

HTP REGIONAL REFERENCE GROUP

Monday 5 August 2024

Cessnock City Council, Chambers Ante Room

Chaired by: Bob Pynsent – Independent Chair

Attendees

Online	In person	Apology	Name	Represents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Pynsent	Independent Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Moore (SM)	Mayor Singleton Council
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jay Suvaal (JS)	Mayor Cessnock City Council
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kay Fraser (KF)	Mayor Lake Macquarie City Council
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	John Sullivan (JFS)	Singleton community
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Phillip O'Neill (PO)	Cessnock community
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Crosdale (DC)	Lake Macquarie community
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Craig Anderson (CA)	Regional Environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Samantha Martin-Williams (SMW)	Regional Business
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nathan Towney (NT)	Regional Aboriginal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Katie Brassil (KB)	RRG Secretariat
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alana Kosklin (AK)	RRG Secretariat

Visitors

	NAME	POSITION
In person	BT, BD & CT	HTP Central - landowner
In person	KW & DM	Hunter Wildlife Rescue
In Person	TP	Mount Baker Road residents
In Person	GM & JD	Pokolbin Mountains Road residents, landholders and users group
In Person	PB & KM	HTP Central - landowner

Declarations of interest

Nil to declare.

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Agenda item discussion and actions

Item 1. **Welcome and Acknowledgement**

The Chair delivered an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed members to the August meeting of the RRG.

**Jay Suvaal, Cessnock City Council Mayor, provided a welcome, OHS brief and thank you for taking the time to meet here and listen to local residents later in the meeting.**

Item 2. **Transmission Line Construction**

*Presentation by Peter Tanner, NSW EnergyCo Transmission Engineer*

Peter introduced himself and his background as transmission line engineer and spoke to his slides and explained the linear construction process (attach slides).

Discussion by members covered:

- The length of the span between towers ranging from 600metres on flat ground to depending on topography up to 1300metres.
- The job families involved: access tracks and clearing (forest and roads), excavation stage (3 or 4 working in different parts of the line), concreters by vehicle (localised batching might be used), tower erections (trucks bringing in steel and those in gangs to undertake construction), stringing is most logistically challenging (lots of different parts)
- Contractor standards required
- Ongoing maintenance schedule - aerial inspections complimented by ground inspection
- Vehicle weights involved in transporting materials – 30/40 tonne excavators, large cranes, depending on terrain on the type of truck used for delivery, personnel – people carriers.

Item 3. **Property Acquisition Process**

*Presented by Property Acquisitions Managers – John Ottaway and Erika Minnaard*

John and Erika introduced themselves to the RRG and their roles. Both spoke to the attached slide pack. Discussion by members covered:

- Need for independent legal advice and valuation
- Unsatisfactory experiences more recently in the Upper Hunter. Therefore, the need for support for those impacted.
- The Just Terms Compensation Act process and various aspects of the process and timing.

Item 4. Presentation by landowners and community groups in HTP Central

WHO	ISSUES
BT, BD & CT	<p>BT asked that it be recorded in the minutes that he disagreed with the format of individual private presentations to the RRG as conveyed by the Chair and supported by RRG members.</p> <p>BT questioned why this route option was chosen and not using existing easements.</p> <p>BT advised the RRG is receiving a consistent message from affected landholders. The actions of EnergyCo are causing additional stress and harm.</p> <p>BT asked the RRG to provide direct and robust feedback to EnergyCo expressing frustration with engagement and consultation and asking they improve on the quality of the consultation, specifically to engage (don't just touch), know your product, meet your timelines and when not, inform.</p> <p>SM expressed she appreciated the feelings which were similar to the experience from the Singleton bypass.</p>
KW & DM	<p>In operation for over 40 years -rescue, rehabilitation and release of Australian wildlife. The soft release pen is located on property that will be impacted by HTP. Hunter Wildlife Rescue asked for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct compensation - Soft Release pen.</li> <li>• Consultation on management of native wildlife during construction.</li> <li>• Advisor for the identification, location, recovery, relocation and rescue of native wildlife in the corridors.</li> </ul> <p>PO asked about funding provider and if staff are paid.</p> <p>KW and DM advised HWR was funded through donations and run by volunteers. There are no paid employees.</p>
TP	<p>TP introduced himself and spoke from his written notes. He lives on Mt Baker Road and is only speaking about the first 1.7km.</p> <p>TP outlined his frustrations with his interactions with the HTP Community and Acquisition Team.</p> <p>Mt Baker Road confirmed as the preferred option as nominated by HTP at recent Mt Baker Road meeting.</p> <p>Engineers should use local knowledge and actually visit the roads in the area as opposed to desktop.</p> <p>TM provided alternate, and what he considered, more appropriate access road options (Cedar Creek Road, Mitchell Road).</p>
GM & JD	<p>GM spoke from his written notes and outlined his personal interests with proposed HTP as an adjoining landowner and access via Pokolbin Mountains Road through 3km of his property.</p>

