process to invite applications from more landowners to the SV CCG.
- CCG members and place managers to contact Brendan Blakley about additional landowner members.
- If several people from one geographic area show interest, it would be preferred if one landowner is put forward to be selected as their representative.

The Chair asked if there was consensus on the proposed process.

- The process was adopted.

3 Undergrounding

Presentation:

Tim provided an overview of the undergrounding study.

- During the October meeting, community and council CCG members expressed desire to further understand the process of undergrounding and how they could be involved in the process.
- Transgrid is commissioning a project specific independent study to understand the feasibility of undergrounding.
- Transgrid are in the process of developing the scope and are looking for community input.
- The study is aimed for completion by the end of the first quarter 2022.

Tim provided an overview of what undergrounding is.

- Overhead transmission lines carry alternating current (AC). Direct Current (DC) is also used for undergrounding.
- Transgrid will be investigating the feasibility of both AC and DC underground.
- There are some precedent examples of DC underground transmission in Australia.

- Fleur has been collecting questions from the community about undergrounding received through multiple feedback channels to help inform the brief for the independent study.
- The Chair indicated that the brief should cover community related issues and concerns.
- Community members indicated not enough information about undergrounding has been made available to the community.
- Community CCG members noted that it has been very hard to receive transparent and consistent information from Transgrid.
- Transgrid noted that they are looking to capture the costs and benefits of transitions between both overhead and underground transmissions.
- The community is commissioning an independent undergrounding study.
- The community members of the CCG noted having landholders involved in the Steering Committee process is very important.
- The CCG will determine a representative for the Steering Committee amongst themselves.

- For either AC or DC transmission underground, the cables will require the excavation of a cable trench, the installation of conduits and back fill.
- The number of cables and size of the trench will be determined by a number of factors including the required circuit rating, depth and ability of natural soils to dissipate the heat.
- DC transmission underground requires less cable in the ground than AC however, there is a large cost associated with connecting DC to AC transmission above ground.
- Underground transmission may require access for the majority of the route.
- Joint bays are required every 800 – 1000 metres. A 10 metre by 3 metre concrete box (joint bay) is indicative of size largely underground would be required to install cables underground. Note that this indication is provided to capture joint bay dimensions, but the number of co-located joint bays is dependent on the final cable design.

The Chair called for questions of a technical nature.

- Community CCG members asked how the compacted backfill associated with the installation of conduits would impact agricultural operations.
- Transgrid noted that they are not completely certain of the impacts that the backfill will have, however they anticipate grazing will still be an option.
- Community CCG members expressed frustration with Transgrid's lack of transparency to date around Undergrounding and the, continuing uncertainty for the community.
- Transgrid responded that there is a lot of community interest in undergrounding and the community needs facts and answers from the study.

- The Chair noted that the brief is aimed to be drafted by the end of 2021.
- The CCG members will elect a group representative and a technical consultant.

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- The Chair noted that it is obvious there is a strong desire from the community to understand the undergrounding process. The study needs to be completed once and independently.
- TransGrid was requested to apply a similar level of transparency and input for the study currently underway to select one of the three Tumut options. It was noted that to date there has been very limited visibility on this aspect.
- Community members expressed concerns about undergrounding being a distraction from community consultation about issues which were likely to influence the project.
- Transgrid noted that it would not, and they are committed to the study because the community sentiment around undergrounding is so strong.
- CCG community members expressed that local farmers are in favour of sustainably battling climate change.
- Community members expressed an interest in future proofing electricity transmission infrastructure.
- Community members expressed a view that when total construction costs and social and environmental costs are included Undergrounding might be the most cost-effective option.
- Early engagement and consultation are needed to acknowledge the additional infrastructure will be feeding into a national grid as east coast coal is decommissioned.
- Transgrid confirmed that it is technically possible to transition between overhead and underground transmission lines. Specific constraints need to be assessed.
- Community members noted the most obvious location for underground

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transmission would be at the back of the airport.

- Community members questioned Transgrid if they could increase the carrying capacity of the existing lines instead or build new ones.

Questions and responses have been outlined in the attached Question Tracker.

The Chair led a conversation around the CCG's involvement in the undergrounding process.

