

# submission form

## Your Submission

You may use this form for your submission if you wish. Whether you use this form or not, please follow the guidelines for preparing submissions on the previous page.

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Signature  

Please tick which applies:

I do NOT wish to make a personal submission at the hearing, and ask that this written submission be considered.

I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission at the hearings to be held between Tuesday 7 June and Friday 10 June 2005.

Please refer to attached.

## Submission to Council

### Re: Council's Policy of Requiring Ratepayers to Pay 50% of the Cost of Undergrounding Power and Electricity Lines When Streets are Rebuilt.

We live in Hamilton Avenue, which is currently being considered for redevelopment of the road. At present the power poles and overhead wiring are unsightly. It would make sense for power lines to be undergrounded during the redevelopment process for aesthetic and practical reasons. Undergrounding the wiring would do away with the power poles and therefore make the street look more attractive, but also from a practical point of view would be more cost-effective for the utility companies to maintain if the wiring was not subject to weather and environmental conditions.

We understand that in order for Council to agree to undergrounding the services, Council require the street residents to pay 50% of the cost of undergrounding. Not only that, but full payment must be in advance of the work being undertaken.

Our concerns and objections are as follows:

1. The cost for supplying electricity to households is paid for via electricity and telephone bills. These utility companies have business plans in place to ensure their profitability and these business plans include the cost of repairing, maintaining and replacing cabling and wiring.
2. Present wiring in our street is between 50 and 70 years old, so it is timely for the utility companies to consider replacement in conjunction with the street redevelopment. It makes sense for Council to liaise with the utility companies to schedule the works so that all services can be replaced at once. It does not make sense for the Council to redevelop the road, kerb and channel, only to have the utility companies rip it up a few years' later to replace their aging wiring and cables.
3. Council has an obligation to provide ratepayers with core services, including the provision of safe roadside environments. Underground cabling is safer than overhead wiring, particularly during adverse weather which may result in overhead wiring coming down onto the road and into residential properties.
4. The cost of undergrounding services is prohibitive for individual residents, particularly under the payment terms imposed by Council i.e. full payment in advance of the works done.
5. What does Council do with it's income from Orion if it doesn't use it for redevelopment? Other councils use their income from electricity companies to pay for undergrounding and don't expect their ratepayers to pay. In effect Council is double dipping by getting revenue from ratepayers via electricity bills and then recharging ratepayers for basic redevelopment work of services. These days the undergrounding of services must be considered "basic" on the basis that new subdivisions are no longer developed with overhead wiring.
6. The terms of payment up front are very prohibitive. If Council insists on the 50% payment, then why not implement an interest-free repayment scheme over 20 years that is added to the property rates in the street?

7. Council very rightly claims credit for creating our beautiful city and keeping it "clean and green". Established streets like Hamilton Avenue provide the essence of this image. As residents, we do our bit by paying our rates. It is up to Council to use the funds wisely, not replace streets and leave ugly, aging power poles in view.
  
8. Council is saying that when Hamilton Avenue is redeveloped it will be necessary to remove the existing plane trees. If this happens then not only will we have lost our beautiful, mature trees, but the ugly power poles will be revealed. This will have the affect of making the street less attractive than it is now, which can hardly be a result Council would want. Certainly we don't.

Surely given that the wiring in Hamilton Avenue is so old, it is time for the utility companies to replace it. It makes sense for this replacement to be done when Council redevelops the street. It also makes sense for Council to pay for this redevelopment, including undergrounding, as other Councils around the country do.

Larry Lumsden and Linda Jenkins  
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10 May 2005