

Engagement Activities

HumeLink



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1. Engagement

1.1. Engaging on HumeLink

HumeLink is a large and complex infrastructure proposal with a high-level of community interest. Transgrid recognises the diverse engagement and information needs of the community and has committed to a robust plan of engagement that will be inclusive and participative in nature.

Transgrid has dedicated local place managers and land access officers supported by a specialised community engagement team to deliver local and best practice community engagement to communities and landowners. The hands-on engagement is complemented with desktop research to understand demographics, land use and unique characteristics to ensure that engagement is reflective of the community that Transgrid is working in.

Transgrid aims to build trust in the community through a comprehensive engagement ‘no surprises’ approach, delivering on commitments, and keeping all stakeholders informed throughout the development of the proposal.

Transgrid has endorsed the IAP2 public participation spectrum as the best-practice approach to community engagement. The level of consultation with each stakeholder group has been based on the IAP2 public participation spectrum.

The engagement approach also aligns with:

- The *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021), which are recently released government guidelines for engagement during the environmental impact assessment process
- *Property Acquisition Standards* (NSW Government, 2019)
- *Quality Assurance Standard in Community and Stakeholder Engagement* (IAP2, 2015)
- *Clean Energy Council Community Engagement Guidelines* (CEC, 2018)
- *Community Participation Plan* (DPIE, 2019).

Transgrid’s engagement and communications approach for HumeLink is to ensure that:

- Transgrid genuinely works to engage all landowners, community and stakeholders and enables them to provide meaningful and informed feedback
- A consistent approach to communications and engagement is maintained and community and stakeholders know what to expect
- There is genuine, honest, and transparent two-way engagement, and it is frequent and respectful
- Communication and engagement are tailored to stakeholder needs and expectations
- The process to identify a study corridor and route options is transparent and includes engagement and consideration of stakeholder feedback
- There is a clear and transparent process for collecting stakeholder feedback and reporting on how feedback / issues / concerns / opportunities have been integrated into the corridor refinement and route options assessment processes
- Transgrid understands the values and opinions of the community and other stakeholders and the proposal provides opportunities to reflect these values and opinions in decision-making

- Transgrid engages affected community and other stakeholders, including those that are hard to reach to seek their perspectives, keep them informed and remove barriers to participation
- The engagement process is refined and updated to reflect both community and stakeholder and regulatory requirements and preferences as required
- Community and other stakeholders can be involved in designing mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts of the proposal on the community and other stakeholders
- Transgrid seeks feedback from the community and other interested stakeholders during the undertaking of relevant specialist studies

1.2. Engagement reset

1.2.1. Background

Transgrid heard that landowners and the communities in the HumeLink corridor were not satisfied with engagement to date and these concerns were taken seriously.

Transgrid engaged independent Landowner and Community Advocate, Rod Stowe, to assess past engagement and consultation practices for the HumeLink project and make recommendations for improvement. A report titled “Review of HumeLink Engagement Process – Findings of the Review” dated July 2021 (Stowe Report) was made public and is published on Transgrid’s website.

Transgrid has committed to implementing all 20 recommendations made in the Stowe Report.

The engagement reset is focused on:

- gaining an increased understanding of stakeholders and their need
- regular, compassionate and meaningful engagement
- assessing potential impacts to stakeholders and appropriate mitigations
- alignment with the Landowner and Community Advocate Report and its recommendations
- achieving regulatory requirements, industry standards and best practice.

Transgrid will continue to engage with identified stakeholders according to the newly adopted principles and approach following the Landowner and Community Advocate Report. As new stakeholders are identified, Transgrid will apply the same framework.

The independent Landowner and Community Advocate will be available throughout the proposal development to support the community on any issues that cannot be satisfactorily resolved following Transgrid’s engagement and complaints processes. Information as to how landowners, the community and stakeholders can engage with the Advocate will be made available.