	<p>Group wants a better/ improved road and seeks a common consensus re: detail of what upgrades are required. He spoke about the special nature of the area and referred to the Vineyard DCP.</p> <p>The group are keen to discuss the social impacts and want earlier EnergyCo engagement as part of the EIS.</p> <p>Pokolbin Mountains Road has been part of GM's property access since 1910. The key issues that need to be addressed are: safety as a priority, drainage (up to 8 additional drainage pipe required), width, line of view vegetation and management, surface materials, signage – aesthetic awareness very important to community.</p> <p>Accepted the HTP and recognised the opportunity to get the best we possibly can in terms of a road upgrade.</p> <p>EnergyCo should use the local knowledge available.</p> <p>Who will be responsible long term for the maintenance?</p> <p>JS agree this is a great opportunity to get a good outcome.</p> <p>PO asked how to improve communications with EnergyCo.</p> <p>GM suggested they had a good relationship and the group they had set up provided an opportunity to express views on an equal platform.</p> <p>JFS asked about engineering support for CCC.</p> <p>The Chair advised this issue would be discussed after the presentations.</p>
PB & KM	<p>KM - 50-acre block in Millfield incorporates a soft release pen. Kathy and Peter both business owners working from home. The forever home reflected in all home and land improvements.</p> <p>Accept project and need for green energy. Dismayed at the impacts to the environment. They have found EnergyCo interactions appalling and distressing from an organisation who hold all the cards.</p> <p>They are upset they are being treated the same as the rest of the state when they are personally impacted.</p> <p>PB questioned if this was the best plan. No reports available that demonstrate why this option was chosen.</p> <p>It was stated that most of this year's delays on this 'urgent project' are because of HTP.</p> <p>PO asked if the Central local landowner meet.</p> <p>KM regularly.</p> <p>Chair advised he had attended the drop-in sessions, and a recent meeting of the Millfield landowners run by EnergyCo.</p> <p>CA asked what can the RRG do?</p> <p>K and P said provide relevant, timely information.</p> <p>JFS – Had heard earlier from the Hunter Wildlife Rescue re: impacts on the soft release pen.</p> <p>KM explained the transmission corridor removes/ changes the vegetation in the compound area impacting the current ideal environment of the wallabies.</p>

**Item 5. Proposed Industry Briefings**

*Katie Brassil provided a brief overview of Industry Briefings to be held in the week commencing 26 August to introduce the HTP to the local business community.*

The briefings will be held in Singleton, Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and online and will cover:

- Project overview
- The Role of Procurement – produce a directory of interested local business's
- Local content obligations for contractors
- What goods, services and skills will be needed
- When and how to get involved
- Registering Expressions of Interest

JFS asked how this would be communicated to meet the timeframe and involve local industry.

KB advised these briefings will be supported by ICN and regional stakeholders and organisations. Promotion will be via radio, social media and by leveraging the membership bases and networks of our regional stakeholders.

**Item 6. General Business**

- The RRG reaffirmed the format of individual presentations for the landowner and community organisations presentations session of the meeting.
- There was a discussion around the provision of additional engineering support to Council's to facilitate more timely outcomes and engagement with local landowners.
- A discussion around the feedback from the prior session and some key themes from both the Singleton and Cessnock presentations.
- 'In principle' support for the Hunter Wildlife Rescue's proposals.

It was agreed the Chair would meet with EnergyCo to convey the following:

- 1) A request that EnergyCo make provision to cover the cost for additional engineering support for Council's.
- 2) Support 'in principle' Hunter Wildlife Rescue's proposals
- 3) Convey feedback and common themes expressed by presenters re: community consultation and engagement from those who attended both Singleton and Cessnock RRG meetings.

RRG Members agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting 2pm – 4pm on 14 October via Teams.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 4:35pm

#### Actions

Action	Responsible	Status
The Chair of the RRG to meet with HTP Projects Managers to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of additional engineering support for Council's to support the various activities associated with the HTP</li> <li>• The Hunter Wildlife Rescue proposals</li> <li>• General feedback and themes re: community engagement and consultation from landowners and community organisations</li> </ul>	Chair /Secretariat	ongoing
Provision for community presentations from the southern area at the November RRG meeting	Chair/ Secretariat	ongoing

#### Upcoming meetings

The next meeting of the HTP RRG will be an Extraordinary Meeting:

**Date:** Monday 14 October 2024

**Time:** 2:00 – 4:00pm

**Place:** Teams/ online

The next Ordinary Meeting of the RRG:

