



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: POTTIGER WIND FARM (SSD-59235464)

PUBLIC MEETING – DAY 2

PANEL: RICHARD PEARSON (CHAIR)
 MICHAEL WRIGHT
 SARAH DINNING

SPEAKERS: TIM MEAD
 (Someva)
 JOHN CLARKE
 (Save Our Surroundings Hay)
 SANDY SYMONS
 ANDREW SLEIGH
 ANNETTE WHEATON
 (Riverina Farming First)
 NOEL HICKS
 (Save Our Surroundings Murrumbidgee)
 JUDY JARRATTS
 ANNETTE SMITH
 DAVID LANDINI
 (The Riverina State Group)
 WADE NORTHAUSEN
 (Billboard Battalion)
 ROSS JOHNS
 (Wimmera Mallee Environmental and Agricultural
 Protection Association)
 KAREN MASSON
 (Farming First – Riverina)
 JEANINE BIRD

KEVIN LOUGHREY
(Australians for Better Government)

ANN HARE

JOHN MCBRATNEY

STUART BONDS
(Pauline Hanson's One Nation)

ADI PATERSON
(Chair of Nuclear for Australia)

RAMILA CHANISHEFF
(Australian Uyghur Women's Association)

ALAN MORAN
(Australian Environment Foundation)

LYNETTE LABLACK
(Save Our Surroundings – Riverina)

GRANT PIPER
(National Rational Energy Network Inc.)

RAFE CHAMPION
(Champion and Associates & The Energy Realists of Australia)

JOHN MCGRATH
(Yass Landscape Guardians)

STAN MOORE

CAROL OATAWAY
(Hay Shire Council)

LOCATION: HAY SERVICES CLUB
371 MURRAY STREET, HAY

DATE: 10:00AM – 2:30PM
THURSDAY, 5th JUNE 2025

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

[Music until 00:18:46]

5 **MR RICHARD PEARSON:** Thank you. So, good morning everyone, welcome to Day 2 of the NSW Independent Planning Commission’s public meeting into State Significant Development Application for the Pottinger Wind Farm.

10 I’m speaking to you from Wiradjuri, Nari Nari and Yitha Yitha land, and acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which – sorry sir, you just need to speak when you have your turn, please. And pay respects to Elders past and present and Elders from other communities.

15 I’m Richard Pearson, I’m chairing today’s Panel, and joining me are my fellow commissioners, Michael Wright and Sarah Dinning. No conflicts of interest have been identified in relation to our determination of this application.

20 We have a very limited and specific role at the end of the planning process. We decide if the application should go ahead and, if so, on what conditions. With regards to projects such as this one, located in an already designated Renewable Energy Zone, the Commission must consider government policy. The government policy does support the rollout of large-scale renewable energy projects and connection to the electricity network. And as such, we do not have the jurisdiction to re-prosecute that policy.

25 We consider the Department’s Assessment Report and recommendations, the application, your written and oral submissions, and other materials that the Planning Law requires us to consider. All of these materials are available publicly or will be made available on our website.

30 In making a decision on this case, the Commission must obey all relevant laws and consider all applicable policies and the public interest. We are obliged also to consider public submissions and that is the purpose of today’s meeting. We want to hear what you think about this specific project before the Commission. It’s not a forum for submissions on whether you like or don’t like the Applicant, the laws we must obey, or the policies we must consider.

35 The application has been assessed by the Department and many of you have participated in that process and made submissions. There is no need to repeat previous submissions – we do review all submissions, and the Applicant and Department have considered your submissions and taken them into account in where we’re at today.

40 Today, we want to hear what you think about the Department’s assessment recommendation and the conditions that they’re recommending. Even if you continue to or want to object to the project, which is absolutely your right, we do encourage you to tell us whether any of your concerns can be addressed either wholly or in part by the conditions we impose if we were minded to approve the

project. Your consideration of alternatives does not compromise your submission, and it enables the Panel to consider all options.

We'll shortly hear from registered speakers. At the conclusion of today's presentations, I'll summarise the key issues the Commission has heard and will give consideration to in our decision-making process. We will use the views expressed today and in submissions to the Commission to assist us in coming to a final decision on the project and, if approved, how it should be conditioned.

