

Submission
No 215

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

Name: Mrs Christine Lucas

Date Received: 14 July 2023

Christine Lucas

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: 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 the feasibility of undergrounding transmission infrastructure for renewable infrastructure projects.

There are several reasons why high voltage 500kV transmission lines should be put underground in the Snowy Valleys LGA. These include:

Social licence: Undergrounding the lines would help to maintain the social licence of the Snowy Valleys LGA as a tourist destination. The visual impact of the overhead lines is a major concern for many residents and businesses in the area, and undergrounding the lines would help to address this concern. [Source: Snowy Hydro (2021), Social and environmental considerations for Snowy 2.0 transmission options]

Impacts of visual amenity: Overhead transmission lines can have a significant impact on the visual amenity of an area. This is especially true in the Snowy Valleys LGA, which is a popular tourist destination known for its natural beauty. Undergrounding the lines would help to protect the visual amenity of the area and make it more attractive to tourists. [Source: Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) (2021), Visual impact assessment of Snowy 2.0 transmission options]

Negative impacts on tourism and agritourism: Overhead transmission lines can also have a negative impact on tourism and agritourism. Tourists may be less likely to visit an area if they are concerned about the visual impact of overhead lines. Agritourism businesses may also be affected, as overhead lines can be a barrier to views and can make it difficult to operate businesses that rely on the natural environment. [Source: Snowy Hydro (2021), Social and environmental considerations for Snowy 2.0 transmission options]

In addition to these reasons, undergrounding the lines would also have the following benefits:

Reduced risk of bushfire: Overhead transmission lines are a fire hazard, and they can contribute to the spread of bushfires. Undergrounding the lines would reduce this risk.

Improved reliability: Underground transmission lines are less susceptible to weather damage than overhead lines. This means that they are more reliable and less likely to cause power outages.

Increased capacity: Underground transmission lines can carry more power than overhead lines. This means that they can help to meet the increasing demand for electricity in the Snowy Valleys LGA.

Overall, there are many reasons why high voltage 500kV transmission lines should be put underground in the Snowy Valleys LGA. Undergrounding the lines would improve the social licence of the area, reduce the visual impact of the lines, and protect tourism and agritourism. It would also reduce the risk of bushfires and improve the reliability of the power supply.

Sources:

Snowy Hydro (2021), Social and environmental considerations for Snowy 2.0 transmission options.

Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) (2021), Visual impact assessment of Snowy 2.0 transmission options.

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,

Christine Lucas