**Date:** Monday 4 November 2024

**Time:** 2:00pm – 4:00pm

**Place:** Lake Macquarie City Council

#### *Attached slide packs:*

- *Transmission Line Construction*
- *Property Acquisition Process.*

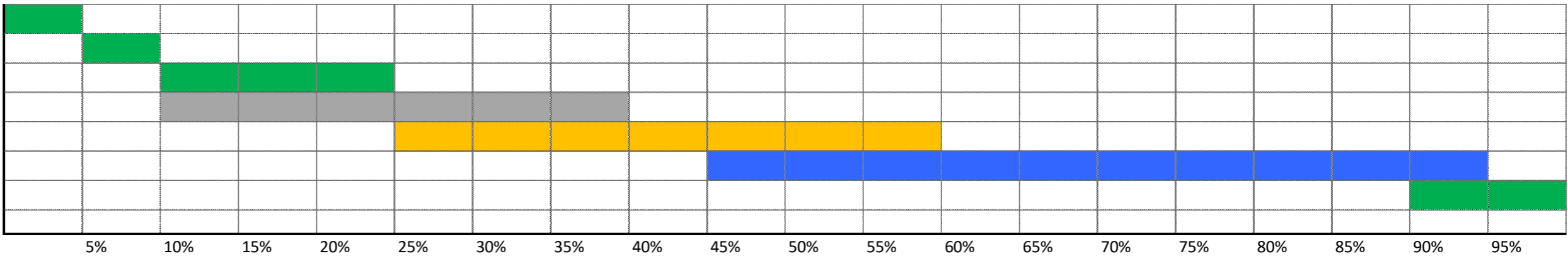
# 500kV Line Construction Overview

## Linear Construction Project

Within each section the following tasks are completed – in order and overlapping

- 1. Access Track and Structure Preparation
- 2. Vegetation Clearing
- 3. Foundations
- 4. Tower Erection
- 5. Stringing
- 6. Restoration and De-mobilisation

Access Tracks  
Structure and Centreline Clearing  
Easement Clearing  
Foundations  
Tower Erection  
Stringing  
Restoration and Demob



**500kV Suspension Tower**



**500kV Small Angle Tension Tower**



**500kV Heavy Angle Tension Tower**





# Access & Clearing

## Access Roads

1. Access roads and tracks follow existing tracks where possible and upgraded to allow construction traffic and minimise impact on property owners
2. In State Forests the line route is located back from ridgelines to minimise visual impact
3. Towers are located to minimise impact on the terrain – ridge hopping where possible

## Initial Clearing

1. Trim access tracks vegetation
2. Clear structure sites (about 40 x 40m initially)
3. Clear centreline – 10m either side using tracked vehicles

## Easement Clearing (70m)

1. Areas where the existing vegetation would present an electrical clearance issue to the conductor have trees taller than 4m removed in a manner to minimise the disturbance to the understory
2. Trees in gullies or valleys that do not present a clearance issue are left unchanged
3. Trees on the edge of the easement with the potential to fall on the line are accessed and removed if required.

## Vegetation Removed – State Forests

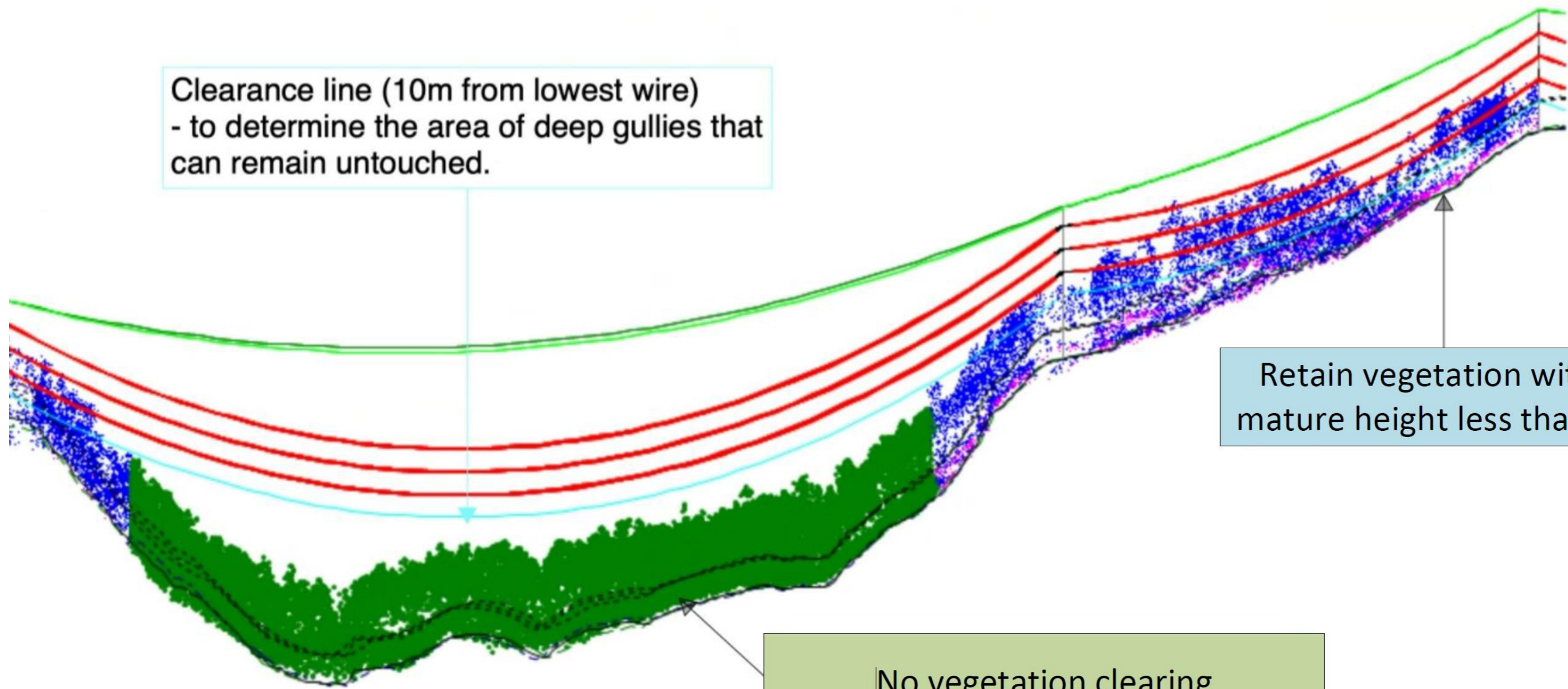
1. Timber suitable for milling are provided to State Forests
2. Other vegetation is either used within the easement for habitat and land management or as mulch used in the restoration of the line disturbance areas.