While we will endeavour to stick to the published schedule, it's dependent on registered speakers being present at the allocated time. I'm going to introduce each speaker in turn to present to the Panel. Everyone knows how long they have to speak. A bell will sound when you have one minute remaining, a second bell when your time has expired.

To ensure everyone gets a fair crack of the whip, I'll enforce timekeeping rules. We can grant extensions on a case-by-case basis, however, in the interest of fairness to other speakers, an extension may not be able to be granted.

If you have copies of your speaking notes and wanted to provide them to the Commission, you're welcome to do that too as Stuart mentioned to staff at the side of the room. Please note any information given to the Commission may be made public, and the Commission's privacy statement governs our approach to managing your information that's available on our website.

In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure full capture of the information, today's meeting is being recorded, and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on our website.

So firstly, we're going to hear from the Applicant, and they will address where the application is up to in terms of what they are seeking approval for, because there have been changes from the EIS exhibited document to where we are now. So, they'll run through that, after which we're going to call individual speakers approximately in the order that you have seen on the Planning Commission's website.

So, I'll ask Tim Mead from the Applicant to come forward in person. And as Stuart mentioned, we may also have questions for speakers, so please just remain at the lectern once you've had your say, to allow the Commission to respond.

Okay, over to Tim Mead from Someva Renewables.

MR TIM MEAD: Thank you, Chair. Thank you. Good morning, everyone. My name is Tim Mead, I'm the Development Director for Someva Renewables. I want to start by thanking the IPC commissioners for the chance to present to you today on the project, and welcome the community members who are here today both in the room and on online.

Next slide please. I'd also like to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of all the lands and waters upon which we meet today. And I would like to acknowledge and respect the traditions of the Wamba Wamba, Perrepa Perrepa, Nari Nari and Wiradjuri peoples, and respect their continued special relationship with the land and waters of the areas where the Pottinger Energy Park is proposed to be located. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

I just wanted to make a comment on this artwork here. This artwork is called *Emus* and our project has licensed this artwork from a nearby Deniliquin artist called Marbie.

Next slide please. Someva is an Australian family-owned renewable energy developer based in New South Wales. And we partnered with AGL Energy, one of Australia's oldest companies, to develop the Pottinger Energy Park. The Riverina is a truly unique region and it's been a privilege for our teams to spend so much time working with the community here over the last four years.

Next slide please. That respect for this region is one of the reasons we've sought to pay homage to the proud agricultural history of the Riverina by naming the proposed wind farm in honour of Manny Pottinger. For those of you who don't know, the Pottinger family was one of the first families to install and maintain windmills in the region. This adoption of wind power in the early 1900s helped to develop a thriving local agricultural industry, and the Pottinger Energy Park seeks to build on that legacy, to help create a prosperous future for this region.

Next slide. As a high-level summary, the New South Wales Department of Planning has recommended that Pottinger be approved to generate up to 1,300 megawatts of clean energy from 247 wind turbines, supported by 500 megawatt/2,000 megawatt-hour battery, all connected to the new Project EnergyConnect Transmission Network.

Pending final approval, the initial phase of construction would be expected to begin in late 2026, and would see approximately 831 megawatts built in line with the New South Wales Government's recent decision to award Pottinger an access right to the South West REZ earlier this year.

Pottinger was one of just four projects in this region to receive an access right to the South West REZ in what was an extremely competitive tender process led by the New South Wales Government. Pottinger not only has the ability to deliver substantial benefits to the Riverina region but it is also a critically important project for New South Wales energy transition.

The project aligns with the legislated New South Wales Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and could replace some of the energy generated today by New South Wales aging and retiring coal-fired power stations.

Next slide please. If approved, the project would be hosted by two local landholders, the Moronas' and the Hooke's, located near Boorooban

approximately 60 kilometres south of Hay, and 75 kilometres north of Deniliquin. Both the Morona and Hooke families operate multi-generational family farming businesses, and it's been a privilege to work and get to know these families who both have a deep care for their land, for their families and for their community.

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The project also offers a neighbour benefits program providing locals living within 10 kilometres of the project the opportunity to benefit for decades to come.

10 We've heard how important Pottinger could be to these families in helping to create a drought-proof revenue stream for their farms, and we're excited about our partnerships with these families. We're also excited about what the future could hold for this community by working together to bring the Pottinger Energy Park to life. For example, if Pottinger is approved, independent economic analysis undertaken during the Environmental Impact Statement process suggests it will
15 deliver hundreds of millions of dollars in direct and indirect economic benefits for the Riverina over the next 35 years.

