

Transgrid do not have social licence. Their continued lack of transparency, genuine consultation and inconsistencies with reporting, quality of information and ever-changing contacts have caused to this. Much of the community are feeling frustrated, unheard, unvalued, and inconsequential. This is not just about not agreeing with the need for or type of project. This is about not being given accurate, clear or consistent information. Not having questions and concerns addressed or even answered and significant delays in sharing of information.

Other factors contributing to this are:

- The way in which people find out information (ie. Transgrid's unwillingness to share this information.) There are many significant pieces of information that the community have found out by reviewing the EIS that Transgrid did not tell us about. Noise impacts being one. The severity of potential noise impacts was not shared with community at any information session or even during one-on-one consultations. Not being transparent with impacted landholders has prevented Transgrid from gaining a social licence. Transgrid say they have improved consultation and community engagement but many in the community are not seeing this.
- The revolving door of staff and place managers: Many in our community have had to deal with up to six place managers and there was only one Transgrid employee that remained on the CCG panel throughout the full process. Every time community feel like they are building a relationship that may address some of these issues, Transgrid change their staff. We have found that information is not passed on to the next person, meaning we have to ask all our questions again. The disconnected pathway of communication from place managers to Transgrid and back to the community has left many questions and issues unanswered. Some questions have taken years to be addressed or acknowledged and follow up is not done in a timely manner or to an acceptable standard.
- Lots of new information is still coming out that was not included in RIT-T and EIS. For example, the inclusion and location of transpositions, standard tower heights and construction methods keep changing, and water sources for construction have not been considered.

One example of the inconsistent information, while only small compared to others, is the incorrect map used in this very CPA2 application report. Figure 2-1 on page 29 is incorrect and differs from the more current route shown in Figure 4-1 on page 49. Similar errors and inconsistencies have plagued Transgrid's reporting from the very beginning.

This CPA2 application makes note of the cost to consumers of the delays to the project caused by community concerns and opposition. This opposition will not go away until Transgrid start listening to community concerns and start acting upon them. They claim that their consultation practices exceed requirements. If this is the case, why does the community not have all of the information we have asked for? Why are whole towns saying "we haven't been heard?" Why is Transgrid saying that they do have social licence and why are they being believed when it is so obvious that they don't? Why should our communities be forced to accept the imposition of the HumeLink project because of failures by Transgrid? The recent report from the Select Committee on the Feasibility of Undergrounding the Transmission Infrastructure for Renewable Energy Project supports these comments. In the chair's foreword it states,

*"It is resoundingly clear that transmission infrastructure providers are failing to secure social licence necessary for their proposed new projects in regional areas."*

Our community cannot trust Transgrid. Our community cannot accept a project that has not been transparently and accurately assessed. Without social licence this project should not be allowed to proceed.

Further to this the Transgrid assessment of undergrounding was found to be inaccurate by independent experts and information provided around this technology by Transgrid continues to differ from that of experts and evidence from projects around the world. The cost discrepancies between the Transgrid and independent assessments are concerning, have been found to be incorrect. Many experts have said that an undergrounding option could be reasonably considered and had Transgrid approached these earlier assessments with community preferences in mind, this option would have been considered fairly in the RIT-T process. This failure, along with other changes to the project, such as capacity, purpose, design and increased costs, the questionable value to consumers, as well as the significant delays in Snowy 2.0 should require HumeLink to be taken back to the RIT-T assessment.

In conclusion we believe that there has been a material change in circumstances and this project needs to be reassessed. We do not agree that the current option identified by Transgrid would still be the preferred option should the RIT-T be reapplied. If undergrounding was accurately assessed during the PACR stage, it would have been found to be a credible option that would also have social licence. If the ongoing maintenance costs, the real community and environmental impacts, and future risks to the infrastructure from climate change were considered fairly it would be clear that an overhead transmission project is not in the best interests of consumers or the environment.