# Access & Clearing

Clearance line (10m from lowest wire)  
- to determine the area of deep gullies that  
can remain untouched.

Retain vegetation with a  
mature height less than 4m

No vegetation clearing



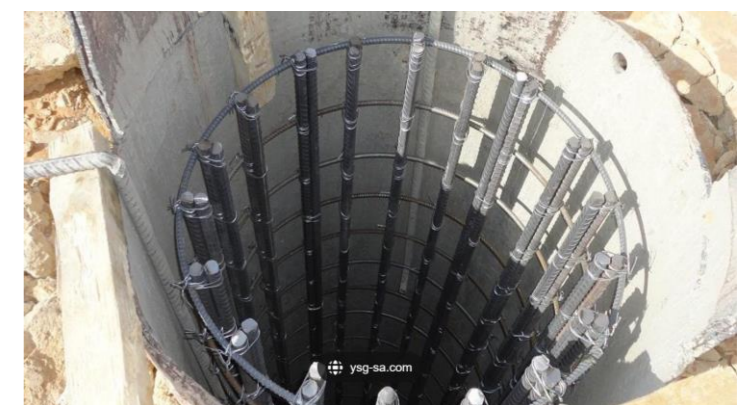
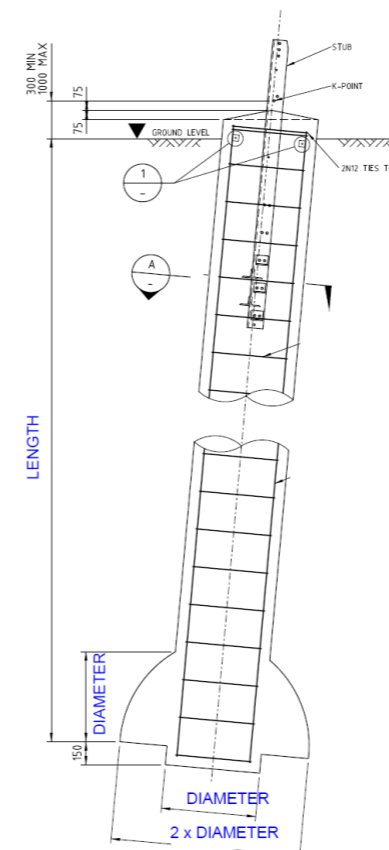
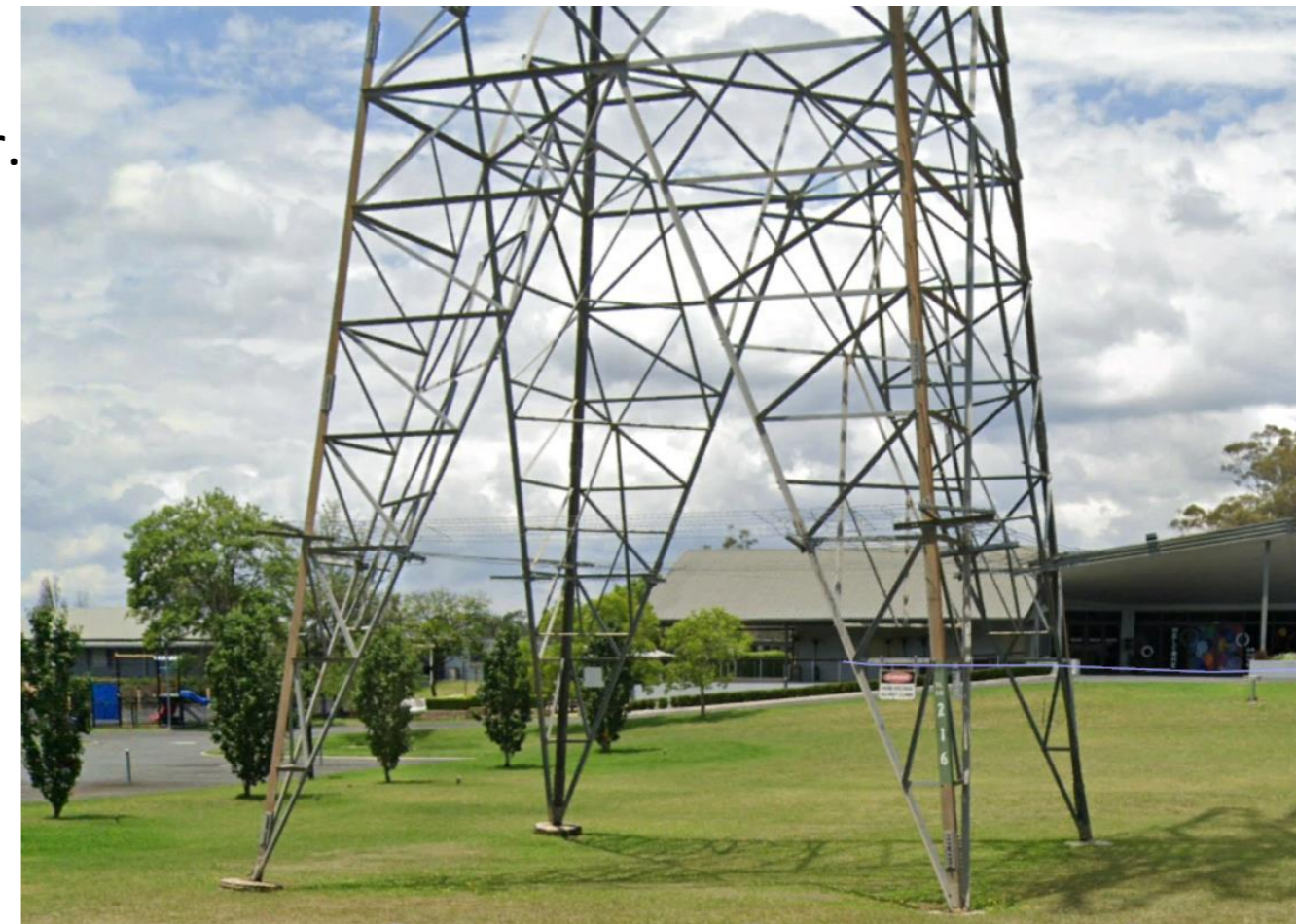
# Foundations

