EIS Volume 1 Chapter 6

Stakeholder Engagement

JBS&G

project energy connect

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

6. Stakeholder Engagement

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the key engagement activities undertaken to date as part of the EIS process, as well as future engagement opportunities. It serves as a summary of a more detailed Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) that has been developed and implemented for the Project and covers ElectraNet's engagement objectives, the engagement approach adopted, lists the stakeholders consulted and the methods used to share information and receive feedback. It also provides a high-level summary of key issues raised and where these have been addressed in the EIS.

Further details of stakeholder engagement activities and collateral used for stakeholder engagement are provided in Appendix G of the EIS.

6.2. Setting the Context

This section provides information on the EIS guidelines and industry standards that have been drawn upon to inform ElectraNet's engagement approach for the Project.

6.2.1. EIS Guidelines

The EIS Guidelines require a description of community consultation processes undertaken by ElectraNet with information relating to community attitudes toward the Project as set out in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1: EIS Guidelines addressed in the Stakeholder Engagement chapter

EIS Guidelines and Assessment Requirements	Assessment level
Effect on Communities *Assessment requirement 9*: the proposed development has the potential to affect the local community during construction and through the establishment of linear infrastructure.	
• 9.3: Describe any community consultation processes conducted by the proponent for the proposal and indicate community attitudes towards the proposal, where identified.	Medium

6.2.1. Standards and industry guidelines

In addition to the EIS Guidelines, ElectraNet has utilised the following sources to inform its approach to stakeholder engagement:

- ElectraNet's Engagement Principles and Commitments (ElectraNet, June 2018)
- *International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement* (IAP2 2015)
- *Clean Energy Council Community Engagement Guidelines* (CEC 2018)
- *South Australian Government Better Together Principles of Engagement* (Second edition) (Department of the Premier and Cabinet 2019).

6.3. Approach to Stakeholder Engagement

ElectraNet is committed to early, transparent, and ongoing engagement with all interested stakeholders and community members. Before any engagement commenced for the Project, ElectraNet developed a detailed Project-specific SEP to guide its approach to identifying and engaging stakeholders through the route selection and EIS processes. Specifically, the SEP set out the key desired outcomes, a process for identifying stakeholders and appropriate engagement strategies to achieve the overall objectives of the SEP. These are discussed further below.

6.3.1. Objectives

The key objectives adopted by ElectraNet to engage with stakeholders during the route selection and EIS processes include:

- **Early and ongoing engagement:** Involving stakeholders in the route selection process, the scoping of potential constraints and opportunities, the assessment of potential impacts and the acceptability of proposed mitigation measures
- **Ensuring understanding:** Providing tailored channels of communication to distribute information about the Project that are clear and accessible so that all stakeholders have the ability to be informed and have a genuine opportunity to provide feedback
- **Building relationships:** Providing opportunities for stakeholders and the community to participate in face-to-face engagement with representatives of ElectraNet, genuinely considering stakeholder concerns and being responsive
- **Ensuring compliance:** Effectively meeting the minimum requirements set out in the EIS Guidelines and where possible, exceeding engagement expectations.

6.3.2. Stakeholder identification

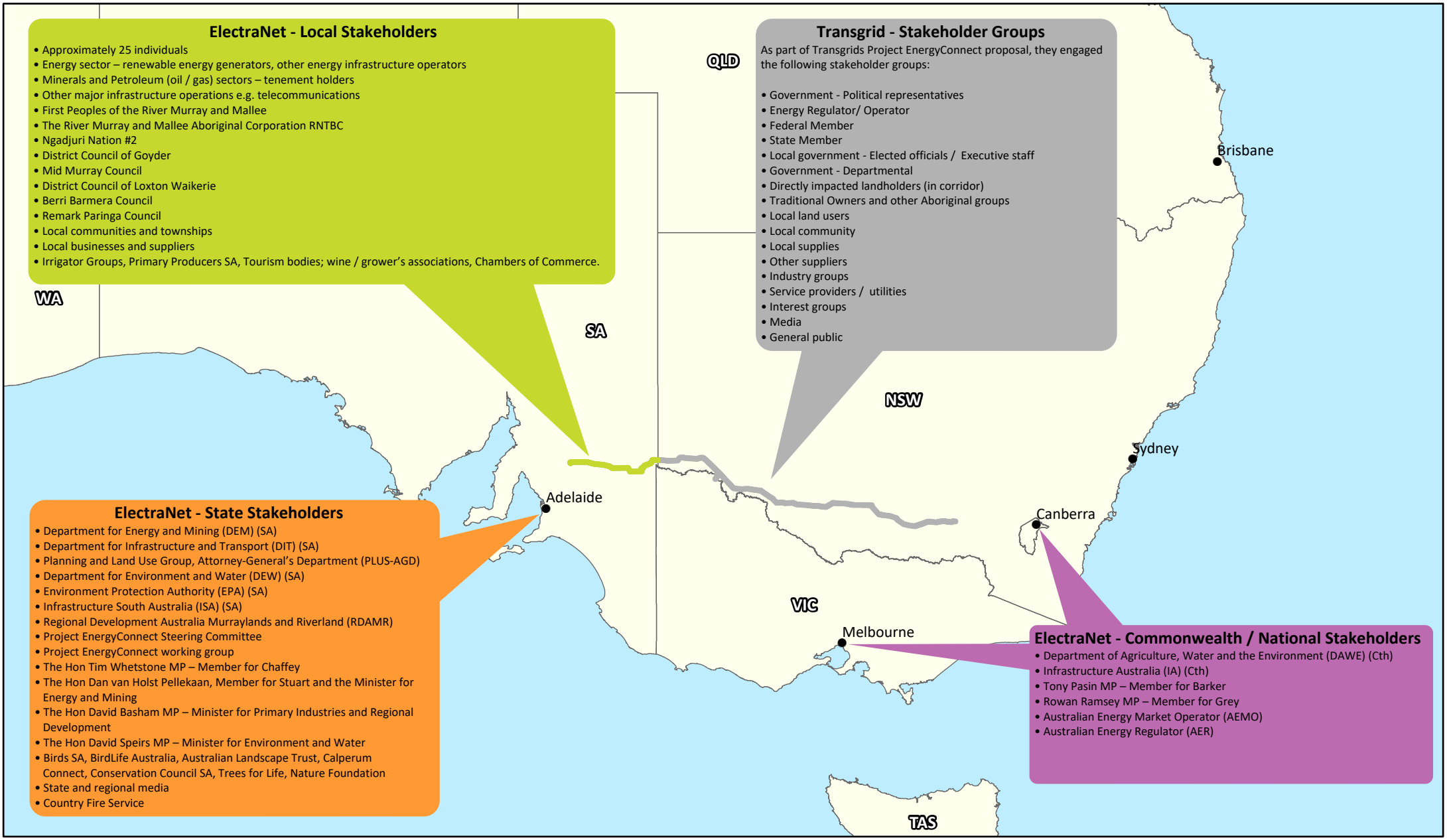
During the route selection and EIS development processes, ElectraNet identified stakeholders that may have an interest in or may potentially be affected (either directly or indirectly) by the Project at a national, State and local level.

