

**Submission
No 170**

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

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Date Received: 14 July 2023

HumeLink Submission

As a resident of the Snowy Valleys town of Batlow, a member of the rural community and the community in general I strongly object to the HumeLink overhead high voltage powerline project and its implications for the community.

Transgrid's HumeLink overhead powerlines are going to cause the following local and national impacts:

- a. The complete destruction of the visual amenity of our beautiful valley;
- b. The generational destruction of the lives and livelihoods of farming families due to:
 - i. The dramatic devaluation of their property's monetary value of up to 33%;
 - ii. A profound impact on their ability to run their rural enterprise due to the limitations on their ability to use aerial agricultural practices;
 - iii. The disruption during the construction phase and the biosecurity risks that will occur;
 - iv. The potential to have a disruptive 210 metre easement through their property;
 - v. The destruction of large areas of remnant native vegetation that may be providing habitat for endangered species of fauna and flora;
and
 - vi. The huge toll it is taking on the farming families, who, like our Indigenous People have a strong connection to the land. This is leading to mental health issues for many of our people who have spent hundreds, if not thousands, of hours fighting this project;
- c. With the catastrophic bushfires of January 2020 impacting the forestry industry in our area, our communities are struggling financially, and any potential for a Batlow – Tumut Rail Trail to lift our economic potential will be destroyed by high voltage overhead powerlines. No one wants to spend their money visiting an industrial landscape;
- d. High voltage overhead powerlines are not only known to be the cause of fatal accidents with helicopters and fixed wing aircraft, but also the death of birds of prey, such as the iconic wedged tail eagle;
- e. The reduced ability to fight bushfires when there are high voltage overhead powerlines is well known, together with failed overhead powerlines often being the cause of starting bushfires in remote areas.
- f. With the possibility of Snowy 2.0 never being completed is it a possibility that HumeLink will be a stranded asset?
- g. With a forecast life of 60 to 80 years of these overhead high voltage powerlines, surely undergrounding adds up when you amortise it over this period. And of course, there will not be the cost of deconstruction at the end of its life;
- h. If undergrounding is adapted, it has been suggested it could follow the road corridors which will require no compensation to landowners; and
- i. With overhead high voltage powerlines there remains the risk of catastrophic weather events or possible terrorist activity collapsing high voltage powerline towers, such as similar to the event which occurred in South Australia in 2021.

Lives and livelihoods should not be destroyed in the rush to renewables. Power generation should be as close to where the power is used to limit transmission loss. Offshore wind towers may well be the answer together with roof top solar which should be on every roof in highly populated areas.

The renewable energy transformation is essential, but is destroying the environment to save the environment the way forward? Or is undergrounding a better way forward?

This project will impact generations. We should be aiming to leave the country in a better condition, not turning it into an industrial wasteland.