Each Tower has four foundations – one for each corner of the tower.

The majority of foundations are augered on an angle by an excavator (photo).

- a) Diameter: 1-2m
- b) Depth: 10-20m
- c) Steel reinforced – concrete foundation
- d) Steel stub installed with the foundation

Excavation rate – 2 legs per day per excavator  
Concrete production rate - rebar, stub setting and concrete one tower each 2 days



# Tower Erection

500kV DCST towers weight from 30 to 100 tonne

Steel delivered to site by truck fully dis-assembled

Steel sections assembled on site and lifted progressively into place

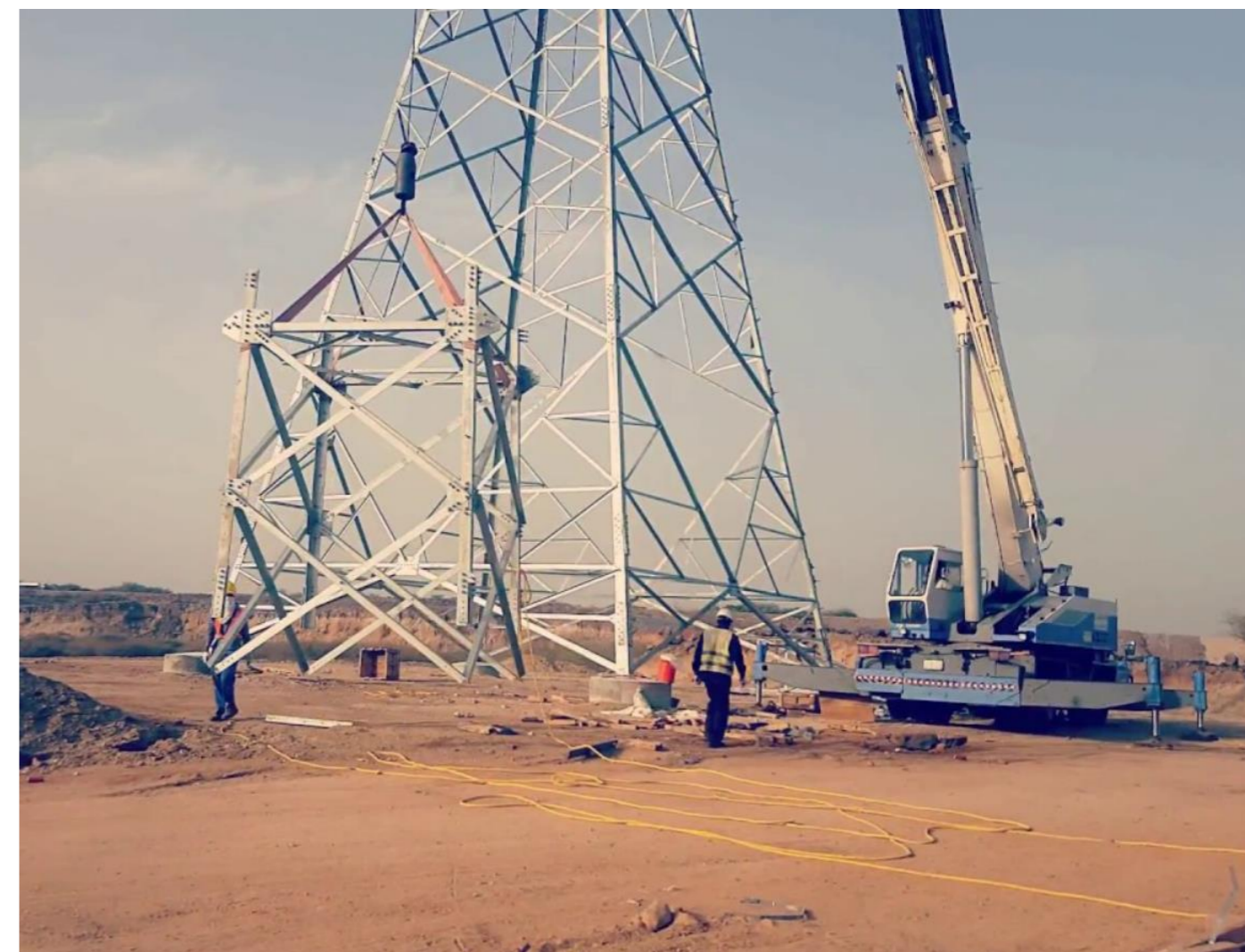
Cranes are used for lifting:

A) 100 tonne cranes most of the tower

B) 250 tonne cranes for the upper portion of the tower (above 60m)

Each tower takes 2-4 days to erect depending on the type of tower and height of tower

There will be multiple tower erection crews – starting after foundations are well progressed and timed to finish 2 weeks after the final foundation



# Stringing

Strung between Tension Structures – typically 5 to 10km sections

## Process

- a) Drum site and tensioner at one end
- b) Sheaves and insulators installed ready to receive the conductor
- c) Winch site at the far end
- d) Draw wire installed by helicopter from drum site to winch site
- e) conductors in one phase at a time run out – pulled using the draw wire
- f) Tensioned and secured
- g) Clip in conductors to insulators and remove the sheaves



EnergyCo

# Hunter Transmission Project

Land & Easement Acquisition



# What are easements?

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The Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) transmission lines will be built on corridors of land known as *transmission easements*. Easements are essential to making sure EnergyCo can deliver electrical infrastructure in a reliable, secure, and safe way.