20 This includes over 900 jobs during construction, nearly 50 full-time local jobs during operations, and a community benefits program of up to \$34 million in funding to the Hay Shire and Edward River Shire councils for critical community projects and services. And an additional dedicated First Nations fund of up to \$6 million that would be co-administered by Pottinger and First Nations groups.

25 We are also looking forward to distributing a further \$500,000 in the coming months to local First Nations and community groups as part of Pottinger's REZ Success Fund. Recipients include RFS Mid Murray, RFS MIA District, Booroorban Social Club, Giz a Break, Hay Inc, Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council, and Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre.

30 We're also deeply committed to partnering with local businesses via a local employment and procurement strategy that will set local content targets for construction and operation. For example, we already know that (if approved) the types of jobs and skills that will be required for this project would include fencing, road grading, earthworks, concreting, catering, electricians, fitters, civil
35 engineering, mechanical technicians, accommodation and transport providers, just to name a few.

40 Already we have received more than 600 expressions of interest from local businesses keen to partner with us on 22 work packages. And we have a strong desire to ensure Pottinger creates as many new jobs here in the Riverina as possible over the next 35 years.

45 Next slide please. We're proud of the deep and broad community support Pottinger Energy Park has received since we first started meeting face-to-face with landholders, local councils and the broader community in 2021. That local support is clear when you understand that there were no objections from anyone living within 20 kilometres of this proposed project during the Environmental Impact Statement process. While Pottinger also has strong backing from both Edward

River and Hay Shire councils, and we appreciate their collaboration to date.

By embedding ourselves within the community and developing true partnerships, we've been able to listen to and understand community perspectives and make sure they are considered and incorporated into the planning of this project. This process has included over 2,000 unique interactions with locals over the last two years, including community information hubs in Deniliquin and Hay, face-to-face meetings with over 60 local organisations, and deep ongoing engagement with both local councils.

While just last week we were out in region, and we met with over 100 businesses in support of EnergyCo's community and business roadshows in Hay and Deniliquin. This community engagement and listening has been critical in helping us to shape a truly local project.

Next slide please. In terms of responding to the community and government agency and the results of our independent environmental and technical studies, there have been four separate junctures where we've made many changes to the proposed wind turbine layout and associated infrastructure. Each time reducing and mitigating potential concerns and impacts.

These have included:

- Prior to lodging the scoping report with the New South Wales Department of Planning, where we considered high-value agricultural areas to avoid, and project siting.
- Ahead of delivering and preparing the Environmental Impact Statement, where we produced close to 20 environmental, social and technical studies to inform the project.
- During the response to submission stage, where we responded to community and agency comments on the EIS.
- And at the final RFI stage where we responded to many additional requests for information from the Department of Planning and other government agencies.

One of the key changes we made following exhibition of the EIS was to remove six turbines from the project layout. This was in response to the community and government agency feedback around reducing potential impacts to biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

Next slide please. Throughout this process, we've heard loud and clear the importance to the community of protecting the local environment, including habitat for the iconic plains-wanderer. This allowed us to work closely with technical experts and local landholders to redesign many parts of the turbine layout, to ensure we identify, avoid and minimise wherever possible, habitat for the plains-wanderer. As an example, we've reduced impacts on the important mapped habitat for plains-wanderer from 5.16 hectares in the EIS, down to just

2.67 hectares in the final project layout.

Next slide please. Further to this, as part of our commitment to conserving plains-wanderer habitat, we've committed to protecting an additional 13 hectares of plains-wanderer habitat in the region. This is in addition to our footprint offsets. This commitment creates a nature positive offset benefit for the plains-wanderer species.

The project's biodiversity offset strategy will include direct investment in biodiversity stewardship sites with local landholders and project neighbours. So, these offsets benefit both the local environment and local landowners that share our commitment to protecting the plains-wanderer and other species.

Next slide please. Pottinger has also been carefully designed to operate alongside existing agricultural businesses and lifestyles. Throughout our initial investigations, we worked with host landowners to identify, avoid and protect areas of high-value agricultural land, as well as existing conservation areas. This co-design and engagement means Pottinger will avoid high-value land such as irrigated areas for cropping, heavily timbered areas, and biodiversity conservation areas.

