

Submission
No 4

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

Organisation: Goulburn Mulwaree Council

Date Received: 30 June 2023

Inquiry into the feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects

The Goulburn Mulwaree Council local government area is adjacent to the Upper Lachlan Council where the Humelink transmission infrastructure project is proposed. This submission is addressing the environmental impacts of the above ground energy transmission electricity infrastructure.

Council is impacted through this project as a city adjacent to the proposed construction area that would be providing services and accommodation to the workforce employed in the project. Council also has a water supply dam, Pejar Dam, located under the proposed route of HumeLink. This is a Council owned and operated water supply dam and is a critical raw water supply for Goulburn Mulwaree Council. This storage is also used for recreational purposes including canoeing, boating, and fishing.

Our LGA has seen an increased interest in alternate power generators seeking to establish facilities in our region. Specifically, there are currently three major solar installations in the various stages of development assessment as well as a major energy from waste facility. Each of these projects are of a state significant scale and are currently under assessment from the NSW Department of Planning. In addition to these projects, Council continues to field interest from other developers who seek to undertake similar projects in our LGA.

According to the majority of proponents, our location is being targeting due to its geographical location between Sydney and Canberra, two of the largest energy markets in the eastern seaboard. These proponents are seeking to take advantage of the presence of existing above ground transmission infrastructure however Council is concerned that this infrastructure will reach capacity sooner rather than later and additional infrastructure will be required.

The impact of powerline placement has the ability to significantly impact the Goulburn Mulwaree LGA moving forward. This includes negative impacts upon visual amenity; loss of biodiversity including irreversible impacts on critically endangered ecological communities; and increased risk of bushfire. Council recognises that the environmental impacts of undergrounding are significantly less than the impacts that arise from above ground power infrastructure for example, underground infrastructure can be located closer to existing residential populations with minimal impact; the corridor for vegetation clearing for transmission lines is significantly reduced during both construction and operations noting that underground energy infrastructure requires significantly reduced asset protection zone; and finally bush fire is reduced with underground lines given the limited exposure of live wires to environmental ignition sources.

Council does acknowledge that there are locations where underground lines are not suitable, for example under public water supplies like Pejar Dam, but on balance, underground transmission lines would be the preferred construction methodology for electricity transmission infrastructure into the future.

Thankyou for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. Council is currently not prepared to give evidence at a hearing.

Kind regards

Marina Hollands
Acting Chief Executive Officer

[Goulburn Mulwaree Council](#) Locked Bag 22 Goulburn NSW 2580 | Connect on [Facebook](#)



Goulburn Mulwaree Council acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land where the Goulburn Mulwaree Local Government operates today and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.