

Submission
No 19

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 8 July 2023

Partially
Confidential

The Hon Emily Suvaal, Committee Chair,
Inquiry - Feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects
Standing Committee on State Development
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

8th July 2023

Dear The Hon Emily Suvaal MLC,

Re: Feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important inquiry into the feasibility of undergrounding transmission infrastructure for renewable infrastructure projects.

We are landowners who were initially impacted by Humelink until the line between Wagga and Bannaby was deleted. We will no longer have the possibility of towers on our property in this project, but we will have a great view of them in the next door property through our kitchen window.

We are also aware that our property is possibly in line for future plans for transmission lines.

As a captain of the local Rural Fire Service during the devastating Dunns Road fires, our team had to fight fires around and under transmission lines. Our own experience showed the lines to be a hindrance during fire fighting and life threatening for members while carrying out their duties. Transgrid have always said they will turn off the power during fires. We have first hand experience that this is not always the case, and have local brigades who have had to abandon firefighting efforts as they were told the power has to be switched back on, which resulted in fires burning thousands of hectares more.

This could have been avoided if the fire fighting efforts could have continued. Undergrounding transmission lines will make fire fighting safer.

Our family knows this property better than anyone after eighty years of farming. If we had to have these monstrous towers, we knew where the line would cause the least interruption to our day to day agricultural business, daily living and the environment, including erosion control. To have Transgrid come in and claim to have a better understanding of where this line should go, and disrespect the knowledge and experience we have was heart breaking. The mental anguish many landowners have been dealing with over the past three years of this land acquisition process has taken its toll on their health, livelihood and well being. The mental health of our farmers seems to have been trivialised over the three year consultation period. The majority of this anguish is caused by the towers themselves and the problems they create for a farming business. Undergrounding would reduce the problems and therefore the opposition to the project.

Humelink was initially planned to begin in early 2022, and project commission late 2024. The latest flyer we have dated 11/3/2021 states construction to start to mid 2024 and completion 2026. This shows, in their own publications, a loss of two and a half years. This delay could have been avoided if Transgrid and the government had recognised the feasibility of undergrounding much earlier, and taken landholders' concerns seriously from the outset.

We urge the Standing Committee to recommend that undergrounding is the best way forward for renewable energy transmission in NSW. As we transition to net zero emissions we need environmentally responsible transmission as well as generation.

Yours sincerely,