

Submission
No 211

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 14 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

14 July 2023

Dear The Hon Emily Suvaal MLC,

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

Our family has been farming in the Bannister area for 60 years. Our property will be greatly impacted by the proposed HumeLink towers, even though it is yet to be determined whether the property falls within the corridor or just outside it.

We **strongly support undergrounding transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects**, as it is a far less damaging option than the currently proposed HumeLink towers, which will severely impact the health of our communities, the environment and the economy, and unfairly impact local farmers.

Concerns

Under the Just Terms Compensation Act, **no compensation is available** for owners of land and houses that are **just outside the transmission corridor**. However, their properties will be **devalued** by the overhead powerlines adjacent to the property.

Other concerns include:

- An increased risk of bushfires and complications with firefighting around electrical equipment that hasn't been addressed
- Towers will disfigure the rural Australian landscape

- The clear felling of remnant and cultivated bushland
- Risk of large, exposed towers being impacted by increasingly extreme weather events, causing failures or degradation.

Solution – Underground Powerlines

All these issues are preventable by simply undergrounding the powerlines. Undergrounding solves a myriad of environmental problems and **stacks up financially over the long term** due to reduced ongoing maintenance costs.

It is **less susceptible to outages and blackouts** because it cannot be impacted by extreme weather, and it lessens the risk of catastrophic bushfires

Transgrid, a foreign owned company, have pursued only one option to win government support for its tower proposal.

Recent costings provided by independent consultants and real-world experience overseas clearly show that the differential cost between undergrounding and overhead transmission is much smaller than Transgrid's inflated estimates, which have already proved to be inaccurate.

Conclusion

Transgrid has many resources and a powerful lobbying presence that regional communities cannot match.

We recognise the importance of renewable, clean energy and the need for infrastructure to support its transmission, but this cannot be at the expense of the environment and the local community.

Underground energy transmission is best practice around the world and Australian scientific studies support this. It is also more reliable, safer and more efficient.

NSW needs to take the lead and support a renewable energy solution that all Australians and our natural environment deserve, while also supporting the health of regional and rural communities.

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.

Regards,