

Submission
No 245

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

Name: Ms Elizabeth Place

Date Received: 14 July 2023

Elizabeth Place (Boxall)

**The Honourable Emily Suvaal
Committee Chair**

**Inquiry Feasibility of undergrounding Transmission Infrastructure for Renewable Projects
Standing Committee on State Development**

**Parliament House
6 MacQuarie Street
Sydney, NSW 2000**

12th July 2023

Dear the Honourable Emily Suvaal BN MLC,

RE: Feasibility of undergrounding the transmission infrastructure for renewable energy projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission in relation to this critical inquiry regarding the feasibility of undergrounding transmission infrastructure for renewable infrastructure energy projects.

The proposed Transgrid Humelink North infrastructure line will directly impact my family, farming enterprise and farming region along with the many other rural farming families and communities along the proposed 28,000 km connecting transmission line.

Fire Threat, Health and Mental Wellbeing

The greatest impact is the fire threat risk to all families and communities living near these proposed overhead transmission lines. Our communities have already experienced 3 catastrophic fire events within a sixteen year timeframe. Firstly the fires of 2003, The Bilo fires of that threatened Canberra and the Dunns Road/ Black Summer fire more recently of 2019/2020. These events were catastrophic and devastating to our rural farming families, townships and commercial enterprises (mainly the forest and related industries still in decline from these events.) These fire events render farming properties with these transmission lines a “ No Go “ zone for RFS personnel, or any aerial fire combat support. Properties are undefendable. Applied water becomes an electrical risk and thick smoke can arc the energy to spark new fires along the line. Farmers and their families are left to try and defend their properties, livelihoods alone and unaided. Why should farmers have to accept this ongoing, relentless worry and risk when there is a safe alternative for all ? Undergrounding transmission lines.

Farming families who have survived these events are scared and anxious what risks these transmission towers create, compounded by the real, associated health risks to families living beneath these transmission lines. Global warming and changing weather conditions predicts that these fire events will become more common.

Farmers also cannot operate machinery underneath these overhead transmission lines. Further impact on operational daily business of farming enterprises to further burden a farmers mental tolerance of imposed public infrastructure for public benefit.

Environmental Devastation

Overhead transmission lines and the related road works to erect these transmission lines for ever after impose a huge degradation to local, unique environments. Farming areas respect established tree stands and rely on the related ecosystems to maintain soil and farm health. Unique bird life and local endangered species, such as Gang Gang Cockatoos, Rosellas, Finches, Eastern Parrots, Kookaburras, Galahs and Cockatoos are prevalent in our environments and will be directly and permanently impacted by this proposed overhead infrastructure.

The risk to people’s health and safety and environment is paramount. A duty of care to Australian communities and our Australian environment. Undergrounding these transmission lines eradicates all of these risks. Maintaining the benefit of supply, access and a futuristic solution for a socially, environmentally responsible energy supply. Farmers would welcome the commencement of the excavation

tomorrow and not defend adamantly their families and properties from the consequences of overhead transmission infrastructure.

Please understand and make a decision based on best practice for future generations, communities and projects forthcoming.

Yours sincerely and concerned,

Liz Place

(Farming Family, mother of three, grandmother and local primary school teacher)