- There is obvious skepticism within the CCG about Transgrid's intentions with the undergrounding study and questioning if it is just a *tick box exercise*.
- The Chair noted that there is also a proposal for a community led undergrounding study.
- The Chair outlined his experience on a project of a similar nature and how the community were able to be involved and influence a study carried out by the proponent.
- The Chair proposed a process to ensure the community's continued involvement and influence over Transgrid's independent undergrounding study:
 - Each CCG would nominate a member to join a Steering Committee for the undergrounding study.
 - The Steering Committee would assist in compiling the brief, assist in the selection of the consultant and jointly manage the study with Transgrid.
 - When the draft brief has been compiled, it will be available to all CCG members for comment.
 - The CCG would have the option to engage a technical consultant that would be appointed by the

community and advise the Steering Committee. Transgrid would pay for the chosen independent consultant's time.

The Chair called for comments and questions.

- Community members noted that they would like to see the same process adopted for the undergrounding study be applied to the process of determining which of the three corridor routes is preferred.
- In response to a question about the feasibility of certain sections of land for the corridor, Transgrid noted that they will not be assessing their study against an international benchmark. Instead, the study's scope will respond to HumeLink specific issues.

The Chair asked if there was consensus on the proposed process.

- The general process for community involvement was agreed.

Questions and responses have been outlined in the attached Question Tracker.

4 Engagement

Timeline

- Fleur provided an update on the engagement timeline.

Discussion

- Transgrid is broadening their distribution scope of newsletters and fact sheets. They are also taking a proactive approach using social media and the project website. Face to face information pop sessions are being planned and they are encouraging people to sign up for their newsletter and for project updates.
- Transgrid confirmed they have attempted to speak to all impacted landowners. There have been some cases where owners have changed, or do not live in the area which has

- As the October CCG meeting was held three weeks prior to the November meeting, there were few updates. See slide 4 of the November presentation for an overview of the HumeLink update.
- Fleur's contact details:
fleur.laurence@transgrid.com.au

meant they haven't been able to make contact.

- Community CCG members raised concerns over an individual community member who had not been engaged with appropriately and Transgrid's response times were severely lagging which has eroded the relationship.
- In response, Transgrid asked CCG members to encourage that particular community member to contact Fleur.

Questions and responses have been outlined in the attached Question Tracker.

5 HumeLink Scoping Report

Scoping report

Tim provided an overview of the scoping report.

- Objectives and purpose of the scoping report are as outlined on slide 11 of the November presentation.
- The key issues and other issues identified in the scoping report are listed on slide 12 of the November presentation.
- The issues of biodiversity and heritage were explained in more detail on slide 13 of the November presentation.
- Transgrid is aiming to submit the scoping report by late 2021. Submitting does not mean route refinement and updated environmental information cannot be revisited. Transgrid will continue to refine the route inclusive of information along the route.

Discussion

- Transgrid confirmed that the scoping report will cover what the EIS will be looking for.

Questions and responses have been outlined in the attached Question Tracker.

The Chair called for additional questions and comments on the scoping report.

- Transgrid will issue the scoping report to the CCG members when it is finalised.
- The preamble of the scoping report will make its purpose around feedback from stakeholders clear. Though the scoping report will be made publicly available, its key purpose is to receive feedback from government agencies on the content and methodology within the report.
- Transgrid will be alerting the community when the report is available.

- No questions or comments were noted from the group.

6 Compensation

Compensation

Tim gave an update on compensation.

- See slide 16 of the November presentation for an overview of the compensation updates
- Transgrid has received preliminary legal advice that alternative payment arrangements are possible under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991.
- The legislation does not prevent Transgrid from offering compensation as a series of annual payments.
- Transgrid is now considering how annual payments could work within our regulatory framework, and to ensure we identify potential issues that need to be resolved.
- Transgrid remains committed to identifying a workable solution that will provide payment method optionality for easement affected landowners.
- Transgrid will work with the AER to acknowledge the prudent and efficient expenditure of annual payments.
- Transgrid is also committed to working with the NSW Government as they consider additional options to change legislation to improve outcomes for easement affected landowners.
- Transgrid noted that there will be further discussion as the matter about compensation develops.

Discussion

- Community members acknowledged that this was a generally welcome update. A representative of Council stated they would prefer it if the transmission lines went through public land.

- The possibility of alternative payments options under the Just Terms Act is an important step forward for Transgrid.

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- Community members also raised the fact that Transgrid funding improved compensation and community benefits. Given the project represents a major increase of their asset base, Transgrid would be the beneficiaries of improvement to their social license, improve relationships with landowners, reduce project approval risk and other operating risks and delays if they took this approach.
- Community members commented that although it is a positive step forward, it needs to be implemented on a broader scale and address how the Just Terms Act governs moving forward. It is not always just about the money being offered, the project will be an imposition on productive farmland.