1.2.2. Landowner and Community Advocate recommendations

1.2.2.1. Overview

Transgrid has committed to and will implement all recommendations from the Stowe report. Some of the key areas where Transgrid proposes to improve its engagement and consultation approach are:

- Clarity around how and when Transgrid is engaging – planned activities and timeline, including the information to landowners and the community on how they can participate

- Engagement tools are confirmed (and adapted if required) in response to community and stakeholder feedback
- Ensuring that there is clarity about why Transgrid engages with the community, landholders and stakeholders in the proposal corridor areas, the frequency of this engagement and how it relates to the proposal planning process
- Ensuring that the public has clear information about the methodology Transgrid uses to refine the corridor and identify route options and the role that the public has in this process
- Information provided on how feedback from landowners, community and stakeholders is used in the refinement of the corridor
- Ensuring that all stakeholders have the time and opportunity to provide feedback
- Ensuring landowners, community and stakeholders are clear about the potential impacts as well as the proposal planning process
- Valuing and committing to ongoing, transparent engagement

1.2.2.2. Implementation plan

Table 1-1 details how Transgrid is delivering on the recommendations of the Landowner and Community Advocate report.

Table 1-1 Implementation of the Landowner and Community Advocate recommendations

#	Action	Indicative timeframe							
		Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	
A	Improve consistency of engagement								
A1	Conduct stakeholder research								
A2	Establish a Community Consultative Committee in the five LGAs								
A3	Embed skilled locally based place managers for consistent and readily available point of contact								
A4	Implement regular regional engagement								
B	Enhance information quality and sharing								
B1	Move HumeLink communications to a regular basis								
B2	Agree and articulate parameters that are in and out of engagement scope with the HumeLink project team								
B3	Commit to publicly providing rationale behind choices regarding community feedback								
B4	Explain the criteria for the next stage of decision making								
B5	Place managers review mapping and analysis of feedback before publicly presented								
B6	Ask community members to nominate topics for detailed fact sheets and FAQs								
B7	Prepare accessible information on the RIT-T and EIS process, regulatory frameworks and statutory and non-statutory consultation								
B8	Prepare accessible information on the process for property access and acquisition after review and endorsement by an independent party								
B9	Undertake independent peer review to verify accuracy								

#	Action	Indicative timeframe						
		Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22
C	Resource engagement to the required level							
C1	Secure endorsement and support for strategy by Transgrid executive and the Humelink project leaders							
C2	Test the reset strategy with key stakeholders							
C3	Appoint a strategic lead							
C4	Utilise expertise of organisations on best practice liaison with impacted landowners							
C5	Embed skilled locally based place managers for consistent and readily available point of contact							
C6	Mandate engagement and communications training for all community facing project team members							
C7	Develop partnerships with local health services to provide support for landowners							

1.3. Engagement to date

Transgrid will engage with landowners, Traditional Owners, stakeholders, and the broader community throughout all stages of the proposal. A key focus to date has been on ensuring that potentially affected landowners (landowners with properties within the proposal corridor) receive comprehensive updates about the proposal and that they have the opportunity to provide information about their properties and farm businesses. Local councils, key stakeholders and the broader community have also been consulted and feedback on the proposal continues to be encouraged.

There are several ways that communities and stakeholders can provide feedback – face to face, phone, email, the interactive map, and webinars. Transgrid is committed to sharing with the community how this feedback has been considered as part of the corridor refinement and route options process, for better proposal outcomes and/or to minimise potential impacts. Table 1-2 outlines the range of engagement opportunities provided up to lodgement of the Scoping Report.

Table 1-2 Engagement activities up to Scoping Report lodgement

Engagement activity	Quantity	Summary	Stakeholder group
Toll free community enquiry number	220 calls	A dedicated toll-free telephone number (1800 317 367) to receive and respond to enquiries from the community and interested stakeholders.	All
Dedicated email address	2623 emails	A dedicated email address (humelink@transgrid.com.au) to receive and respond to enquiries from the community and interested stakeholders.	All
HumeLink website	13,770 visits to the website	The HumeLink web page on the Transgrid website (transgrid.com.au/humelink) provides a proposal overview, key dates and proposal milestones, details about the approvals process and how community can get involved, as well as a range of proposal fact sheets and other information. This is updated regularly.	All