Table 6-2 and Figure 6-1 present a summary of the key stakeholder groups identified and engaged during both the route selection process and through the development of this EIS.

Table 6-2: Key stakeholder groups

Stakeholder Group	Key Stakeholders
	Commonwealth / National
Commonwealth Government Agencies	• Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) • Infrastructure Australia
Federal Political Representatives	• Tony Pasin MP – Member for Barker • Rowan Ramsey MP – Member for Grey
Energy Regulator	• Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) • Australian Energy Regulator (AER)
	State
SA Government Agencies	• Department for Energy and Mining (DEM) • Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) • Planning and Land Use Services within the Attorney-General's Department (PLUS-AGD) • Department for Environment and Water (DEW) • Environment Protection Authority (EPA SA) • Infrastructure South Australia (ISA) • Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland (RDAMR)
Project EnergyConnect Steering Committee and Working Group	• Appointed representatives from: - SA government agencies: DEM, EPA, DEW, PLUS-AGD - NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) - ElectraNet - TransGrid - JBS&G / Consentium
SA Political Representatives (e.g. local Members)	• The Hon Tim Whetstone MP – Member for Chaffey • The Hon Dan van Holst Pellekaan, Member for Stuart and the Minister for Energy and Mining

Stakeholder Group	Key Stakeholders
	• The Hon David Basham MP – Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development • The Hon David Speirs MP – Minister for Environment and Water
Special interest groups	• Birds SA, BirdLife Australia, Australian Landscape Trust, Calperum Connect, Conservation Council SA, Trees for Life, Nature Foundation SA
Media	• State and regional media
Emergency Services	• Country Fire Service (CFS)
Local	
Landholders	• Approximately 25 individual landholders in respect of 82 land parcels, comprising freehold title, pastoral leases and conservation reserves.
Other major land users	• Energy sector – renewable energy generators, other energy infrastructure operators • Minerals and petroleum (oil / gas) sectors – tenement holders • Other major infrastructure operations e.g. telecommunications
Traditional Owners / Native Title Parties	• First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee (native title claimants (SC2019/001) and a party to The River Murray and Crown Lands Indigenous Land Use Agreement (SI2011/025) • The River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (as holders of native title in specific areas) (SCD2011/002) • Ngadjuri Nation #2 ((SC2011/002) (native title claimants)
Local Government	• Regional Council of Goyder • Mid Murray Council • District Council of Loxton Waikerie • Berri Barmera Council • Remark Paringa Council • Pastoral Unincorporated Area
Local and regional communities	• Communities and townships in the vicinity of the Project including Robertstown, Morgan, Loxton, Waikerie, Berri, Barmera, Renmark and Cooltong.
Local businesses	• Local businesses and suppliers
Industry Representative Bodies	• Irrigator Groups, Primary Producers SA, Tourism bodies; wine / grower's associations, Chambers of Commerce.



Transmission line corridor - ElectraNet

Transmission line corridor - Transgrid

Cities

Figure 6-1
Stakeholder groups engaged

0 500

Kilometres

N

ElectraNet

energy connect

JBS&G

6.4. Engagement and Communication Programme

6.4.1. Summary of engagement phases

Route selection engagement

The key objective of the route selection process and associated stakeholder engagement was to find an alignment that is broadly supported by and acceptable to stakeholders. This was achieved through an extensive engagement programme that consulted on the route selection methodology, investigation corridor and multiple route options. The route selection process is detailed in Chapter 4 Route Selection.

As part of this process, a number of communication tools were developed for the Project to provide information to stakeholders and obtain feedback. These tools were tailored specifically to obtain feedback from a broad range of stakeholder groups. Engagement for route selection commenced in August 2018 and concluded with a preferred proposed route alignment in November 2020. This route was broadly supported by all stakeholders engaged and was used as the basis of assessment in this EIS.

Landholder engagement

The approach to engaging with directly impacted landholders involved more targeted activities than those employed with the general public and other stakeholders. This was important due to the requirement to secure an approximately 80 m wide easement on land that is otherwise utilised for primary production or other purposes.

Engagement with landholders primarily took the form of one-on-one meetings, phone calls and e-mails. The focus of this engagement was on securing input into the route selection process, understanding local level constraints and opportunities, obtaining information on any planned future land use, addressing any concerns and reaching agreement on the establishment of an easement. Information was shared with landholders in the form of fact sheets and maps. All feedback from landholders was captured and stored in an online mapping portal and stakeholder management database for future reference during surveys and construction.

