

**Submission
No 128**

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

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12th July 2023

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

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 on this important inquiry into the feasibility of undergrounding transmission infrastructure for renewable infrastructure projects.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves to you and the committee in our personal situation. We currently have two 330kva transmission power lines on our property, these being the Yass 03 line and the Wagga Wagga 051 line running from T3 Power Station at Talbingo. With the looming of an extra larger transmission line being HumeLink 500kva double circuit with 6 more towers to add to the 6 towers that we already have on our property of 156ha, bring the total to 12 towers, we feel that this is over saturating/burdening of land. Undergrounding will solve this problem and many more.

The major concerns we have is bush fire risk and visual impact. Since the construction of the two existing 330kva transmission power lines which accrued in the 1970's, these lines have been responsible for the ignition of three fires within close proximity of our property.

The 4th January 2020 on the 3rd run of the Dunns Road Fire, our property was 99.9% burnt out. Fire fighting efforts were greatly hampered that day by these existing 330kva transmission power lines. A new 500kva transmission power line along with these current 330kva transmission power lines would make our property completely undefendable. Our livelihood and lives may be lost.

During the Dunns Road Fire we were informed by TransGrid that they recorded 64 outages (ARC'S) on their system. Briefly this means that 64 times these overhead power lines arced to ground in the smoke and heat. This could have been 64 potential deaths to the unexpected or to the heavy smoke covered disorientated person/persons/volunteer fire fighters. This could be one of your family members.

Undergrounding any power lines eliminates these risks, completely.

Having lived and worked with these 330kva transmission lines since the mid 70's there is not a day goes by when we don't see, hear and pass through their electromagnetic fields and if this is not a health hazard, we don't know what is!

The tourism business in our area is rebuilding after the Dunns Road Fire with help from our government. By putting overhead transmission power lines through our picturesque area, this will undo what we all have worked so hard to achieve for our community as far as tourism goes. With our government pouring the money into tourism, it seems very counterproductive to run 500kva overhead transmission lines through it.

On the subject of compensation, we consider that the NSW government's Strategic Benefits Payment Scheme \$200k over 20 years for private landowners, is insulting. To only pay for 20 years when the multinational company has a 99 year lease is very unbalanced. So in sort, Australian consumers of electricity and the multinational company e.g. TransGrid that leases the lines get a free ride at our expense for the life span which is expected to be 100 years. How is this fair and just?

We are not against renewables; however it should be done right to safeguard our children that we all brought safely into this world and their children against environmental, economic, community loss but most of all, reduce the fire risk for them by putting these transmission power line projects underground, no matter the cost.

We have a message to all our government members; we the people put you all into these positions, so listen to us – 'the people'.

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,

Paul & Andrea Sturgess