

Submission
No 196

**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

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.

1: We are landowners affected by the Humelink project. The proposed line will run through our property from east to west for 2.4km, with at least 6 towers to be constructed. It will run through all our prime cropping land which will have a major impact.

As well as crops grown, we run a self-replacing stud sheep operation and self-replacing beef cattle breeding. We already have a 330kv power-line, which was on the property at purchase. Our farming practices have changed dramatically since we purchased the farm, so adapting to two lines would be very impractical.

The impact the powerlines will have on our farming and grazing operation include:

a) Danger operating machinery. Our boom sprayer used is 24m wide, so navigating between two lines of towers is difficult, creating over-lapping, resulting in doubling of chemical applied.

b) A similar problem will occur when sowing crops or pastures and spreading fertilisers.

c) Due to height restrictions of 4.3m, we have to move away from powerlines when unloading grain at harvest time. Normally unloading is done without stopping harvesting.

d) With a second line in place, aerial crop spraying will become an unsuitable option.

2. Our irrigation area will be reduced 50% as you cannot have spray irrigators operating beneath powerlines.

3. In the event of a bushfire it is unsafe to spray beneath powerlines. With an existing easement of 60m plus the proposed easement of 70m, there would be a strip 130m wide, through which a bushfire could tear unabated, from west to east through our property, with catastrophic effect.

4. In 2007, to increase bio-diversity and provide shade and shelter for livestock, several tree-lines were established. These well-established tree corridors will be desecrated, throughout the proposed 70m wide easement. This will increase the likelihood of massive losses to small birds during migration, due to predatory attack from larger birds. Since the easement width for undergrounding would be much less, this would help to alleviate this problem, as small birds could more quickly reach safety. We stand to lose the benefits of 140 native trees within the 70m easement.

5. There is a significant Indigenous Cultural Site within the proposed easement. In spite of our best efforts to point out that it's inadvisable to locate the line through there, all our concerns appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

6. Mental Health.

a) It has been a strain on both body and mind to be constantly dealing with this situation.

b) We have been liaising with representatives from Transgrid for the past 3 years, to gain better outcomes. Whilst our discussions with local project officers have been pleasant and meaningful, there appears to be little or no consideration from those higher up.

c) When technical staff arrived for a meeting, they did not inspect the proposed site. When it was arranged for the CEO to call in and hear our grievances, he was not able to offer any support or advice, nor did he inspect the site.

d) The arrogance and contempt shown to our family has been appalling.

7. Visual Impact.

The current line runs east/west 350m south of the residence, with several towers visible from the dwelling and from the main entrance. With the addition of a second line, our farm will take on the appearance of an industrial site. The proposed compensation, will go nowhere near covering the loss of value at the point of sale.

8. Photo of our property along a section of the proposed new easement is attached.

Note:

a) canola crop in flower (yellow)

b) oat crop in early stage, around a powerline tower

c) established tree-line in foreground

d) sheep and cattle grazing on the far hill.

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,