Engagement activity	Quantity	Summary	Stakeholder group
Online interactive map	1677 comments on the interactive map	An online interactive map allows stakeholders to comment and share local information. The map details the route refinement process and is updated to reflect the corridor refinement stages. All comments are considered as part of the planning process.	Landowners Interested community Local businesses Community groups
Stakeholder briefings	67 briefings held	Regular briefings and presentations are provided to relevant local councils and key industry stakeholders. The briefings have included presentations and discussions on the need for HumeLink, how stakeholders would like to be engaged, and any other topics of interest. They also provide an opportunity to listen and receive information from stakeholders and to explore opportunities to work together.	Government representatives (local, state, and federal) Community groups Local businesses Industry representatives Major development proponents Aboriginal representative groups
Landowner one-on-one meetings	423 meetings held	Face-to-face, on-property meetings will continue to be held with landowners within the corridor throughout the proposal. These meetings help Transgrid to understand individual property constraints, farm businesses, current and future land use, and other local information.	Landowners
Fact sheets, newsletters	Regular updates at key proposal milestones and factsheets issued as required	Newsletters will be sent to landowners directly and will be made available to all stakeholders on the HumeLink web page. They will also be emailed to key stakeholders and interested community members. Factsheets will continue to be developed in response to feedback from community and landowners about what topics they would like more information about. Factsheet topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HumeLink (overview of the proposal) • Route selection • Landowner consultation • Ecological surveys All newsletters and factsheets are available on the HumeLink web page.	Landowners General community Key stakeholders All interested community
Notifications, information packs	557 landowners received packs in September	All landowners within the corridor will continue to receive notifications when there is; new information about the proposal and the planning process, for request to enter property to complete environmental/ technical studies, and for any other updates. Notifications are often accompanied with newsletters, maps, and fact sheets to form information packs. These information packs are issued to provide landowners and other stakeholders with as much detail as possible to ensure they understand the proposal and are able to provide meaningful feedback.	Landowners Community Key stakeholders
Events, webinars and drop-in sessions	3 community events (limited due to COVID-19)	Transgrid will continue to hold events to enable the broader community to find out more about HumeLink and provide feedback. Events include community festivals and agricultural shows. Drop in sessions are planned to continue where possible at key stages of the proposal.	Community focussed

Engagement activity	Quantity	Summary	Stakeholder group
		COVID-19 restrictions have prevented face to face engagement so webinars have been held to enable engagement to continue, noting that Transgrid's preference is to engage face to face.	
Community Consultative Groups (CCGs)	3 CCGs established	<p>The first Community Consultative Group was held in October 2021 and the groups will run throughout the development of the proposal.</p> <p>There are three groups across the five LGAs and they provide an opportunity for discussion between Transgrid and landowners, local community organisations, councils, and other members of the communities in the HumeLink proposal study corridor.</p>	Community, landowners, and community representatives
Media, social media and advertising	Media releases distributed	<p>Full-page advertising and digital campaigns have been run in local newspapers to promote the proposal and opportunities for engagement and this will continue at key stages throughout the proposal. Media organisations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wagga Daily Advertiser • Goulburn Post • Tumut and Adelong Times • Gundagai Independent • Tumbarumba Times • Yass Valley Times • Crookwell Gazette <p>Media releases continue to be issued on new route options and other HumeLink announcements. Social media is also used to share proposal updates</p>	All

1.4. Stakeholder engagement

Transgrid has engaged with a range of relevant stakeholders across the HumeLink corridor. Table 1-3 provides a list of stakeholder groups who have been engaged to date. Transgrid expects this list to grow and diversify as the development of the proposal continues and the engagement broadens.

Key areas of discussion with stakeholders have included:

- Need for the proposal
- Community and stakeholder engagement
- Consideration of feedback into the proposal planning process
- Potential impacts
- Status of the proposal
- Corridor refinement process
- Regulatory approvals
- Compensation.

