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Matthew Hyde
CEO
Snowy Valleys Council
76 Capper Street
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Dear Matthew

Response to questions raised at HumeLink presentation on Thursday 6 August 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to present to Council the week before last.

Answers to questions sent before the meeting, and raised at the meeting, are attached. The presentation we gave is also attached.

The Tumut Airport upgrade is a key area of concern and HumeLink is committed to working closely with Snowy Valleys Council to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

Please contact me on 0416 083 884 or kath.logan@transgrid.com.au if I can be of help.

Yours faithfully

Kath Logan
Community Relations Lead

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Councillors would like more clarity on location and infrastructure and properties affected.

- > At the moment, HumeLink is gathering information about the route corridor. It is far too early to establish exactly which locations, infrastructure and properties will be directly affected.
- > When ecological and technical surveys are completed we will be able to reduce the study corridor to a 200m wide route corridor in 2021. That is when we will know which properties will be affected. The exact location of infrastructure will be finalised during the detailed design phase in late 2021 at which point the 200m wide corridor will be reduced to an 80m wide easement.

Councillors would like to know any impact on Tumut Aerodrome and any other Council infrastructure such as the impact on Council road network during construction

- > Since June 2020, the HumeLink team has been working closely with Snowy Valleys Council's engineers specifically on issues related to the Tumut Airport upgrade. We will continue to work with them to reach a mutually agreeable alignment that does not interfere with firefighting and general airport operations.
- > Potential impacts on Council roads during construction will be identified during the detailed design stage once the contractor has identified specific construction traffic routes. Potential road upgrades, impacts or other Council road network issues will be discussed with Council.

Will HumeLink impact farming operations such as aerial spraying, seeding and fertilising?

- > HumeLink will include information provided by landowners about aerial operations in the route refinement process.
- > We are relying on landowners to use the interactive map to tell us the location and orientation, and flight paths, of any unregistered airstrips.
- > TransGrid owns 13,000km of transmission line across NSW, most of it in regional areas. In those areas, aerial farm maintenance work is done around transmission lines.

Impact on natural habitat

- > A small number of ecological surveys were completed in December 2019 and early in 2020. Ecological surveys will start again in September 2020 and continue throughout 2021.
- > Ecological surveys confirm the location of threatened animal species and endangered plant communities which allows us to minimise impacts on them. The EIS will assess potential impacts on the natural environment and propose ways to manage impacts of the project.

Will visual impacts on landowners who are nearby but not in corridor be considered?

- > Until the corridor is substantially narrowed, visual impacts cannot be predicted.
- > Landowners' and community members' feedback about visual impacts will be included in the route refinement process and considered in the assessment of visual impacts in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- > They will also be able to comment on visual impacts when the NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE) puts the EIS on public exhibition late in 2021.

Councillors would like clarity on detailed steps in process including consultation and responses to matters raised by community inside the corridor and outside the proposed corridor:

- > **What statistics and information will be published from community consultation?**
 - Statistics on community consultation will be included in community leader updates and in the EIS

- > **Where on the IAP2 continuum will the consultation sit for each aspect?**
 - The IAP2 spectrum is one of the many available engagement tools.
 - HumeLink will always involve the community and will collaborate when possible.
 - Balancing technical, social, environmental and economic considerations to deliver a defensible final alignment requires multi-disciplinary expertise.
 - TransGrid is required to take ultimate responsibility for the final alignment and its effects.

- > **How will TransGrid demonstrate it has dealt with ratepayers respectfully and attempted to adequately understand their business and personal connections with the land?**
 - Meetings with landowner representatives will start in late August 2020.
 - On-farm meetings for the remainder of 2020 are being planned now.
 - Landowners have always had the opportunity to consult with HumeLink to share information about their properties using the 1800 number, the project email, online meetings and the interactive map.
 - We have always told landowners that we will have face-to-face meetings when it is safe to do so.
 - HumeLink's community consultation will always comply COVID-19 requirements in the NSW Government's Public Health Orders, TransGrid's risk management policies and the project Health Safety and Environment Management Plan.

- > **What communication and engagement material is expected to be produced?**
 - Direct communication with landowners about their farm businesses and property assets will be done by phone, letter and meetings (on-farm or in town).
 - Communication with the community is done via the website and factsheets.
 - We are planning to produce videos, run webinars and produce a community newsletter.
 - We will also be attending local shows, markets and saleyards when it is safe to do so.
 - We are always happy to hear community suggestions about better ways to consult ways to work with people to make sure they believe they have been heard.

