

Submission
No 46

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 10 November 2023

Partially
Confidential

The Director,
Select Committee on the Feasibility of Undergrounding
Infrastructure for Renewable Energy Projects,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY NSW 2000

10th November 2023

Dear Director,

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

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this critical inquiry. We write this submission to reiterate our support for undergrounding transmission infrastructure.

We have been members of the Batlow community for over 40 years and own a grazing property and orchard on the eastern side of Batlow. There have been many changes and incidents over the years, but the most harrowing was the 2020 January bushfires, where approximately 90% of our property was burnt in an extremely hot bushfire. We are still recovering.

After reviewing Transgrid's Humelink EIS, we ask that the below points are considered in this inquiry:

Bushfires have a huge impact on the people, animals and land affected. Anything, no matter the cost, to assist in limiting these is worthwhile. But not only is it the increased risk of bushfires, but the danger they present to aerial firefighting, which of extreme importance in our area due to the topography. In the past two years there have been a number of incidents around the world where aerial firefighters have been killed by flying into power lines. Yet the government wish to build more?

Transgrid's overhead power lines require clearing of hundreds of metres of trees and bush on either side of the powerlines for hundreds of kilometres. This land is home to numerous native species, especially in the Kosciuszko National Park. Is this really being clean and green when we are supposed to plant more trees and not destroy thousands of hectares, and keep the area clear around the overhead powerlines into the future. At what cost to the nation and to nature?

Undergrounding of the powerlines would mean far less damage to the park (and other areas), require fewer trees and less native bushland to be disturbed and kept clear, and thus less native animals affected. Australia is prepared to spend millions of dollars on removing feral animals from these areas, yet not consider the overhead powerlines as causing significant damage also.

And finally, we live in an amazing country and do not want to destroy it by building overhead powerlines, leading to great tracts of newly cleared land, and spoiling the area's tourism, on which many small rural towns rely. Most power is used by the cities, so build infrastructure there. For example, every house and factory should have solar on their rooves, wind towers offshore (seen in Wales with no visual impact at all as just on the horizon) and other electricity saving devices (eg better building design, increased public transport).

To minimise the above impacts, I urge the Standing Committee to recommend undergrounding the Humelink project. Undergrounding may be initially more expensive, but the ongoing costs must be far less expensive. There would be less impact on the land, birds and other native animals, be unlikely to cause bushfires and not hinder firefighting efforts. Maintenance would be minimal and damage from storms not an issue. However, perhaps it would be prudent to wait until Snowy Hydro 2.0 is built and proven effective, before outlaying huge amounts of money on transmission lines that may never transmit.

Yours sincerely,