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To: ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au

cc:

Subject: Undergrounding Electricity in NSW

I would like to advise an initiative in regard to the above inquiry.

Undergrounding has been trialled before in this organisation and I am sure you are aware of the findings of an undergrounding scheme implemented at Epping by SCC in the early 1970s. One of the biggest costs and most hassle in a full undergrounding scheme is the costs and implications involved with undergrounding the customer's service. The mains can be justified in terms of increased reliability and reduced maintenance costs but the service is the customer's responsibility and often they are unwilling to contribute any funds. To force a change by legislation compelling people to suddenly pay for undergrounding would be very unpopular. My initiative is centred around this problem.

Legislation could be introduced to the conditions for approval for any Development Application. Local Councils could be forced to include as part of the approval process that developers make provision for the future undergrounding of electricity mains from the front boundary to the main switchboard. This would be in the form of a sealed conduit that service mains could be pulled through at a later date. After an appropriate time period, say 10 -20 years, considering the extent of development that occurs, I would think that more than half of properties would have provision for future undergrounding. Some localities would progress faster than others and this is to the overall benefit of the scheduling of the work.

In the meantime, mains could be progressively undergrounded with the existing poles remaining to service the properties overhead. At an appropriate time, depending on development in particular suburbs, the decision would be taken to underground the street or group of streets. The overhead service and pole would be removed and the underground service connected to the service conduits provided during the intervening period. The remainder who did not have any development carried out could then be compelled to follow suit then or given a time period to change over.

This initiative would allow a start to be made on the problem and progressively work towards a solution over time.

Regards,
John Egger