Councillors would like to understand HumeLink's willingness to alter routes and look to alternatives

- > **Alternative routes**
 - The design team is willing to consider landowners' evidence-based suggestions for route options as we narrow the route corridor.
 - Route refinement is an iterative process that continually assesses new information about constraints and opportunities. It considers information holistically because a change in one area can result in negative consequences elsewhere.
 - We encourage landowners to get involved in the consultation process, so we can understand all issues and concerns before we progress to the next stage of planning.
 - There will be constraints and issues in all areas and we are working to minimise or avoid impacts wherever possible in the route planning process.

- > **What are the criteria being used to assess?**
 - Guiding principles for route selection:
 - Try to keep the transmission line as straight as possible
 - Select the shortest possible route between two substations

- Where feasible, parallel existing transmission lines.
- **Two classes of constraints are considered:**
 - Tier 1 (no go areas)
 - Tier 2 (avoid or minimise impact – includes houses and buildings)
 - Tier 1 & 2 constraints in the Snowy Valleys LGA are shown on the HumeLink interactive map at <https://humelink.mycommunityengine.com/>
- **Within the Tier 1 & 2 groups, there are different types of constraints:**
 - Social constraints (townships and built up areas, airports, amenity, services, cultural heritage)
 - Environmental constraints (biological features like flora and fauna and physical features like soils, hydrology and air quality)
 - Land use constraints (existing or planned use of land including agriculture, tourism and industry)
 - Engineering constraints (areas with significant engineering or constructability challenges e.g. water bodies, geological conditions)
 - Network security, planning and design requirements
- > **Is forestry land a viable option to run lines over?**
 - It is preferable to minimise the amount of the route that runs through timbered areas due to:
 - Design considerations:
 - Bushfire risk
 - Network security
 - Terrain and access
 - Construction considerations:
 - Environment and heritage
 - Land use impacts
 - Clearing and constructability costs

The area has recently been impacted by catastrophic fires. How will TransGrid demonstrate respect for the additional mental impact on top of drought, fires, flood, COVID?

- > HumeLink delayed starting consultation early in 2020 because of the bushfires. We were due to start in March 2020 when COVID started. We recognise that the community is fragile after going through so much adversity and have tried to walk a middle line on consultation whenever possible.

Will there be a peer review of the final chosen route and protection measures implemented?

- > There is no peer review process for the final route selected.
- > The EIS will include a chapter on project development which will summarise the route selection and options assessment process.
- > The final easement location will be the result of an iterative route selection process as well as easement negotiations with individuals landowners.

What will be the response to any devaluation of the land?

- > Compensation for easements is determined under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*.
- > Compensation is paid based on valuations by two licensed valuers (one appointed by HumeLink and the other by the landowner).
- > Compensation factors in:

- The market value of the land
 - Any special value of the land
 - Any loss attributable to severance
 - Any loss attributable to disturbance
 - Disadvantage resulting from relocation.
- > Landowners' reasonable costs incurred in the easement negotiation process are paid by TransGrid.
- > Legal, accounting and valuation costs, as well as fees, are covered.

Measures to address biosecurity issues

- > When landowners allow TransGrid to access land for project investigative works, they set biosecurity requirements on the Consent to Enter forms.
- > TransGrid staff and contractors are expected to follow landowners' biosecurity requirements at all times.
- > Every landowner is allocated a Land Access Officer who is their first point of contact if they have any problems with HumeLink's staff or contractors.
- > All TransGrid staff and contractors must to adhere TransGrid's overarching biosecurity procedures and guidelines.

Number (single tower line or dual) and height of towers

- > HumeLink will use two types of towers:
- Single-circuit towers are typically 35m tall (up to 50m depending on terrain), and stand on the centreline of an 80m-wide easement.
 - Double-circuit towers will typically be 55m tall (up to 70m depending on terrain), and stand on the centerline of an 80m-wide easement.
- > Towers are on average 450m apart.

How will safety issue be addressed – during construction and following?

- > Before construction starts, the contractor will prepare a Work Health and Safety Management Plan (WHSMP) that covers a range of issues including traffic management, biosecurity, hazard identification and public safety.
- > The WHSMP will be reviewed by TransGrid before work starts.

Proposed camps and locations

- > Final camp locations will not be known until a detailed construction plan is completed by the construction contractor.
- > Indicative camp locations will be identified in the EIS.
- > HumeLink plans to use local accommodation whenever possible.

Use of local contractors and suppliers

- > HumeLink is committed to using local suppliers whenever possible.
- > Tier 1 contractors will be contractually obliged to use a percentage of local businesses and staff.