

**Submission  
No 268**

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

**Name:** Georgina Arthur

**Date Received:** 2 August 2023

---

Georgina Arthur

10 July 2023

The Hon Emily Suvaal, Committee Chair

**Inquiry - Feasibility of under grounding the  
Transmission infrastructure for renewables energy projects  
Standing committee on State Development**

Parliament House  
6 Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear The Hon Emily Suvaal MLC,

I am writing to you about the feasibility of under grounding the transmission lines and infrastructure for renewables energy projects inquiry. Historically under grounding transmission and distribution wires were so cost prohibitive that the idea has been dismissed before even exploring it. This is a mistake, as this is the 21st century and we are not building transmission and distribution lines like our grandfathers did. Indeed, the cost to bury electricity lines has fallen and new technologies make power lines not only easier to bury but also more robust once in the ground.

If built above ground, the power lines will contribute to the destruction of the visual beauty of our countryside. The land underneath these monstrously high towers will not be able to be utilised for agriculture. Having kilometre wide corridors of unusable land will mean less income for land owners and will also devalue their properties a great deal. The risk of fire underneath the towers with the grass that can't be eaten down during fire season will be much greater. Saying that, if there is a bushfire, Fire Fighters would not be allowed to fight fires near these towers as its too dangerous. The best way to stop this would be to put the lines underground.

In November 2018, California's deadliest Bushfire was started by faulty transmission lines. This fire killed 85 people, destroyed nearly 19,000 homes

and businesses and nearly razed the town of Paradise. We don't need that here in Australia ever again. It can be avoided by putting the lines underground.

The impact that above ground powerlines have on animals, birds, insects, people and even plant life is also worth bringing to your attention, as it is very worrying. The Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) has an effect on all of these. In a paper published last November by B.Blake, Henry Lai and Albert Manville there is decades of research of longterm harmful effects felt in most living creatures including primary animal and bird species, amphibians, insects and plants. Incredibly alarming is the effect it has on bees who become stressed, which can lead to the destruction of their hives. This is very frightening as it affects the pollination of all things including the food we eat. There are no existing laws or rules on long term low level chronic EMF exposure in humans and animals and these need to be set and monitored. The best way to reduce exposure to the EMF from wildlife to people is to put the lines underground.

Underground powerlines are better protected against weather, fire and other conditions that can impact overhead lines. They also don't render the land useless or add to the industrialisation of our beautiful landscape. The cost might be more, but there would be little production lost, plus no devaluing land compensation for farmers.

In all, if the powerlines went under ground, the land would hold its value, farmers could farm, fire fighters could safely fight fires, animals, birds, plants, insects and people wouldn't be affected by EMFs, habitat for native animals wouldn't be lost and there would not be the destruction of the visual beauty of our incredible and unique landscape.

Please listen to our voice. It should not always be about the cost. The people living in rural Australia will be affected by your decisions forever, and although we are fewer than the masses in the city, we still count because we produce the best food in the world, and we are all Australians fighting to look after the health and welfare of our land.

Your decisions will affect future generations, and sometimes you have to do what is right regardless of the price tag.

Sincerely yours,

Georgina Arthur