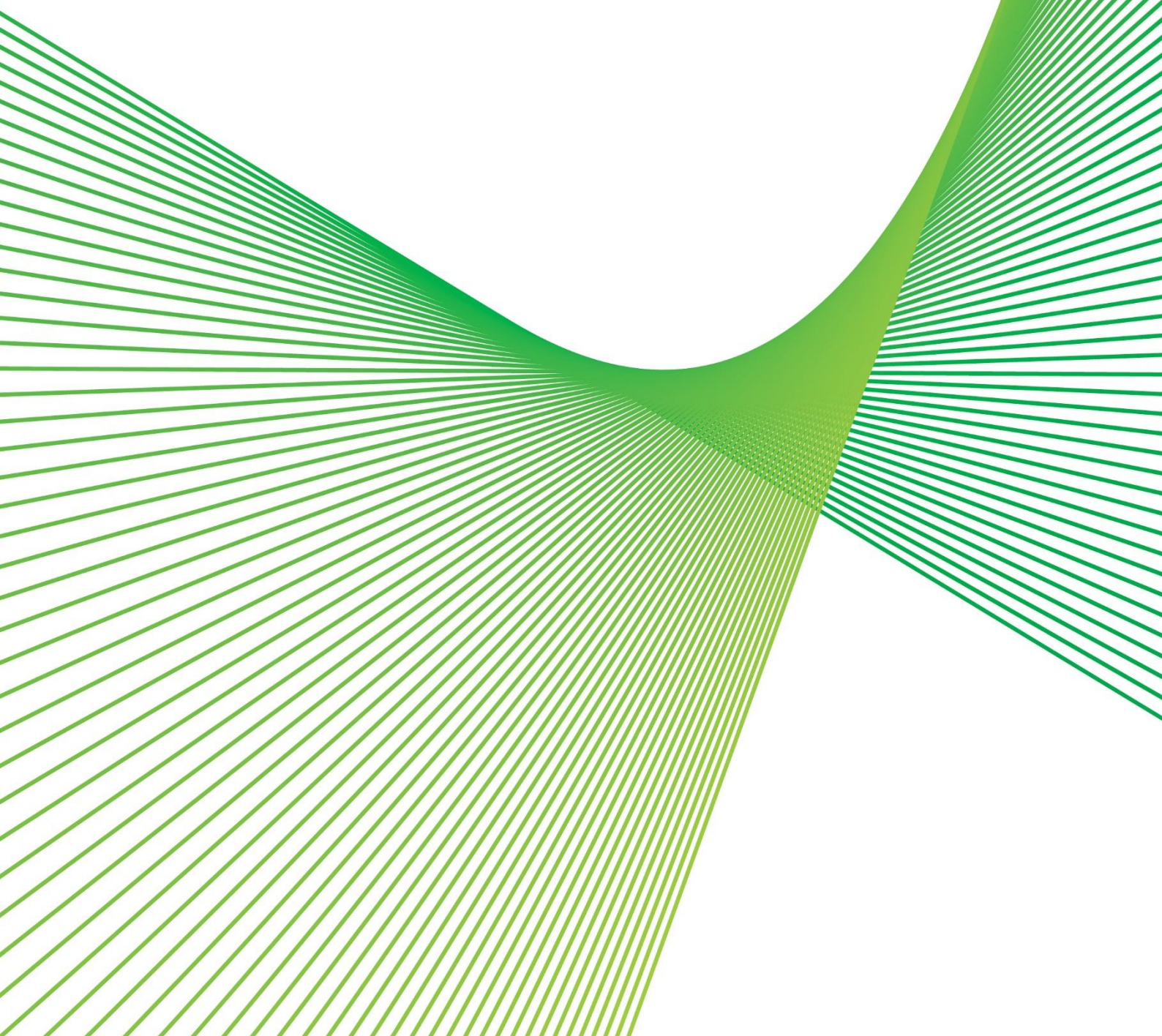




People. Power. Possibilities.

HumeLink Webinar

Summary of Webinar – October 7 2021



Background

HumeLink is a new 500kV transmission line which will carry electricity to customers from new generation sources, including the expanded Snowy Hydro scheme. It will connect Wagga Wagga, Bannaby and Maragle. More information about the project can be found on our [website](#).

