

Submission  
No 220

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 14 July 2023

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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

Date: 14 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.

I'm certain this won't be the first submission you read today talking about the bushfire risks and the unnecessary destruction of prime, productive agricultural land by the planned overhead powerlines and I'm certain that it won't be the last. The proposed powerlines and associated towers are currently set to run straight through my family's farm; a farm that we have poured out literal blood, sweat and tears into and a farm that also borders the Mudjarn Nature Reserve – a sacred and spiritual site for the local Wiradjuri people and an important habitat for a large number of plants and animals including the endangered white box and 6 threatened bird species.

There are many documented reports and findings stating the risks of bushfires as a result of overhead powerlines. As both a family and as a local community, we've had more than our fair share of bushfires with the 2019-20 Dunns Road fires still sitting front and centre in our minds. These fires have left scares across the physical landscape of our local area and even bigger emotional scares across the wider community, particularly those front line heroes who, day after day, put their own lives at risk for the overall protection of others. The losses associated with the Dunns road fire are immeasurable in a dollar figure – Yes you can put a price on the loss of livestock and infrastructure but you can't put a price on people's memories, people's health (physical and mental), threatened ecological communities that were decimated, and loss of ecosystems. If there is anything that can be done to lessen the risk of a bushfire, it should be done. There have been 0 documented cases of underground powerlines causing bushfires.

The proposed overhead powerlines will run only a matter of metres from Mudjarn Nature Reserve. A fire within this sacred and spiritual area would have the potential to destroy the remnant and protected pockets of the endangered White Box Gum community as well as the habitats of 9 species of mammals, 4 species of frogs, 7 species of reptiles and 153 species of birds including 6 threatened

bird species. Meanwhile, underground powerlines have no impact on the delicate ecosystem functioning of the reserve.

Underground is the way forward. It's efficiency is greater, its ongoing maintenance and therefore costs are lower, its environmental impacts are lower. Aesthetically, I'd much rather look at underground powerlines running through my beautiful home valley rather than gigantic metal structures. Have you ever driven through Killimicat Valley? It is possibly the most stunning valley in our whole local area!

I'm going to wrap my submission up here... Not because I am out of things to write (I could go on for a whole lot longer), but because I'm optimistic that the Standing Committee can see that underground really is the best way forward. I've only touched on a few of the basic points but I'm confident some of my fellow community members have gone into greater details and you will take the time to read through these submissions and can understand that underground is best. My grandma would always say "If you're going to do a job, do it right the first time and it's a job well done". Putting the powerlines underground is right. It only takes a quick look towards the progressive European nations (and even Western Australia!) to see that underground is the best move forward for all.

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,