EIS engagement

In addition to route selection and landholder engagement, the engagement process has been designed to align to the Project approval phases (as discussed in Chapter 1 Introduction), namely:

- determination of the approval process
- environmental baseline data gathering and assessment of impacts
- exhibition of the EIS
- assessment and determination (response phase).

A summary of these phases, the objective and key engagement activities is summarised in Table 6-3 and illustrated in Figure 6-2 below.

6.4.2. Engagement channels

Given the geographical extent of the Project, ElectraNet took an initial approach of combining face-to-face engagement and digital communication tools with the aim of reaching as many stakeholders as possible to capture broad stakeholder feedback. Given the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions in early 2020, ElectraNet re-assessed and tailored its approach to engagement and communications with a greater emphasis on online engagement, whilst still holding one-on-one and targeted stakeholder meetings where possible.

Details of all the engagement channels made available is provided in Table 6-4 below.

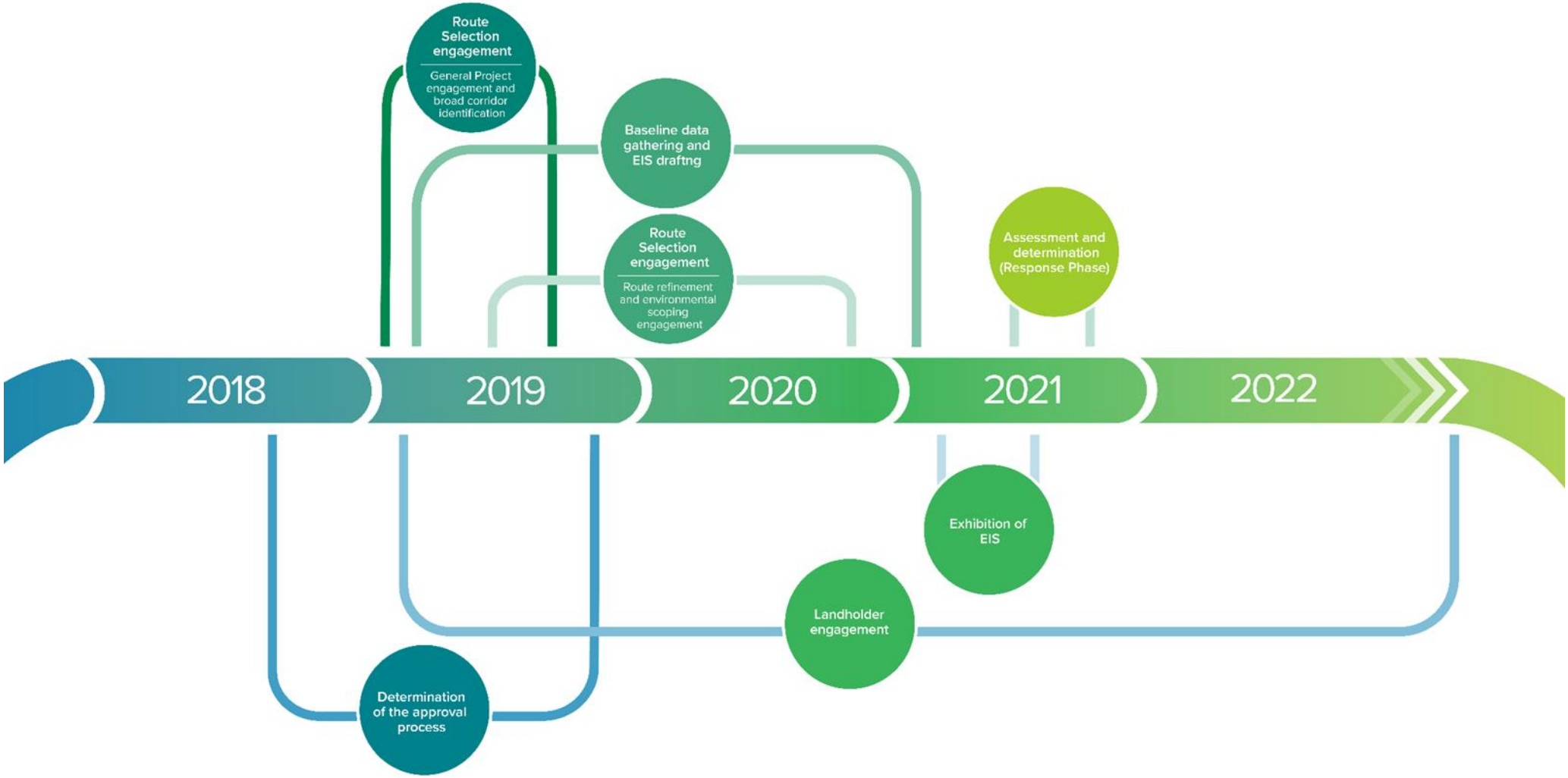


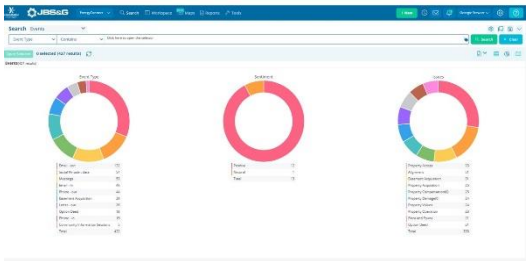
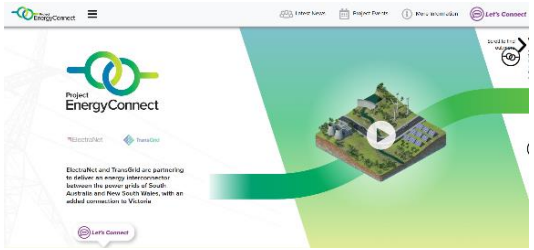
Figure 6-2: High level summary of stakeholder engagement timing