To date, Transgrid has been engaging directly with landowners on the proposed study corridors. This webinar which was held on 7 October 2021 was to provide information about the project to the broader community. The purpose was to give attendees the opportunity to learn more about the project, provide an update, and outline the route selection process. Due to current COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting was held online and was advertised via the project newsletter and website. The meeting link was distributed to those who emailed their interest to the project email at Humelink@transgrid.com.au.

Welcome and agenda

Transgrid's independent facilitator welcomed and thanked all attendees for their time. The session began with a round of introductions from all who joined the meeting, including the Transgrid representatives who outlined their roles. The independent Landowner and Community Advocates were also in attendance as observers.

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Presentation on the HumeLink project
- Questions

Transgrid thanked attendees for coming to the session but noted as there was only an hour, all questions may not be able to be answered during the meeting. Transgrid committed to providing responses to questions taken on notice within a week. These responses would also include any questions provided in the chat function during the session. Transgrid also advised that there would be ongoing community information sessions.

Summary of presentation

Transgrid presented an overview of the HumeLink project, and themes included:

- Overview of the energy landscape and the Federal and State objectives driving the need for the project
- Outline of the project approval processes
- Project overview
- Overview of the study areas and the corridor refinement process
- The Landowner and Community Advocate engagement review and recommendations
- Transgrid's commitment to improve engagement and what this looks like
- Community Partnerships program
- Next steps

Questions and answers

There were several questions and comments from attendees. These are summarised below. Question and comments have not been attributed as permission was not sought to do so.

Question/comment	Response
<p>What is the role of the Community and Landowner Advocate and can the community and landowners contact the Community and Landowner Advocate directly?</p>	<p>The Office of the Landowner and Community Advocate has been established within Transgrid to help us implement the best possible landowner and community engagement practices across all of our major transmission projects.</p> <p>The function is led by former NSW Commissioner for Fair Trading Rod Stowe who is highly regarded by the community and has extensive experience protecting consumers. The Office of the Landowner and Community Advocate Charter can be located on the website.</p> <p>Landowners can contact Rod Stowe directly by emailing him at advocate@transgrid.com.au.</p>
<p>Can the TransGrid CEO commit to meeting the HumeLink Action Group? Despite the technical content contained in the letter. Is there any indication of him meeting our request?</p>	<p>Transgrid's CEO Brian Salter is responding in writing directly to the Group.</p>
<p>A comment was made about whether new team members had an understanding of the engagement that has occurred to date.</p>	<p>As part of our commitment to improve our engagement, we have increased our team to include three dedicated place managers to ensure we can engage with landowners and the community consistently and regularly.</p> <p>We keep records of our engagement with stakeholders including face to face and online meetings, comments made on the interactive map, emails and phone calls.</p> <p>While we can't discuss the particular issue raised as we don't have the detail, we welcome all feedback directly so that we can continue to improve our engagement.</p>
<p>How wide and tall will the towers be and how far apart can they be from each other?</p>	<p>The design of the HumeLink towers has not yet been finalised, however steel lattice structures ranging from 50-70m in height will be the most likely option.</p> <p>Typically towers are on average 400 metres apart. The distance between towers can vary on topography but they could be anywhere from 100 metres apart when crossing a major highway or up to 1.5kilometres apart when traversing hilly terrain.</p> <p>Exact tower locations will be finalised during the detailed design phase of the project. The final tower locations will be based on a range of factors, including but not limited to landowner feedback, technical analysis and environmental impacts. The towers require an easement width 70m-wide.</p>

<p>Why does the proposed corridor in Bannaby not follow the existing lines?</p>	<p>The existing line, which runs through Tarlo National Park was constructed in 1969 before it became a national park. The route identification constraints for HumeLink include avoiding national parks and nature reserves wherever possible. The parks and reserves are avoided because there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an increased impact on biodiversity, heritage sites, areas with Aboriginal significance and recreational space - more outages due to bushfires and damage caused by fallen trees, and increased associated maintenance costs - greater impacts on aerial firefighting operations - challenging terrain from a construction and operational perspective - environmental impacts due to required sterilisation of the land with increased clearing required - higher biodiversity costs. <p>Paralleling through the National Park would increase ecological impacts and the costs associated with the project including higher offset costs.</p> <p>The narrowing of the corridor in the Bannaby area has been based on environmental and design considerations, analysis of bushfire and network risks and the identification of local constraints. The corridor was initially wider in this area to allow more options to be investigated and to gather feedback from landowners.</p> <p>The current corridor was selected based on consideration of the above, plus opportunities to maximise distance away from houses.</p>
<p>There was a question about engagement costs and whether there is a budget for landholder compensation?</p>	<p>Transgrid balances delivering projects with the lowest possible cost while ensuring that communities where the infrastructure will be located are treated fairly and their feedback is considered as part of the project planning process.</p> <p>As part of Transgrid’s commitment to improve engagement and deliver on all of the recommendations of the Landowner and Community Advocate, the team has been rightsized to ensure we can genuinely engage with landowners and the community as we progress through the project planning stage.</p> <p>Transgrid’s compensation is determined by the impacts on a specific property. Many factors are considered when assessing compensation, so the amount paid to each landowner will vary.</p>