An easement is an acquisition of rights over land. They are established via an agreement between EnergyCo and the subject landowner. This agreement allows EnergyCo to access and use a section of private land for the transmission network.



Landowners can generally continue to use land that has an easement on it, however this will be subject to certain restrictions to ensure public safety and to maintain the reliable operation of the electricity network.

# EnergyCo Acquisition Principles

- Easement acquisition in Australia is common for the construction and operation of transmission lines and utilities.
  - EnergyCo seeks an agreement with the landowner, defining rights and obligations, compensation, and other required interests.
  - EnergyCo's power to acquire land comes from section 15 of the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987
  - In NSW, the land acquisition process is governed by the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991.
  - The EnergyCo acquisition process aims to provide certainty and equity for the landowner.
- EnergyCo's objective is to obtain by agreement a temporary Construction Easement and permanent Transmission Easement with access rights, where required.
  - Compensation for the easements and associated access rights is included in the formal agreement.
  - After completing the permanent construction works EnergyCo surveys the area for the permanent Transmission Easement.
  - Documentation for registering the permanent easements on the land's title is provided to the owner for execution to enable registration of the Easement at Land Registry Services.
  - EnergyCo prefers to acquire by agreement, but if no agreement is reached after a minimum six-month period, they may need to initiate a compulsory acquisition process in parallel to negotiations.



