



Ref bps.2101

12 March 2021

## **Kosciuszko National Park Draft Amendment to the Plan of Management – Snowy 2.0**

### **SUBMISSION FROM GREG PIPER MP - MLA LAKE MACQUARIE**

Dear Manager, Planning Evaluation and Assessment,

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission in relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service's plan to amend the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management.

While I raise no objection to the proposed amendments relating to Section 12.5 of the plan, I raise a strong objection against an amendment to Section 12.6 – the proposed amendment to Electricity Transmission Authorities and Telecommunications carriers, Policies and Actions No.6 – as it relates to removing the requirement of transmission lines to be located underground.

While the project is not located in my electorate, I have received a significant number of submissions from my local constituents who have expressed concern that these transmission lines will be built above ground, thus having a substantial visual and environmental impact on what is widely regarded as one of the State's best and most important national parks.

I absolutely share that concern.

Kosciuszko National Park is a place of significant environmental, scenic and cultural value. It supports threatened and vulnerable species, rare ecosystems, majestic landscapes and Aboriginal heritage. It is a world-class national park.

I was alarmed to learn that TransGrid proposes to connect Snowy 2.0 with overhead transmission lines through this pristine national park wilderness and that National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) was now moving to allow that to proceed.

I understand the transmission lines will be suspended on sets of massive steel lattice towers up to 75 metres high and require easements up to 200 metres wide, meaning one square kilometre of national park would be cleared.

Such an impact on rare national park is unheard of anywhere in any modern progressive democracy and in the absence of every effort being taken to avoid the use of overhead transmission, to proceed could only be described as wilful vandalism.

Technology exists to bury the infrastructure underground and significantly reduce the project's environmental impacts. I understand there are a number of ways to do this, including connecting a tunnel to existing substation infrastructure at Lower Tumut. This option also opens up opportunities to shorten and rationalise the proposed HumeLink project, significantly reducing its impacts on local communities and landholders over hundreds of kilometres, as well as Bago State Forest.

Not only would there be substantial community and environmental benefits, but New South Wales electricity consumers would face lower costs.

Any additional costs incurred from undergrounding transmission infrastructure must be assessed in the context of massive long term savings from lower maintenance and higher reliability, without risks from bushfires or lightning.

The recent 'black summer' bushfires took out the connection between New South Wales and Victoria and burnt electrical equipment in the Snowies, causing tens of millions in damages and losses from constrained generation. Overhead lines also threaten to complicate fire-fighting efforts by interfering with road and air operations.

I believe it would be short-sighted to build such industrially intense infrastructure through this scenically beautiful and biodiverse-rich national reserve, leaving a greatly diminished legacy for future generations.

I therefore urge you to reject this section of the planned amendment and direct TransGrid to underground the transmission infrastructure for the Snowy 2.0 project.

I thank you again for the opportunity to make this submission. I would be happy to discuss the matter with you or your representatives further at any stage in the future.

Yours sincerely,



Greg Piper  
**MP for Lake Macquarie**