	<p>Overall, Transgrid must demonstrate to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) that HumeLink will deliver a credible option that maximises the net economic benefits to all those who produce, consume and transport electricity in the market.</p>
<p>A question was asked about why the HumeLink Action Group's option is only being considered by Transgrid now?</p>	<p>The option was considered more broadly in the early planning stages, however we have heard from the HumeLink Action Group that they feel that Transgrid hasn't considered this option as part of the project planning process and communicated this back to the Group.</p> <p>As we are committed to improving landowner engagement and as part of our recent engagement reset, we are in the process of commissioning an independent study that will review the proposed option 2F. The findings of this study will be shared once completed. We expect this assessment will be completed before the end of the year.</p>
<p>Can you please provide your current 200 metre preferred route?</p>	<p>In late October we will begin talking to landowners in most areas about the preferred narrowed 200 metre corridor and, for those with an existing transmission line on their property, we will be sharing current design preferences for which side of the existing line HumeLink is expected to parallel for their feedback.</p> <p>Ongoing active investigation and consultation, particularly in the new corridors between Westwood and Gilmore, and through Tumut, will continue into 2022 to ensure we have time to gather input and feedback from landowners. We are planning to have narrowed the corridor to 200 metres by early 2022.</p>
<p>Has Transgrid considered undergrounding HumeLink, which is viewed as world's best practice especially in Germany/Europe?</p>	<p>Transgrid considers a range of options and methodologies, including undergrounding. However undergrounding for HumeLink is not a practical option for several reasons, including environmental impact, technical limitations, impacts during consideration and cost. While there are advantages to installing cables underground including visual amenity and some weather events, the disadvantages overall are considered by Transgrid to be greater.</p> <p>The cost of undergrounding 500kV lines as of 2021 is in the order of ten times higher in magnitude than overhead lines. Due to the scale of the HumeLink project, even if only some sections were placed underground it would result in significantly higher electricity costs for all NSW households and businesses.</p> <p>Another disadvantage is land use; land over underground cables can't be used for agriculture and farming due to the concrete used to cover the cables. In comparison, cropping and grazing can continue to occur under overhead lines, causing less impact on many farming operations.</p>

	<p>The construction impacts to landowners are generally higher than installing overhead lines using proven technology. Underground transmission lines are usually constructed using open-trenching technique – the construction process is lengthy with multiple stages, digging trenches, installing conduits, temporary reinstatement, pulling, joining and testing cables, permanent reinstatement and the commissioning of the cables. This increases the risk to farming operations in terms of pest control and increased vehicle activity as these tasks are completed by separate specialist crews. There is also the requirement of storage areas and other compounds. By contrast, towers can be installed relatively quickly with a much smaller footprint.</p> <p>In terms of operation, there are maintenance considerations as underground cables are at a high-risk of deterioration over time due to moisture seepage. Faults to the network are also harder to identify, taking more time to restore power if there is an outage. In the event of an outage, crews will have to look for the source of the fault and potentially change sections of cables – this involves opening the trenches and working around the clock to restore the power.</p>
<p>Do you realise that this meeting was emailed to start at 5pm? 4pm AEST....? In case someone missed out.</p>	<p>Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We want to thank those who could attend the webinar. We don't believe anyone missed the session but we plan to have regular community information sessions so there will ongoing opportunities to attend and participate.</p>
<p>Please ensure Bannister District is included in future community information sessions.</p>	<p>All community members are encouraged to attend the online information sessions. The webinars will continue to be advertised on multiple communications channels, including the project website and via newsletters. Community members can sign up to our mailing list to receive regular updates on the HumeLink project.</p>
<p>I'd be interested in hearing of any early analysis of customer bill impacts, for example, the dollars per year increase for a NSW residential customer through to 2030.</p>	<p>We are working on this modelling and we will be able to provide an update in the coming months.</p>