

Submission
No 205

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

Name: Mr Raymond Billing

Date Received: 14 July 2023

RA & CA BILLING

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

Thursday 14th 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 feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects.

We are residents of Batlow and live on a few acres to the east of town. We look over the nearby mountains and are in view of the current transmission lines. Under current proposals additional towers and power lines will become larger and a lot more visible. Our house is one of the oldest in Batlow being built prior to WW1 and has been used as a B&B in the past and has Council classification as such. We are currently renovating it to meet these standards and maintain a commercial value in our residence. Any visual pollution such as these proposed structures will have a negative impact on this value.

Both my wife, Tina, and I have been heavily involved with our community since retiring here in 2011. This is particularly the case since the Dunns Road fire that devastated our town and region with Tina as President of the Country Women's Association of NSW – Batlow Branch, and myself as chair of 2 local committees. We have seen the devastation and impact that such a disaster can cause. We are very concerned that all possible precautions are taken to prevent this happening again. If the overhead power transmission lines are built as proposed we believe the potential of creating more bushfires through any arcing to the ground would increase. Also, smoke and moisture from any nearby fire has the potential to increase arcing from the lines and ground, and result in restricting access to emergency services and firefighting organisations.

Our town is surrounded by prime agricultural diversity and is adjacent to Australia's largest Alpine National Park, as well as Australia's largest pine plantations. These must be protected at all costs.

We believe that the proposed overhead power transmission lines will have a negative impact on the livelihood, investments, and lifestyle of those landholders directly affected with structures on their property. We are concerned that land values for both landholders directly impacted and those in the surrounding areas will be reduced and that the tourism industry will be greatly affected.

Whilst it has been stated that installation of overhead transmission is a more economical alternative to underground transmission, we challenge the long-term financial impact to our region. Has the financial impact on farming enterprises, forestry, tourism, and land values been considered?

We believe that underground energy infrastructure reduces the environmental impacts; is less likely to start fires; and would have a lesser impact on existing farming and forestry enterprises. It would help maintain the aesthetic qualities as well as satisfy safety considerations in our region.

We urge the Standing Committee to recommend that undergrounding is the best way forward for renewable energy transmission in NSW.

Sincerely,

Ray Billing BSc(Ed)

Tina Billing