A key focus for Transgrid has been to meet with landowners. There have been more than 423 meetings with landowners on-property to date. The purpose of these meetings has been to understand landowner

sentiment and any concerns or opportunities, seek input and receive local information including local farming operations, logistics, land use and environmental and cultural considerations.

Stakeholder identification and engagement will continue throughout the development of the proposal and will be updated as appropriate.

Table 1-3 Summary of stakeholder engagement and interest

Stakeholder	Engagement	Topics of interest
Community	HumeLink newsletter and fact sheets Website and Interactive Map 1800 number and HumeLink email Community Consultative Groups Webinars, information sessions and public displays Support services, such as independent counselling	Local employment opportunities Environmental and social concerns Cumulative impacts Community sponsorship opportunities Community benefits Opportunities for improved communication and consultation Opportunities to collaborate for better regional outcomes Impact to local businesses
Landowners	One on one meetings and site visits HumeLink newsletter and fact sheets Targeted notifications Website and Interactive Map 1800 number and HumeLink email Community Consultative Groups Webinars, information sessions and public displays Support services, such as independent counselling	Impact to local farm businesses and landowners Easement guidelines Compensation Opportunities for improved communication and consultation Environmental and social concerns
Government (political representatives) The Office of the Hon Premier, Dominic Perrottet (NSW) Treasurer and Minister for Energy and Environment, Matthew Kean (NSW) Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, Hon Angus Taylor (Fed) Planning Minister (NSW), Rob Stokes	Briefings / presentations Briefing Notes	Community sentiment Media interest Regulatory considerations
Local Federal Members Kristy McBain, Eden-Monaro Hon Michael McCormack (Deputy Prime Minister), Wagga Wagga Hon. Angus Taylor (Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction), Hume	Briefings / presentations Proposal newsletter and fact sheets	Community sentiment/ issues arising Constituent concerns Media interest
Local State Members Joe McGirr, Wagga Wagga Wendy Tuckerman, Goulburn Stephanie Cooke, Cootamundra Justin Clancy, Albury	Member of Parliament briefings Electorate officer briefings Constituent meetings Proposal newsletter and fact sheets	Community sentiment / issues arising Constituent concerns Media interest
Local Government (elected officials and Executive staff) Snowy Valleys Council	Councillor briefings Council presentations Emails / phone calls	Community sentiment / issues arising Constituent concerns Local impacts

Stakeholder	Engagement	Topics of interest
Upper Lachlan Shire Council Wagga Wagga Council Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council Yass Valley Council	Proposal newsletter and fact sheets	Media interest Local opportunities and constraints, such as considerations around Tumut airport Use of public vs private land
Government (Departmental and Agency) Heritage NSW DPIE (NSW) (including Biodiversity Conservation Division) DAWE (Fed) Department of Primary Industries (NSW) Forestry Corporation of NSW Centre for Property Acquisition (NSW) Transport for NSW Rural Fire Service	Briefings / presentations Technical meetings Interface meetings Emails / phone calls Proposal newsletter and fact sheets	Field survey requirements Hunting restrictions Impact of proposed routes on firefighting and fuel reduction burns Impact on operations Compensation Opportunities to share lessons and to collaborate for better regional outcomes
Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal representative groups Brungle-Tumut Local Aboriginal Land Council Onerwal Local Aboriginal Land Council Pejar Local Aboriginal Land Council Wagga Wagga Local Aboriginal Land Council Wagonga Local Aboriginal Land Council Riverina Murray Regional Alliance	Briefings / presentations Emails / phone calls Proposal newsletter and fact sheets Community Consultative Groups Website and Interactive Map Community sponsorship program	Culturally significant sites Cultural heritage survey requirements and findings Opportunities for improved communication and consultation Community sponsorship opportunities Opportunities to collaborate for better regional outcomes
Community groups Community organisations Service groups (Rotary etc) Issue-specific interest groups (e.g. environment, health) Local business PIAC, EUAA, ECA, St Vincent de Paul, Tesla, AiGroup	Briefings / presentations Proposal newsletter and fact sheets Website and Interactive Map Community Consultative Groups Community sponsorship program Support services, such as independent counselling	Local employment opportunities Community sponsorship opportunities Opportunities for improved communication and consultation Opportunities to collaborate for better regional outcomes
Industry representative groups NSW Farmers Association	Briefings / presentations Proposal newsletter and fact sheets Website and Interactive Map Community Consultative Groups Support services, such as independent counselling	Impact to local farm businesses and landowners Easement guidelines Local employment opportunities Community sponsorship opportunities Opportunities to collaborate for better regional outcomes Opportunities for improved communication and consultation Compensation
Major development proponents and renewable generators (e.g. Snowy Hydro, CWP Renewables, Tilt Renewables, Spark Renewables)	Briefings / presentations Proposal newsletter and fact sheets Website and Interactive Map Technical meetings Interface meetings Emails / phone calls	Workforce capacity Cumulative impacts Interface management Constraints and opportunities Opportunities to share lessons and to collaborate for better regional outcomes