Table 6-3: Phases of and summary of activities

Phase of engagement	Objective	Key engagement activities	Key outputs
Determination of the approval process (August 2018 – November 2019)	• Determine the appropriate approval process in consultation with both State (SA) and Commonwealth governments	• Face to face engagement with appropriate government (State and Commonwealth) departments to determine the appropriate approval processes and the setting of EIS guidelines • Face to Face engagement with State Planning Commission (SPC) • Formation and monthly face to face meetings with the Project EnergyConnect Steering Committee • Lodgment of a Major Development application with PLUS-AGD • Lodgment of an Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) Referral with DAWE	• EIS Guidelines prepared by the SPC and released by the Minister for Planning and Local Government
Route selection engagement – General Project engagement and broad corridor identification (January 2019 – August 2019)	• Launch the Project and provide suitable information to stakeholders about the Project, its need, the route selection and EIS process and the opportunities stakeholders have to participate • Consult on the route selection methodology • Identify stakeholder values, key regional constraints and opportunities	• Launch of the Project EnergyConnect website and registration of stakeholder interest • Targeted meetings and workshops with key stakeholders, such as State and local government, Traditional Owner groups, the Project EnergyConnect Steering Committee, landholders, conservation bodies etc.) • Establishment of web-based interactive mapping platform on the Project EnergyConnect website to obtain public feedback • Community information sessions in region • Interactive hubs in local councils and libraries • E-newsletters, media briefings, briefing papers etc. • Monthly Project EnergyConnect Steering Committee meetings • Regular Project EnergyConnect Working Group meetings and workshops	• Launch of the Project in the public domain • Broad acceptance of the route selection methodology • Establish key stakeholder values, potential concerns, constraints and opportunities at a broad level to inform investigation corridor • Registration of stakeholder interest
Route selection engagement – Route refinement and environmental scoping engagement (June 2019 – November 2020)	• Narrow the 20 km investigation corridor, identify potential routes and identify a preferred route for assessment in the EIS • Gain a preliminary understanding of the scope of the Project and potential impacts • Consult with stakeholders on the next steps and opportunities for engagement	• Updates to the Project EnergyConnect website • Targeted meetings / briefings with key stakeholders (including national, State and local government, and Traditional Owner groups) • Updates to the web based interactive mapping platform to obtain ongoing public feedback • Regional community information sessions in region (including a booth at the Riverland field days) • Interactive hubs in local councils and libraries	• Identify local level constraints and opportunities to inform the multiple route options within the investigation corridor and refine as appropriate (including field visits and survey) • Understand stakeholder issues and concerns to inform the scope of works for the specialist studies for the EIS • Broad acceptance of preferred route by stakeholders to assess in the EIS

Phase of engagement	Objective	Key engagement activities	Key outputs
		• E-newsletters, briefing papers, latest news updates on the website etc. • Phone surveys (random sample of 200 residents of the five local government areas along the proposed alignment to understand Project awareness, key areas of community interest, key concerns and how the community wish to be engaged going forward)	• Endorsement from the Project EnergyConnect Steering Committee and working group on both the methodology used to select the investigation corridor and preferred route for assessment in the EIS
Landholder engagement (February 2019 – ongoing)	• Identify property level constraints and opportunities (current land use activities, residential dwellings, flood areas, access tracks etc.) • Explain the land access process to landholders (preliminary activities proposed, timeframes, negotiation process etc.)	• One on one meetings • Landholder communications (phone calls, email notifications, targeted updates, e-newsletters, land use surveys)	• Broad acceptance by landholders of the location of the Project at a local level • Establish property level constraints and opportunities • Understand landholder issues and concerns • Landholders understand the process and their rights • Negotiated and executed agreements for an easement
Baseline data gathering and EIS drafting (March 2019 – February 2021)	• To discuss baseline data collection through detailed specialist survey • To discuss the EIS preliminary findings and proposed mitigation measures with interested and affected stakeholders and general public to ensure concerns are adequately addressed in the EIS	• Key stakeholder and government site visits • Cultural heritage surveys with traditional owners • Key stakeholder presentations on preliminary findings • Virtual online EIS engagement room and interactive online feedback tools to share preliminary findings and receive feedback	• Broad acceptance by key stakeholders • Stakeholder concerns are adequately addressed in the EIS
Exhibition of EIS (April 2021)	• Share the preliminary findings and full EIS with the public for review and comment	• Dissemination of the EIS and executive summary for public comment via government process (30 days) • Dissemination of the full EIS and executive summary for public comment via a virtual online EIS engagement room • Key stakeholder presentations • In region engagement, as appropriate	• EIS and executive summary available in an interactive way that allows stakeholders to understand the findings and are able to voice their opinions
Assessment and determination (Response phase) (June – end 2021)	• Respond to any further stakeholder concerns based on submissions on the EIS	• Preparation of a Response Document by ElectraNet responding to submissions made during the SA Government public consultation period • Disclosure of response document publicly	• Response document outlining all stakeholder submissions and ElectraNet's response to outstanding issues or concerns

Table 6-4: Engagement channels

Engagement channels	Engagement summary	Example of engagement channel
Telephone and email	• A dedicated toll-free telephone number (**1800 560 577**) and email address (**projectenergyconnect@electranet.co.au**) was established in January 2019 to receive and respond to queries from interested and affected stakeholders. • All correspondence was recorded, tracked and reported in stakeholder and community engagement software to ensure all queries were recorded and responded to appropriately.	
Project EnergyConnect website	• A dedicated Project EnergyConnect website (**www.projectenergyconnect.com.au**) was developed and launched in January 2019. The website includes an overview of the Project, the Project status, an online EIS virtual engagement room, interactive maps, latest news and events, ways to participate in the process, contact details and links. • The website has undergone numerous updates as the Project has progressed. • As of December 2020, over 17,000 people had visited the website.	
Online interactive mapping platform	• An interactive mapping platform was developed and launched in May 2019 to provide ongoing opportunities for stakeholders to have input into the route selection process. The mapping tool evolved as the route was refined and primarily sought to obtain feedback on stakeholder values and concerns. • This interactive mapping tool was made available via the Project website, advertised via social media platforms, e-newsletter updates etc. • The interactive mapping tool was also accessible via the interactive hubs set up in relevant councils.	

