

29 April 2002

Fiona Towers
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW
PO Box Q290
QVB Post Office. NSW 1230
Fax. No.: 02 9290 2061

Our Ref:
3/36/100/001
ABN 81 065 027 868

Dear Ms. Towers

SUBJECT: ELECTRICITY UNDERGROUNDING IN NSW

Lake Macquarie City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the above report. It appreciates the difficult job faced by the Tribunal in reporting to State Government in a particularly constrained timeframe.

It must be stated that the timeframe provided by the State to comment on a matter that could impact on Local Government and its ratepayers is inadequate. The scale of this program warrants appropriate consideration by Council and adequate consultation with the Community if Local Government were to assist with cost recovery through the rates or levy system.

Council agrees that public benefits such as improved amenity, reduced opportunity for motor vehicle accidents, reduced electromagnetic radiation and improved public safety; operational benefits such as improved energy supply and reduced maintenance costs; and environmental benefits such as improved wildlife safety and streetscape design are worthwhile aspects of placing electricity supply underground.

The main points that Lake Macquarie City Council wishes to make are:

- Facilitated cost recovery by Local Government could in no way occur without Ministerial approval to introduce a specific levy for the undergrounding program.
- Lake Macquarie City Council would strongly oppose any proposal to recover costs of the undergrounding program through the ordinary rates system, at the expense of presently constrained Council services.
- Costs to administer the program by Local Government should be met with appropriate State funding.
- It should also be noted that the undergrounding of electricity supply is best performed by the Distribution Network Service Providers and not Local Government.

Should you require further information, please contact me on 4921 0458.

Yours faithfully

MICHAEL BAER
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT

A compost bin is a great way to reduce waste and makes an ideal natural fertiliser for lawns and gardens.