

Submission  
No 227

**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: 13 July 2023

Dear Committee,

Re: Feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important inquiry. We hope that this enquiry's outcomes will help ensure better outcomes for regional communities in NSW.

For many reasons, we strongly **support undergrounding transmission infrastructure** for renewable energy projects, as it is a far less damaging option than the currently proposed Humelink towers. The proposed 360-kilometer, high-voltage transmission line, with towers as tall as the Sydney Harbour Bridge will severely impact the health of our local communities, the environment and the economy in numerous ways. These inevitable detrimental effects include but are not limited to:

- Local communities are already experiencing anxiety over the Humelink proposal and their powerlessness at the hands of foreign-owned company, Transgrid.
- Some residents have experienced thoughts of suicide over threats to destroy their homes, land and treasured landscapes.
- The risk of deadly fires will be increased using this outdated tower technology. Humelink cuts through large areas still recovering from the 'Black Sunday' bushfires of 2019-2020.
- The ability to fight fires in the proposed areas will be made more difficult and dangerous.
- The cost of bushfires in Australia can run into billions of dollars and will be well in excess of the cost associated with undergrounding.
- Humelink will devastate habitats and wildlife corridors for more than 80 threatened or endangered species of flora and fauna.
- Humelink towers will worsen greenhouse gas emissions through large-scale land clearing and increased risk of bushfires.

Underground energy transmission is the best practice worldwide, and Australian scientific studies support this. Underground energy transmission is more reliable, safe and efficient and will not be impacted by extreme weather or increase the risk of catastrophic bushfires. In fact, PG&E's modelling in California shows undergrounding lines reduces their risk of igniting wildfires by approximately 99%.

We do not accept what Transgrid is telling the community; that nothing can be done, and the towers will be built. This is not acceptable. The NSW Government must take a leadership position and ensure this foreign-owned company doesn't railroad decision-making and build a multibillion-dollar firetrap through the middle of our communities.

While there is no doubt that we need renewable energy, the proposed transmission is not the answer. The cost of undergrounding is more than offset by enduring environmental benefits.

I urge the Standing Committee to recommend that undergrounding is the best way forward for renewable energy transmission in NSW.

Yours sincerely,