Engagement channels	Engagement summary	Example of engagement channel
Online EIS virtual engagement room	• A **Project EnergyConnect online EIS virtual engagement room** was launched on 29 January 2021. This room was launched in two phases. The first phase of the engagement room provided details on the preliminary findings of the EIS and sought public feedback. The first phase of the engagement room included Project summaries in the form of short films, downloadable fact sheets and presentations, animations and interactive tools for the public to access information and provide feedback. The second engagement room includes a downloadable version of this EIS and executive summary. • The launch of the engagement room and exhibition of the EIS was advertised via the media, ElectraNet media releases, key stakeholder letters, the Connector e-news, via Project EnergyConnect social media platforms and via the Project website.	
One on one meetings, key stakeholder briefings and workshops	• Up to December 2020, a total of 38 meetings with key stakeholders, including the Australian Landscapes Trust, Birdlife Australia, government agencies and local Councils, have occurred. These meetings commenced during the route selection process and have continued as required during the EIS development process. • Since 2019, approximately 60 directly affected landholder meetings have been held to discuss land access and easement acquisition. These meetings are ongoing. • Approximately four meetings with three Traditional Owner groups have been held since 2019, in addition to several cultural heritage surveys. Targeted engagement continues. • Targeted stakeholder briefings and workshops were held with five local Councils, with valuable input into the route selection process, local community values, potential impacts and economic development benefits provided by participants. Five briefings and five workshops were held in March and April 2019 and were followed up with multiple updates to each Council.	
Key stakeholder site visits	• A number of key stakeholder site visits were undertaken in from July 2019 – February 2021. These included: - Cultural heritage surveys with the relevant Traditional Owner Groups - Site visits and walkovers with representatives from Australian Landscapes Trust (ALT), DEW, PLUS-AGD - Site visits and walkovers with landholders.	

Engagement channels	Engagement summary	Example of engagement channel
Steering Committee and Working Group meetings	• A total of 29 Project EnergyConnect Steering committee meetings and five working group workshops have been undertaken for the Project between August 2018 and February 2021. These meetings were attended by appointed representatives from: - SA government agencies: DEM, EPA, DIT, DEW, PLUS-AGD - NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) - ElectraNet and TransGrid - JBS&G / Consentium.	
Community drop-in sessions	• During the route selection process, ElectraNet hosted six drop-in sessions across five council areas, including Berri, Renmark, Waikerie, Morgan and Burra. These drop-in sessions included posters and maps outlining the route selection process, the methodology to be adopted and initial investigation corridor. Feedback was sought from the general public on the methodology, environmental values and any constraints or opportunities. These drop-in sessions were well attended and provided useful local input into the route selection process.	
Riverland field days	• Representatives from ElectraNet and JBS&G Australia, hosted an information booth at the Riverland Field Days (**www.riverlandfielddays.com.au**) held in Barmera during September 2019. Over 13,000 people attended this event. This provided ElectraNet an additional chance to meet with community members and stakeholders, provide information about the Project and obtain feedback about route selection, environmental and other values, and discuss any concerns.	

Engagement channels	Engagement summary	Example of engagement channel
Interactive hubs	• It is acknowledged that not everyone has access to a computer or an internet service. As such, interactive hubs powered by iPads have been placed at strategic locations throughout the broader Project area to allow stakeholders to view Project related information on the website, interactive map and online EIS virtual engagement room. The interactive hubs are located in the following locations: - ElectraNet Head office reception - 55/52 East Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000 - Remark Paringa Council - 61 Eighteenth Street Renmark - Waikerie Library and Visitors Centre – Strangman Road, Waikerie, 5330 - Berri Library - Kay Ave, Berri SA 5343 - Barmera Library - 4 Barwell Ave, Barmera SA 5345.	
The Connector – e-newsletters	• "The Connector" e-newsletter launched in June 2019 and is emailed to over 600 subscribers who have registered to receive updates. • The Connector is circulated each quarter, the purpose being to inform stakeholders of material updates with respect to the Project. Subject matters to date included updates on the EPBC Act application status, the Riverland Field Days, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) determination and other Project updates. • The e-newsletter was also used to advise stakeholders of the launch of the virtual engagement room and the availability of the online EIS summary and commencement of the EIS public exhibition process.	
Social media	• ElectraNet has strong social media following and presence and regularly utilises LinkedIn and Facebook for updates on its various projects across South Australia, including Project EnergyConnect. Content focuses on information relating to the latest news, broader energy market and renewables transition, safety education and the information on the energy sector. • A **Project EnergyConnect Facebook page** was set up in April 2019. • Social media platforms (including ElectraNet's LinkedIn and the Project EnergyConnect Facebook page) were used to advise stakeholders of the launch of the online EIS virtual engagement room and commencement of the EIS public exhibition process.	