# Compensation, Valuation and advice

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*Compensation: Landowners are entitled to compensation if EnergyCo acquires an interest in their land, including the market value of the property and fees for legal and valuation advice. EnergyCo will never give an estimate of compensation - it is important that all factors are fully considered by EnergyCo's consultant valuer in relation to each particular property.*

*Valuation: The value of the acquired property interests will be determined by a qualified valuer, considering factors such as the type of interest, land area, impact, location, improvements, zoning, and recent sales.*

*Independent Advice: Landowners should seek advice from an independent valuer and lawyer to guide their decisions during the acquisition process, with reasonable fees for these services being compensated.*

# Supporting the landowners through the process

- Commitment to support: EnergyCo recognises that the acquisition process can be stressful and is dedicated to supporting landowners throughout the process.
- Dedicated Acquisition Manager: All landowners whose property is identified for an easement will be assigned a dedicated Acquisition Manager who will serve as their main point of contact. This manager will assist landowners throughout the acquisition process.
- Additional support: In addition to the Acquisition Manager, landowners will be able to seek assistance from dedicated Place Managers.





01 ●

**Early community consultation**

We will begin consulting the wider community about the project.



03 ●

**Face-to-face meeting**

If an acquisition is identified which involves your land, we will ask to meet with you to discuss the next steps and provide information so you can better understand the acquisition process.



05 ●

**Valuation**

Both EnergyCo and the owner obtain an independent valuation assessing the owner's compensation entitlement in relation to the interests to be acquired.



07 ●

**Exchange of Valuation Reports**

Valuation reports are exchanged between the parties.



02 ●

**Initial landowner contact**

We will contact you to learn how you currently use your land as well as discussing what transmission infrastructure is potentially planned in the immediate area. We may also request access to your property for preliminary investigations to help inform our planning.



04 ●

**Opening letter**

EnergyCo will issue an opening letter to advise that an acquisition is required and will detail the particular interests in land which are to be acquired. This would include, as may be relevant, a Sketch Plan showing the area required for a temporary construction easement and the approximate location of the permanent transmission easement as required by EnergyCo. The letter will also contain information which explains the owner's entitlement, under the Act, to reasonably obtain legal and valuation advice in relation to the acquisition.



06 ●

**Letter of Offer**

EnergyCo will issue the owner with a written offer based on its independent valuation.



08 ●

**Reaching agreement**

Meetings/discussions would occur between EnergyCo and the owner, including the independent valuers, to discuss any differences between the respective valuer's reports with a view to reaching an agreement as to the compensation for the acquisition of the required property interests.





09

### Deed of Agreement

Following an agreement between the parties, EnergyCo's legal advisors will prepare and issue the owner's legal advisor with a Deed of Agreement (the Deed) which confirms the necessary terms which will include:



09.2

The agreed occupation fee for the period of the temporary interests required for construction which is anticipated to be for approximately 4 years and will be paid in full upfront.



09.4

Initial payment representing 100% of the agreed market value compensation for the acquisition of temporary interests required for construction and 80% of the agreed market value compensation for the acquisition of any permanent interests, together with the full payment of all other agreed compensation for the acquisition will be paid within 20 business days from the date of the execution of the Deed by all required parties. The remaining 20% of market value compensation will be paid upon the completion of the acquisition of the permanent interests.



09.1



The area of the land for the Construction Easement which is to be occupied by EnergyCo on a non-exclusive basis for the purposes of construction and any project investigations and any construction easement for access (if necessary).



09.3



The area of the land for the permanent interests that will be acquired. Following the completion of the permanent infrastructure works, a survey will be undertaken to define the land over which the permanent interests will be acquired.



### Switching Station

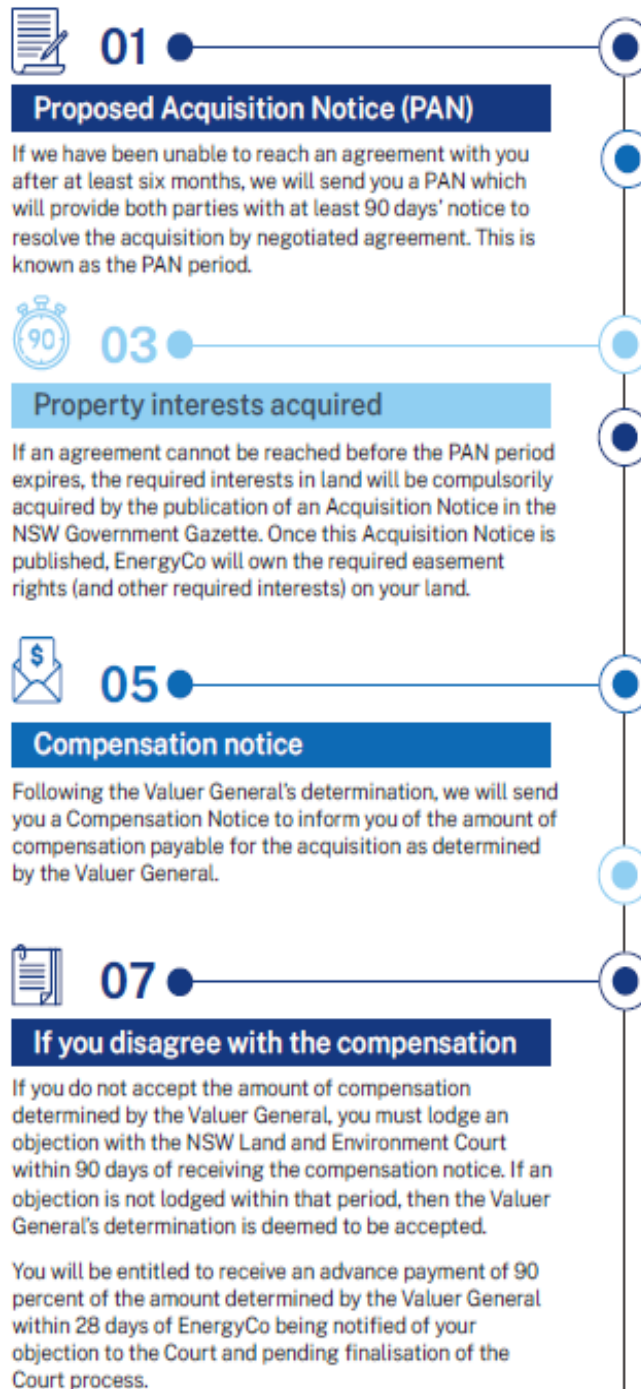
In instances where a partial acquisition of land is required to host a switching station, the Deed will provide for a construction lease over the relevant land and will include a Contract for Sale which confirms the agreed terms for such partial acquisition on completion of construction.



