



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE FEASIBILITY OF UNDERGROUNDING THE  
TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **REPORT TABLED FOR THE INQUIRY INTO FEASIBILITY OF UNDERGROUNDING THE TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**28 March 2024**

The Select Committee into the feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects has tabled its report today. This was the second inquiry into the issue, following an earlier inquiry by the State Development committee.

This inquiry sought to provide a balanced assessment of the merits of both overgrounding and undergrounding electricity transmission, following significant community concern around a number of transmission infrastructure projects underway in New South Wales.

Cate Faehrmann MLC, Chair of the Committee, said: 'The committee approached this inquiry with the intention of objectively assessing the merits of overgrounding and undergrounding electricity transmission. However, the limited uptake of undergrounding technology in Australia, particularly at the scale of the transmission projects examined – HumeLink and Central West Orana – made the task challenging'.

'What is not in dispute is that the necessary infrastructure for the transition to renewable energy must be built as quickly as possible. However, the lack of social licence for HumeLink and Central West Orana is putting deadlines for the completion of this necessary infrastructure at risk'.

'There is a lot more that transmission providers and governments can do to build support for transmission infrastructure'.

'The community is frustrated at the fact that all the costs and benefits of undergrounding and overgrounding technology aren't taken into consideration during the initial assessment phase, and that therefore overgrounding is almost always chosen due to its historically lower financial cost than undergrounding'.

'They're also frustrated at what appears to be a biased attitude by transmission providers, regulatory authorities and governments in favour of overhead transmission lines'.

'It's clear that what's needed is an independent assessment into the costs and benefits of undergrounding transmission infrastructure to ensure a more informed debate, and we call on the NSW Government to commission this'.

'Governments also need to ensure that electricity transmission providers develop climate adaptation plans for their energy infrastructure to ensure that the State's energy transmission networks are built with the resilience to withstand more frequent and extreme weather events'.

'One option we explored was the viability of a hybrid approach; that is, using overground and underground technology at different points of a project to allay some of the concerns in communities about overhead transmission lines, including environmental, cultural and social. I believe this could go some way to allaying the very real concerns in some communities that their concerns aren't being heard. We therefore believe that the NSW Government should work with Transgrid and EnergyCo to consider opportunities for a hybrid approach for transmission infrastructure projects'.

Details regarding the inquiry, and a copy of the final report, can be found at:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/listofcommittees/Pages/committee-details.aspx?pk=320>

*For further information please contact Committee Chair, Ms Cate Faehrmann, on (02) 9230 3771.*

-ENDS-