Engagement channels	Engagement summary	Example of engagement channel
Media and advertisements	• Project EnergyConnect information and updates have been published in various media sources since late 2018, including articles or mentions in: - The Advertiser - InDaily - The Murray Pioneer - Financial Review - GlamAdelaide - RenewEconomy - Daily Telegraph • Local media such as The Murray Pioneer has been utilised to advise community members of upcoming regional events, such as the Community drop-in sessions, virtual engagement room etc.	 **Call for local feedback on interconnector project** RIVERLANDERS can provide assistance and feedback regarding the proposed construction of a power interconnector through the region at information hubs set up by energy contractor ElectraNet. Interactive iPads can now be found at numerous public outlets across the Riverland, which can be used by locals to discuss any social or environmental issues surrounding project EnergyConnect. ElectraNet land services manager Scott Haynes encouraged Riverlanders to share any feedback that may help identify an optimal route for construction of the interconnector. "As we work to narrow our existing 10km-wide study corridor for the interconnector to a final easement, we are interested in hearing about any opportunities or constraints to the locations which the local community can identify," Mr Haynes said. "People can provide the same input via their own mobile devices and computers, but these iPads in community locations provide an additional opportunity for those who may struggle with connectivity at home. "These hubs have been created in partnership with local government and I would like to thank the regional councils involved as well as Regional Development Australia, and their staff for their willingness to assist." EnergyConnect information hubs can be found at the Renmark Paringa Council foyer, and at libraries in Loxton, Waikerie, Berri and Barmera. Renmark Paringa Council assistant Tish Moritz, customer service officer Jenni Thiel and ElectraNet stakeholder advisor Angela Faulkner unveil the EnergyConnect information hub. PHOTO: supplied

6.5. Feedback from Stakeholders

The engagement approach adopted by ElectraNet has allowed for structured feedback collection from stakeholders. The initial focus was on the route selection methodology and hierarchy of constraints which was widened to focus on environmental, economic and social matters during impact assessment investigations.

Feedback through a range of engagement channels has been received in relation to the route selection methodology, community values, land access and land use requirements, cultural heritage values, native vegetation and birds.

Most stakeholders have advised that the Project is important from a regional and State-wide perspective as it will provide safe, secure and reliable electricity for consumers and enable the unlocking of various renewable energy sources, such as solar generation.

As indicated in Table 6-4, the feedback received has been captured in a variety of different ways including interactive maps via the Project website, interactive hub stations, online EIS engagement room, feedback forms, telephone survey, direct discussions at community drop-in information sessions, one-on-one meetings, targeted workshops and queries via the dedicated Project email address and toll-free telephone number. All feedback collected has been entered into the Project's central database in strict alignment with accepted privacy and confidentiality requirements.

6.5.1. Telephone survey

In 2019, ElectraNet commissioned an independent fieldwork company to undertake a telephone survey of residents located within the five local government areas along the proposed transmission line route. The purpose of the survey was to understand the level of awareness of the Project, key areas of community interest, concerns, potential perceived benefits and how community members would like to be engaged going forward.

Prior to being contacted for the survey, 44% of respondents indicated that they were aware of Project EnergyConnect or the SA / NSW Interconnector project. Of those aware of the Project, the most common sources of information were:

- TV 46%
- newspaper 38%
- radio 28%
- word of mouth 19%
- social media 15%

The top three perceived benefits and impacts of the Project as identified by the survey respondents are provided in Table 6-5.

Table 6-5: Top three benefits and impacts identified in telephone survey

Perceived benefits	Percentage	Perceived negative impacts	Percentage
Increased energy security / reliability	33%	Loss of productive / agricultural land	11%
Lower power prices	33%	Impacts on crops / livestock	8%
Employment / jobs	15%	Impacts on vegetation and birds	6%

The top three factors considered important when refining the route were identified as being: avoiding impacts to tourism and recreational use of the River Murray; avoiding townships and residential areas; and avoiding areas of environmental value, such as areas with sensitive flora / fauna.

The respondents advised the preferred methods of engagement for the Project are:

- email 44%
- newspaper 24%
- radio 15%
- social media 11%
- community information sessions / drop-in sessions (7%)

The results of the survey shaped engagement methods and communication and tools as provided in Table 6-4, and the potential impacts raised during the survey were considered by the Project team as outlined in Table 6-6.

6.5.2. Summary of key issues raised

As noted in Chapter 4 Route Selection, ElectraNet's approach to route selection was generally viewed positively by stakeholders who provided detailed feedback on regional and local level constraints and opportunities that would contribute to minimising potential impacts and maximising the use of areas of existing disturbance.

A consistent view put forward by various stakeholders, particularly local Councils, Traditional Owners and local businesses, is that the proposed route should not traverse south of the River Murray. The social, economic and environmental reasons put forward included the number of landholders who would be impacted, number of productive agricultural and viticultural operations that would be impacted, potential impacts to tourism, proximity to the floodplains and potential impacts to cultural heritage. As noted in Chapter 4 Route Selection, the River Murray was noted as a Tier 1 constraint, therefore the Project alignment runs north of the River Murray at all times.

Perceived impacts on locally endangered flora and fauna (and more specifically mallee birds) were a significant concern raised by stakeholders during early engagement in 2019. ElectraNet spent a considerable amount of time engaging with stakeholders around these concerns and commissioned additional specialist studies to better understand potential impacts to flora and fauna, refine the route selection and feed into the EIS. Further details of these specialist studies and the results are discussed in Chapter 11 Flora and Fauna. As a result of the specialist studies and stakeholder engagement, the route alignment selected avoids areas of dense mallee habitat which was identified as a key environmental value.

Stakeholders recognised the economic benefits of the Project, including improving reliability in power supply, aiding in the transition away from the use fossil fuels, job creation and flow on effects to the local region including the procurement of goods and services.

Various impact assessments have been undertaken to support the EIS and deal with the issues, concerns and opportunities raised by stakeholders.

Each EIS chapter provides information on feedback received throughout the route selection and EIS processes and describes how identified impacts will be managed via appropriate mitigation measures.