When it comes to First Nations peoples, we have sought to engage respectfully and face-to-face from the earliest moment. Throughout this development process, we have worked closely with seven registered Aboriginal parties to understand on-site cultural heritage values. And we've made many design changes in consultation with these RAPs.

When it comes to visual amenity, right from the start, the proposed site was selected due to its location away from the Cobb Highway. The fact that turbines are being proposed to be placed over 10 kilometres from the Cobb Highway has been well received by the community. The independent visual assessment has also concluded that the visual impact for this proposed site is very low, in accordance with the New South Wales Wind Energy Guidelines.

Next slide please. Finally, we've been engaging deeply with both Hay Shire and Edward River councils for a number of years now to make sure Pottinger delivers for the community. We've been working closely with teams from each council to consider community enhancement funds, housing and accommodation strategies so we can benefit communities across the decades to come.

We've discussed mitigations for issues such as roads, waste, water supply and many others. If the project is approved, we will finalise these mitigation measures via tailored management plans and strategies in consultation with local councils and the Department of Planning, as required by the proposed conditions of consent.

We have also heard from both the community and local councils about the importance of the decommissioning process. It's important to note there is a

possibility that the operational life of the wind farm could be extended well beyond 2060 or 35-years design life, at which time we could either re-power or the turbines may last longer than their expected 35-year design life.

5 However, in the case that the wind farm is decommissioned in the early 2060s, there are a series of conditions related to decommissioning and rehabilitation of the site that the Department of Planning has proposed. And the project is supportive of these conditions of consent.

10 Next slide please. As my time wraps up, I want to thank each of you for making the time to be here today and online. Throughout the development process, we've been buoyed by the broad enthusiasm and support for Pottinger and renewables in this region in general, particularly here in Hay and down the road in Deniliquin.

15 From our collaboration with both Hay Shire and Edward River councils, to our host landowners and Pottinger's neighbours, to First Nations groups, local businesses, community groups and members of the community who we have engaged with and heard their views, we thank you for your collaboration to date. Thank you for your willingness to engage with us and for your support as we seek
20 to develop this potentially transformational project.

 Ultimately, we want the Pottinger Energy Park to support the growth and prosperity of this region for decades to come, helping to write a new chapter in the proud and iconic history of this special and unique region of Australia. Thank you.

25 **MR PEARSON:** Okay, thanks, Tim. Commissioners, any questions for the Applicant?

MS SARAH DINNING: Thank you. Thank you, Tim, thanks for the presentation. And you've mentioned the big picture benefits to the local communities, the VPA with Council etc. But that's in the longer term. Your access to the transmission line has been granted at a lower level than that which you're seeking approval for this project. Could you just talk a little bit about that, what that means for those numbers ...

35 **MR MEAD:** Sure.

MS DINNING: In terms of direct payments in the near future, please. Thank you.

40 **MR MEAD:** Yes, sure, no problem. Yes, so we can appreciate that it can be confusing, because we have had two parallel streams happening at once at the moment. We've had obviously the planning stream for this project and others in this region. But we've also had the REZ access rights process which was, as I mentioned, concluded only in April this year. So, we have been allocated as an
45 initial stage, the 831 megawatts of the 1,300 megawatts that we're seeking approval for under planning.

 So, from our perspective, there are many reasons why we would hope to seek to

install more capacity in the future. And I think we have an RFI that we have on record where we responded to the Department of Planning on this note. But I'd say the primary reason would be that Project EnergyConnect, if EnergyCo undertake a headroom assessment and find additional capacity, they may tender more capacity.

But for the initial 831 megawatts, so firstly for the VPA, the VPA's on the basis of a per-megawatt-rate. It aligns with the New South Wales Planning Guidelines of \$1,050 per megawatt. So, that would \$1,050 times 831 megawatts. And as I mentioned, there's a 15% allocation to a dedicated First Nations fund.

In terms of jobs, we've estimated up to around 900 construction jobs and 50 ongoing local operational jobs. I would expect for the 831 initial stage, that would be between 500 and 600 jobs for construction, and 30 to 40 jobs for local operations. Yes.

MS DINNING: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

MR PEARSON: Thank you. Any other questions? