

**Submission
No 6**

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

Organisation: Save Our Surroundings (SOS)

Date Received: 4 July 2023

Inquiry into the Feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy

projects Save Our Surroundings (SOS) is part of network of like-minded groups of concerned & impacted citizens in rural Australia directly affected by the proliferation of industrial scale weather-dependent "renewables" (unreliables) & their negative impacts upon local & global environments & communities. Independently run groups like SOS span multiple States. We share & distribute information, research & experiences with each other & other parties.

Our comments on the Feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects in NSW are that:

1. It is unclear what the Committee is actually interested in knowing. Is the "undergrounding the transmission lines" mean the whole length of only new transmission lines in an Renewable Energy Zone, e.g. The proposed 180km 500KV/330KV from Wollar to Wellington in the Central West Renewable Energy Zone? If so then the lines will have to pass through very varied terrain, from high hills, to small undulating valleys, national parks, state reserves, numerous agricultural properties, wetlands (permanent or intermittent) and pass the major towns of Mudgee and particularly Gulgong. In this example would the existing Wollar-Wellington 330KV transmission infrastructure also be put underground?
2. While it may be feasible to put some parts of transmission lines underground where ground conditions are suitable, we believe that, yet again, the extra costs of doing so just end up increasing the cost of electricity to all electricity consumers. We have already seen the multi-billion dollar blowouts of the Victoria to NSW Interconnector West, the Marinus Tasmania-Victoria Link and the Townsville to Mt Isa transmission line to name just three projects.
3. The benefits of not being visible from towns, tourist spots and rural residences, reduced fire risks, and interference with agricultural activities would soon be outweighed by the proliferation of unreliables, such as solar works, battery energy storage systems, pumped hydro works and particularly wind works, which are far worse than even visually polluting and dangerous transmission lines.
4. For example, the angry protests against the proposed 360km 500KV HumeLink to connect Wagga Wagga, Bannaby and Maragle and similar opposition to the Victoria to NSW Interconnector West show how farmers and others view the destruction to wildlife habitat, impositions on the ability to farm their properties and the visual pollution around their towns and properties. Similar concerns, including destruction of existing farm assets (sheds, silos, cattle yards), inability to grow crops, inability to keep the farm viable were raised in the CWO REZ [Daily Telegraph "Farmers stuck in path of green bulldozers" p11 4/07/2023; copy attached].
5. We would expect, based on past and present performance in building any transmission or government subsidised infrastructure (e.g. Snowy 2.0,