A high-level summary of the key feedback received to date is provided in Table 6-6 including where these have been specifically addressed in the EIS. A detailed list of all values, concerns, opportunities and specific feedback is provided in Volume 2 Appendix G,

Table 6-6: High level summary of stakeholder feedback and associated outcomes

Value	Aspect	Concern / opportunity raised	Outcome of engagement / summary of response	EIS chapter reference
Corridor selection **Socio-economic**	Route selection methodology	• Opportunity to align with existing infrastructure (such as roads and other transmission lines) to avoid additional disturbance	• Constraints and opportunities identified at a regional and local level • Broad stakeholder acceptance of the route selection methodology and hierarchy of constraints	• Chapter 4 Route Selection
		• Hierarchy of constraints (how constraints were identified and ranked. i.e. what constitutes a tier 1 versus a tier 2 constraint)		
		• Easement acquisition such as process, impacts to land and compensation	• Easement acquisition clearly explained to landholders • Executed option agreements which set out compensation and other relevant matters	• Chapter 9 Land Use and Tenure
	Land use / operations	• Impacts on areas of intensive agriculture (irrigation, viticulture, horticulture and citrus growing)	• Areas of intensive agriculture avoided	• Chapter 4 Route Selection
		• Impacts to conservation land / habitat loss	• Areas of high conservation and habitat value avoided	• Chapter 4 Route Selection • Chapter 9 Land Use and Tenure • Chapter 11 Flora and Fauna
		• Impacts to townships and residential areas	• Proposed route avoids all townships. Specialist studies (including visual, air quality, noise and vibration, traffic and transport and socio-economic) completed, and appropriate mitigations measures proposed in the EIS	• Chapter 4 Route Selection • Chapter 13 Visual Amenity • Chapter 14 Air Quality • Chapter 15 Noise and Vibration • Chapter 16 Traffic and Transport • Chapter 17 Socio-economic Environment
		• Impacts on aerial mustering practices on nearby property	• Transmission line marker balls may be installed where appropriate	• Chapter 9 Land Use and Tenure
		• Impacts on native title and cultural heritage values	• Cultural heritage surveys complete and engagement with Traditional Owners is ongoing	• Chapter 9 Land Use and Tenure • Chapter 12 Cultural Heritage

Value	Aspect	Concern / opportunity raised	Outcome of engagement / summary of response	EIS chapter reference
	Tourism	• Impacts to tourism and recreational use on the River Murray	• Prominent tourism areas avoided and the transmission line will not traverse the River Murray	• Chapter 4 Route Selection
Hazard management	Fire risk	• Opportunity to provide a fire break between Calperum station and Cooltong community and reduce the risk of bushfires	• ElectraNet will work with landholders to ensure a safe clearance distance is maintained between vegetation and the transmission line • A Fire Hazard Management Plan for the Project will be developed and align with the regional fire management plans and consultation with CFS	• Chapter 18 Hazards and Risk Management • Fire Hazard Management Plan (Appendix S)
		• Perception that transmission lines attract lightning strikes and may cause a bushfire	• Transmission lines do attract lightning strikes but act as lightning conductors and reduce the risk of lightning strikes as a source of fire	
		• Opportunity to share access routes with CFS through high risk bushfire areas that currently have little access available (e.g. Hawks Nest station)	• A Fire Hazard Management Plan for the Project will be developed and align with the regional fire management plans and consultation with CFS	
		• Fire risk associated with transmission lines through high bushfire risk areas such as Calperum and Taylorville stations.	• A Fire Hazard Management Plan for the Project will be developed and align with the regional fire management plans and consultation with CFS	
	Human health	• Impacts on human health arising from transmission lines	• While concerns have been raised in relation to exposure to electromagnetic fields, studies have shown that levels outside of the transmission line easement would be similar to those readings within a home	
Flora and Fauna	Ecology	• Concern that the transmission line may spark a bush fire in area of critical habitat	• A Fire Hazard Management Plan for the Project will be developed and align with the regional fire management plans and consultation with CFS	• Chapter 4 Route Selection • Chapter 11 Flora and Fauna • Chapter 18 Hazards and Risk Management
		• Impacts on critical habitats because of vegetation clearance for project	• Constraints and opportunities identified at a regional and local level were considered in	

Value	Aspect	Concern / opportunity raised	Outcome of engagement / summary of response	EIS chapter reference
		construction – towers, laydown areas, access.	the route selection process and resulted in the proposed route alignment. • Impacts assessed via extensive specialist study	• Fire Hazard Management Plan (Appendix S)
	Native Vegetation	• Impacts on mallee vegetation.		
	Birds	• Impacts on flight paths of migratory birds because of overhead transmission lines		
		• Impacts on local endangered wildlife such as Black Eared Miners and Malleefowl because of habitat segregation		
	Fauna	• Impacts on wild animals		
Traffic and Transport	Traffic	• Impacts to local traffic due to increase in vehicle movements	• The construction of the Project is expected to occur within an 18–24 month timeframe, in a linear manner and occurring concurrently, thereby there will be limited impact to local traffic. • A Traffic Management Plan prior to construction commencement • ElectraNet will consult prior to construction with the appropriate roads authority regarding works which may affect roads or traffic	• Chapter 16 Traffic and Transport
	Roads	• Opportunity for potential road upgrades	• ElectraNet will consult prior to construction with the appropriate roads authority regarding works which may affect roads or traffic	
		• Impacts on road quality and who is responsible for costs of upgrading / maintaining during project construction	• A Traffic and Transport study has been undertaken which shows that all planned construction and operational phase traffic impacts are within the capacity of the existing road network	
		• Opportunity for increased access created by tracks required for the transmission line construction and maintenance	• Tracks created for the construction and ongoing maintenance of the Project will be for use by the landholder, ElectraNet and its appropriate contractors and not the general public	