1.5. Key community themes

In mid-2020, Transgrid started engaging with landowners and stakeholders within the corridor. Since this time, stakeholders have provided feedback across a range of themes. Table 1-4 provides an overview of the key trends in feedback received up to lodgement of the Scoping Report.

Table 1-4 Feedback themes

Theme	Number of times topic was raised	Focus of feedback
Proposed alignment	364	Location of route Preferences for alignment Concerns about the alignment Proposed alternative alignments Timeframes for route refinement Level of influence on alignment Consultation timings and process What it means to live with a powerline Easement guidelines Route selection process Compensation process Known and unknown constraints Use of public versus private land
Impacts on land use and property	220	Protection of productive agricultural land Current and future land-use plans Existing farming infrastructure Impact to farming operations Property access Gates and livestock Biosecurity Easement guidelines Construction impacts Consent to enter protocols
Impacts of towers	97	Tower locations Size and shape of the towers Impact to visual amenity Impact to property value Impact to farming operations Level of influence on tower placement Easement guidelines and exclusion zones Design safety features
Impact on the environment	48	Protecting Landcare plantings Clearing requirements Construction impacts Easement guidelines Identification and protection of heritage items Undergrounding the line Use of public vs private land
Impacts on health	37	Concerns about effects of electric and magnetic fields (EMF) on people and animals

1.6. Ongoing engagement

Best practice engagement will remain the key focus and Transgrid will continue to engage potentially affected landowners, Traditional Owners and the community to ensure they receive comprehensive updates about the proposal and that they have the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal and the planning process.

Table 1-5 details engagement and communication activities that have been and will continue to be carried out by Transgrid during the reset engagement phase of the proposal. Transgrid will update the engagement approach as required, including changes to the proposal scope, feedback from community and stakeholders and other considerations such as restrictions resulting from COVID-19.

Table 1-5 Summary of ongoing stakeholder engagement

Communications action	Objective	Stakeholders	Collateral
August 2021			
Bulk landowner mailout	Provide HumeLink update and confirm commitment to engagement reset	General community	Newsletter + letter Website updates
Landowner check-in calls and survey	Introduce new place managers, follow-up newsletter distribution and conduct short survey on information needs and communication preferences	Landowners	FAQs Short phone survey
Initiate regular stakeholder briefings	Provide regular opportunities for feedback	Proposal stakeholders, with a focus on community representative groups	Phone scripts / emails Presentations
September 2021			
Briefing with councils	To provide status update on the proposal and seek feedback	Local government	Presentation
Call for CCG nominations	CCG establishment	Local community	Adverts Media release Targeted invites Website Social media
Ecological survey engagement	Confirm access arrangements and any other considerations	Landowners	Property maps Notifications Phone calls
Meet with Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) & Traditional Owners	To provide status update on the proposal and seek feedback	LALC	Presentation
Bulk landowner mailout	Provide HumeLink update and confirm commitment to engagement reset	General community	Newsletter Website updates Social media
Meet with community groups	To provide status update on the proposal and seek feedback	Community groups	Presentation Phone
Community Partnerships Program	Provide support for local initiatives to build relationships with local and impacted communities	Landowners General community Community groups	Email Newsletter Website