Questions and responses have been outlined in the attached Question Tracker.

The Chair called for additional questions and comments on the scoping report.

- No questions or comments were noted from the group.

7 December Engagement

December Engagement

Fleur provided an overview of upcoming engagement in December 2021.

- See slide 17 of the November presentation.

The Chair called for additional questions and comments on the scoping report.

- No questions or comments were noted from the group.

- Transgrid will not be conducting any planned engagement activities over the holiday break.

8 Discussion and general business

The Chair called for other items of business.

Reimbursement

- Transgrid are to institute the \$50 Eftpos voucher for eligible members right away.
- When Brendan is selecting landowners to join the CCG, he will look out for those who have a

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- The Chair is of the opinion it is appropriate to reimburse members for out-of-pocket expenses such as fuel.
 - Landowner and council representatives who are already paid will not receive the reimbursement.
 - The majority of community members supported this proposal, with some members declining the offer of the \$50 Eftpos voucher.
 - A CCG community member noted that everyone who has a meeting with Transgrid is losing time.
- particular interest in undergrounding.
 - Transgrid to provide CCG members with an understanding of the potential constraints the project will have on agricultural productivity.
 - Transgrid will supply the CCG with a physical map of the whole project.
 - Transgrid to have relevant technical experts available to give immediate answers for technical questions moving forward.
 - The Secretariat will issue a calendar invite for meetings moving forward.

CCG representative for the Steering Committee

- Community CCG members decided they would choose their representative and technical advisor between themselves and advise the Chair.

Next agenda items

- Community members requested transparency on the scope for the three different options for the corridor information on European standards and why underground transmission infrastructure is used in Europe.

Discussion

- A community CCG member commented that documentation and media information received has stated the infrastructure would be 50-70 metres tall, however there is now information that the height will be 60-80 metres tall, which appears incorrect and misleading.

The Chair called for additional questions and comments on the scoping report.

- No questions or comments were noted from the group.
- The meeting closed at 6:50.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked attendees for their time and input.

7 Meeting close

- The next CCG meeting will be held in late January 2022.

1.3 OPEN ACTIONS

No.	Action	Status or comment
1	Secretariat is to follow up with members on administrative details including signed Code of Conduct Agreements and sharing of contact details	Underway
2	The 20 recommendations outlined in Transgrid's commitment to improve engagement are to be circulated for reference to members	Underway
3	Transgrid is to consider advice provided by members of the CCG and broaden its engagement process for community members across the region, with attention to project messaging and the businesses social license to operate	Underway
4	Transgrid is to follow up with interested members of the CCG to deep dive into ecological maps and identified flora. An out of session meeting and demonstration might be beneficial for interested members	Underway
5	Transgrid is to share more information on the current route and why an option running to the western side of Talbingo crossing over the Dam and running parallel to the Snowy Mountains. It is proposed that a detailed map issued out of session would be a good way to address	Underway
6	Transgrid is to share an explanation on Network Operational Risks	Done
8	Transgrid to provide further information on the corridor decision making processes, key criteria and key considerations in relevant Acts	Done
12	If Place Managers or CCG members are aware of landowners who would be interested in the CCG, please pass them on to Brendan Blakeley – Brendan.blakeley@wsp.com	Underway
13	CCG members to appoint a representative for the Steering Committee and find a technical advisor	Underway
14	Transgrid to institute the \$50 reimbursement for eligible members	Underway
15	CCG member to advise discouraged community member to contact Fleur	Underway
16	Transgrid to ensure the right technical people are available to answer questions when needed.	Underway
17	Fleur to answer question F2 in question tracker	Underway
18	Secretariat to issue calendar invites to CCG meeting moving forward	Underway
19	Transgrid to supply CCG members with a physical A3 map of the project	Underway

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20	Transgrid to distribute the Scoping Report to CCG members when finalised	Underway
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1.4 NEXT MEETING

Item	Agenda topic
1	Compensation
2	Undergrounding
3	Scoping report
4	Scope for the three different corridor routes
5	European standards for network transmission and why underground transmission infrastructure is used in Europe

1.5 CLOSED ACTIONS

No.	Action	Status or comment
7	Interactive map for landholders and the community is to be shared with the CCG	Complete
9	Transgrid is to share deep dive information and proposed engagement activities for undergrounding options	Complete
10	Transgrid to make the contact details for members of their Community Team available to the CCG	Complete
11	The Chair to call CCG members who needed to be caught up to speed on undergrounding.	Complete

Meeting minutes endorsed by the CCG Chair, Brian Elton 3/12/21