Value	Aspect	Concern / opportunity raised	Outcome of engagement / summary of response	EIS chapter reference
Economic	Employment	• Opportunities for employment	• ElectraNet will use local labour where appropriate; however, many positions require experienced and highly skilled workers which may need to be sourced from outside of the region • Opportunities for employment will be via ICN and registration available on ElectraNet's virtual engagement room	• Chapter 17 Socio-Economic Environment
	Local business	• Opportunity for local businesses to provide goods and services	• ElectraNet and its engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor will use local businesses wherever possible and as appropriate for the delivery of the Project • Opportunities for the provision of goods and services will be via Industry Capability Network (ICN) and registration available on ElectraNet's virtual engagement room	
	Renewable energy	• Opportunity to enable renewable energy projects in the area and as a result increase economic activity	• The Project will enable renewable energy developers to connect to the electricity grid. A corresponding increase in economic activity will follow as renewable energy developers plan and subsequently build their projects	• Chapter 2 Project Justification • Chapter 9 Land use and Tenure • Chapter 17 Socio-Economic Environment
	Power supply	• Access to secure, reliable, affordable power for South Australians	• The Project will provide access to lower cost energy generation, decrease South Australia's reliance on other States to provide electricity and result in lower household and business power bills over time	
Visual amenity	Construction of transmission line	• Opportunity to underground the transmission line to reduce visual impact.	• Undergrounding the transmission line was considered in early project development but ruled out due to the potential for unacceptable environmental impacts, in addition to higher construction and maintenance costs.	• Chapter 9 Land Use and Tenure • Chapter 13 Visual Amenity

Value	Aspect	Concern / opportunity raised	Outcome of engagement / summary of response	EIS chapter reference
	Lifestyle	• Impact to quality of lifestyle due to large structures obstructing landscape	• During the route selection process, the alignment was sited away from areas that are visually sensitive, such as towns and scenic tourism locations.	
	Property values	• Impact on property values as a result of the transmission lines obstructing view.		
Construction	Project management	• Concern for breakdown in communication between the company and contractor regarding treatment of the local environment by contractor undertaking project construction	• ElectraNet will develop a Construction Environmental Management Plan with its engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor which will set out a range of matters, including communication channels, roles and responsibilities, and compliance reporting.	• Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix P)
Cultural Heritage	Protection of areas of cultural heritage significance remains	• Impacts on areas of cultural heritage significance due to tower clearance and construction	• Cultural heritage surveys have been completed along the corridor and engagement with Traditional Owners is ongoing. • Traditional owner teams will act as 'monitors' during work that involves any level of land disturbance.	• Chapter 12 Cultural Heritage
		• Mitigation management process to ensure that areas of cultural heritage significance are protected		
		• Compensation	• ElectraNet and the relevant Traditional Owner groups are negotiating various heritage and other agreements, which deals with the issue of compensation	
		• Avoid crossing the River Murray	• Constraints and opportunities identified at a regional and local level were considered in the route selection process and resulted in the proposed route alignment, with no part crossing the River Murray	

6.6. Further Opportunities to Provide Feedback

6.6.1. Public exhibition of the EIS

The Minister for Planning and Local Government will place this EIS on public exhibition for a period of at least 30 business days. The public exhibition process is the government's formal consultation with stakeholders, providing an opportunity for all interested parties to read about the Project and submit questions or comments to government who make a decision on whether to approve the Project.

When published, there will be a variety of different ways for stakeholders to view, download and provide comment on the environmental, social and economic impact assessments that ElectraNet undertook as part of the EIS process. These include via:

- the SA government's SA Planning Portal – https://plan.sa.gov.au/state_snapshot/development_activity/major_projects/majors/south_australiansw_electricity_interconnector
- the Project EnergyConnect website (www.projectenergyconnect.com.au)
- the Project EnergyConnect online EIS Engagement Room – https://lnkd.in/gp_DcCj
- the interactive hubs located at the following locations:
  - ElectraNet Head office reception – 55/52 East Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
  - Remark Paringa Council – 61 Eighteenth Street Renmark
  - Waikerie Library and Visitors Centre – Strangman Road, Waikerie, 5330
  - Berri Library – Kay Ave, Berri SA 5343
  - Barmera Library – 4 Barwell Ave, Barmera SA 5345.

Hard copies of the EIS Executive Summary and a digital copy of the EIS and appendices on a USB will be made available on request. Requests may be made via the virtual engagement room, the Project website or by contacting the Project team directly on:

- Email: ProjectEnergyConnect@electranet.com.au or
- Phone: 1800 560 577

In addition, during the public exhibition process PLUS-AGD will facilitate one or more community meetings to provide a further opportunity for stakeholders to hear about the Project. This meeting or meetings may be held in person or online and will generally comprise:

- a presentation on the Project by ElectraNet
- an overview of the Government assessment process by PLUS-AGD
- an opportunity to ask questions directly to either PLUS-AGD or ElectraNet representatives.

Information on the date, time and location of the community meeting(s) will be advertised by PLUS-AGD in local newspapers and on the SA Planning Portal prior to the event. ElectraNet will also provide details about the meeting(s) on the Project website and via The Connector e-newsletter and social media platforms.

Due to COVID-19, face-to-face stakeholder interactions may be restricted, therefore it is likely that virtual engagement methods may be adopted during the public exhibition process.

6.6.2. EIS response phase

All submissions received on the EIS via any of the above sources during the public exhibition process will be reviewed by ElectraNet, and all matters addressed in a Response Document. Together, the EIS

and Response Document will form the final application to government for the assessment and consideration of Project approval.

6.6.3. Ongoing community feedback

ElectraNet is focused on developing the Project in a manner that generates maximum benefit for the broader South Australian community. Extensive engagement and communication activities and channels have enabled ElectraNet to gain a strong understanding of potential issues and benefits the Project may bring. As noted in Table 6-6, the potential issues and benefits raised by stakeholders have been considered by ElectraNet and the Project team will be addressed through Project design and appropriate mitigation measures wherever possible.

ElectraNet is committed to open and transparent engagement with stakeholders and community members throughout the EIS process and beyond and will continue to provide updates via the Project website, virtual engagement room and social media platforms.