Communications action	Objective	Stakeholders	Collateral
Regular key stakeholder meetings	Provide regular opportunities for information sharing and collaboration	Key stakeholders, including Snowy Hydro and Forestry NSW	Online meetings
October 2021			
Bulk landowner mailout	To provide overview of upcoming work	Landowners	Fact sheet Landowner letter
Landowner check-in calls	Provide proposal update, follow-up newsletter distribution, and seek feedback	Landowners	Phone FAQs
Webinar	Provide overview of the proposal	All	Webinar
Landowner engagement	Engage landowners	Landowners CCGs Community groups	Property maps Stakeholder briefing LAO pre-briefing FAQs On-property meetings Media statement Phone
CCG inaugural meeting	Establish terms of reference and group priorities	CCG members	Presentation Social media
Pulse check on engagement	Evaluate awareness and sentiment	General community	Surveys Phone
Engagement on environmental studies	Confirm access arrangements	Landowners	Fact sheet Website Land Access Officer pre-briefing FAQs On-property meetings Phone
November 2021			
Ongoing engagement	Engage landowners	Landowners	On-property meetings Phone
CCG second meeting	Engage on corridor refinement	CCG members	Presentation Social media
Landowner check-in calls	Provide Humelink update and seek feedback	Landowners	Phone FAQs
Local Aboriginal Land Council/ Traditional Owner Groups check-in calls	Provide Humelink update and seek feedback	LALCs	Phone FAQs
December 2021			
CCG third meeting (optional)	Engage on corridor refinement	CCG members	Presentation Social media
Bulk landowner mailout	Provide Humelink update	General community	Newsletter Website updates Social media
Landowner end of year text	Thank landowners for their input	Landowners	SMS
January 2022			

Communications action	Objective	Stakeholders	Collateral
Landowner check-in calls	Re-engage with landowners for the new year and provide overview of next steps	Landowners	FAQs Phone
Local Aboriginal Land Council/ Traditional Owner Groups check-in calls	Re-engage for the new year and provide overview of next steps	LALCs	FAQs
Reassess information needs and develop new collateral	Ensure information needs are being responded to	All	Fact sheet Website Social media
February 2022			
CCG meetings (ongoing)	Ongoing opportunity for engagement with a focus on proposal next steps	CCG members	Presentation Social media
Bulk landowner mail out - Geotechnical investigations	To provide overview of upcoming phase of field work	Landowners	Fact sheet Landowner letter Property maps Website LALC Briefing /RAPs Phone
March 2022			
Geotechnical engagement commences	Confirm land access arrangements	Landowners	Land Access Officer pre-briefing Phone FAQs On-property meetings
Land acquisition process commences and engagement on construction management plans	To provide guidance and set expectations through next phase of the proposal	Landowners	Ministerial briefing Stakeholder briefing FAQs LAO pre-briefing Fact sheet Landowner letter Website On-property meetings Phone
Community Partnerships Program	Provide support for local initiatives to build relationships with local and impacted communities	Landowners General community Community groups	Email Newsletter (if timing allows) Website/social media Phone CCGs

Engagement will continue and will inform the preparation of the EIS, as well as the proposal more broadly. Transgrid is committed to continuing to engage landowners, the community and stakeholder throughout all proposal stages and to build and maintain strong relationships within the communities where the HumeLink infrastructure will be located.

Transgrid is committed to resetting engagement on the HumeLink project so that it is robust, transparent, and effective. Transgrid have heard that some landowners and community members have not been satisfied with the engagement for the proposal to date and take these concerns seriously.

Ongoing community and stakeholder engagement established through early engagement activities will complement and support the formal consultation required under planning regulations, including activities that may be stipulated in the SEARs and in the preparation of the EIS.

Engagement approaches will be evaluated and reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure they are providing adequate participation opportunities and responding to stakeholder needs and expectations. Regular community and stakeholder surveys will also be conducted to track engagement performance, sentiment and issues of concern and opportunity.