### Energy Hub

Where land is required for an Energy Hub, EnergyCo will complete the acquisition of the required land (after reaching an agreement with the landowner) by way of a Contract for Sale, which would confirm the agreed terms of purchase. A Deed will not be required for the acquisition of Energy Hub land.





**01** **Proposed Acquisition Notice (PAN)**

If we have been unable to reach an agreement with you after at least six months, we will send you a PAN which will provide both parties with at least 90 days' notice to resolve the acquisition by negotiated agreement. This is known as the PAN period.

**03** **Property interests acquired**

If an agreement cannot be reached before the PAN period expires, the required interests in land will be compulsorily acquired by the publication of an Acquisition Notice in the NSW Government Gazette. Once this Acquisition Notice is published, EnergyCo will own the required easement rights (and other required interests) on your land.

**05** **Compensation notice**

Following the Valuer General's determination, we will send you a Compensation Notice to inform you of the amount of compensation payable for the acquisition as determined by the Valuer General.

**07** **If you disagree with the compensation**

If you do not accept the amount of compensation determined by the Valuer General, you must lodge an objection with the NSW Land and Environment Court within 90 days of receiving the compensation notice. If an objection is not lodged within that period, then the Valuer General's determination is deemed to be accepted.

You will be entitled to receive an advance payment of 90 percent of the amount determined by the Valuer General within 28 days of EnergyCo being notified of your objection to the Court and pending finalisation of the Court process.

**02** **Negotiations continue**

During the PAN period we will continue to seek to resolve the acquisition with you by negotiated agreement.

**04** **Valuer General determination of compensation**

Following compulsory acquisition, you will become entitled to compensation in an amount to be determined by the NSW Valuer General in accordance with the Act. The Valuer General's office will contact you directly to explain the process.

Compensation is assessed on the same basis under the Act whether acquisition is by agreement or by compulsory acquisition.

**06** **If you accept the compensation**

If you accept the Valuer General's determination, then payment will be made promptly following your return of the required executed documents to EnergyCo.

# Strategic Benefit Payments

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The Strategic Benefits Payment Scheme (SBP) offers financial incentives to eligible private landowners who host new high voltage transmission projects vital to the energy transformation and the future of the electricity grid.



Landowners will receive a fixed rate of \$200,000 per kilometre of transmission hosted, adjusted for real 2022 dollars.



Payments will be disbursed annually over a period of 20 years. I.E 1km = \$10,000 p/a for 20 years



The SBP payments are in addition to any compensation already provided to landowners under the Act for transmission easements on their property once the project becomes operational (energised).

# Resources

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## Property Acquisition NSW

The NSW Government website that outlines the property acquisition process.

**W:** [propertyacquisition.nsw.gov.au](http://propertyacquisition.nsw.gov.au)

**E:** [info@propertyacquisition.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@propertyacquisition.nsw.gov.au)

**P:** 1300 029 146

## NSW Valuer General

Determines the compensation for compulsory acquisition.

**W:** [valuergeneral.nsw.gov.au](http://valuergeneral.nsw.gov.au)

**E:** [valuationenquiry@property.nsw.gov.au](mailto:valuationenquiry@property.nsw.gov.au)

**P:** 1800 110 038

## Australian Valuers Institute

Provides independent information on finding a qualified valuer.

**W:** [valuersinstitute.com.au](http://valuersinstitute.com.au)

**P:** 1300 748 506

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EnergyCo



## Questions...

Useful resources from EnergyCo  
Website:

*Property and easement acquisition*

*Living and working near transmission  
line easements*

*Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme*

