

**Submission
No 126**

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

Name: Mr Jesse Rand

Date Received: 13 July 2023

Submission to Inquiry into the Feasibility of Undergrounding the Transmission Infrastructure for Renewable Energy Projects.

I am writing to express my support of undergrounding the HumeLink project and my genuine concerns if the current proposal of an Overhead line goes ahead. I believe the overhead line poses serious dangers for the many communities within its vicinity not to mention certain detriments to the surrounding environment. My concerns are not hypothetical most clearly shown by the multitude of local citizens who have already suffered high levels of stress, anxiety, and a feeling of helplessness. While Transgrid has attempted to downplay these concerns, I believe they are well-founded.

Firstly, there is a serious risk to life by having overhead lines near households and/or across access roads to these remote and highly forested properties. It is a well-documented occurrence in bushfires that, given the thick smoke surrounding high-voltage powerlines, the electricity arcs to the ground creating a deadly situation. This threat is so real that firefighters have placed protocols prohibiting personnel from traveling below powerlines during bushfires. This is a direct threat to those attempting to escape a bushfire and prevents emergency services from accessing properties to defend lives and property. Living on a property that can only be accessed by traveling underneath an existing 330kV powerline, the 550kV HumeLink overhead line will make this situation even more dangerous.

Secondly, the environmental impact of a 550kV overhead power line cannot be ignored. The total easement width of these powerlines, adjacent to the pre-existing 330kV powerline would be around 120m through fragile untouched bushland. Furthermore, this would set a precedent to clear even more land of decades-old trees with the imminent installation of more high-voltage powerlines to accommodate Snowy 3.0 and 4.0. With hundreds of kilometres of powerlines to be installed I am sure the committee can understand the magnitude of the environmental impact this will cause.

Finally, these powerlines will significantly impact local economies through the degradation of land value and, due to their appearance, will certainly reduce much-needed tourism to the area. There are also over one thousand properties on the western side of Tumut which will have a clear view of the powerlines requiring astronomical compensation by Transgrid. Furthermore, the productivity of farms and forestry will suffer greatly from nearby powerlines due to access issues and the requirement for cleared land. This area is already struggling financially in the wake of the devastating Dunns Road fire of January 2020 and this will cause further strain and hardship.

The undergrounding of the powerline overcomes all of the undeniable issues I have stated above including many more. I implore the committee to be forward thinking and despite a slightly higher cost of initial installation, it will be much cheaper in coming decades with the respect of the environment and local communities having been upheld.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jesse Rand,