

**Submission
No 84**

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

Name: Mr Peter Barratt

Date Received: 13 July 2023

Peter Barratt

13 July 2023

The Hon Emily Suvaal, Committee Chair,
Standing Committee on State Development
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Inquiry - Feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects

Dear The Hon Emily Suvaal MLC,

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

Our property is located in the beautiful Gilmore Valley where we have farmed cattle for the last twenty years. This property is where we raised our three children and the network service provider plans to place two towers on our property with the overhead lines running only a few hundred metres from our home.

Listed below are the implications that the overhead transmission lines will have on our family and on our farm which is also our business.

The overhead transmission lines are to cut across the hill country on the property which is aerially sprayed twice a year. Due to the steepness of the terrain this method is the only effective way to manage this area which requires it to be sprayed to eradicate weeds as well as to fertilise. These overhead lines will take away this option and the land will become totally unproductive. The cows will not be able to put on the hill to lose weight before birthing or to take their calves once born as the land will be unusable.

Our property has a separate title which was going to allow us to build a home on it for an elderly parent and we have paid rates on this block for the last twenty years. The proximity to the overhead power lines that the network service provider are planning to run through the property will now remove this option for our family.

I think by now everyone is aware of the risk that placing overhead transmission lines and towers across the landscape pose and if not why not? A quote from EnergySafe Victoria, the Victorian Government “ Areas near or beneath transmission lines should be avoided in the event of a fire, as dense smoke can increase the risk of an electrical arc or flashover which can endanger life and property”.

We feel it is inconceivable that knowing the inherent bushfire risks and knowing that fires cannot be fought under powerlines that the service provider and governments do not value human life enough to place these lines underground.

We would have presumed that as a nation we were all on the same page when it came to climate change by saving as many trees on the planet as possible however this doesn't appear to be the case with the network service provider or the government when it appears they would rather take the cheaper option and cut down trees rather than take the underground option, at what cost to the environment.

Tourism which is at the heart of these towns and keeps the small businesses thriving gives a huge boost in the way of economic growth and employment which will be shattered by the decline we will see in these regional areas due to the ugly transformation of our region.

The sheer beauty of the Snowy Valleys is going to be destroyed by placing 80 metre towers and overhead lines through it. The community thrives here with the huge number of tourists drawn here by everything it has to offer but if you remove the beauty you remove the soul.

We find it disappointing that when the network energy provider and the government say they need to save money by installing overhead lines instead of undergrounding the lines the profit they make will be enjoyed by the energy provider's Canadian and Saudi shareholders instead of making the right choice by all Australians.

In closing, all of the issues and concerns mentioned above could be eliminated if the powerlines were placed underground. We are not about stopping progress but we need companies and governments to be leading by example in protecting us the people, the rural communities and the environment.

Before those of you sitting in on this Public Inquiry in your office respond to these submissions my family invite you to visit us, to sit in our home, to walk around our farm and to drive through the mountains ranges and valleys.

I 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,

Peter Barratt

Notes re Submission

1. This submission does not need to remain confidential and I am happy for it to be published with my name.
2. I am also happy to be called as a witness to give evidence at a hearing.

Peter Barratt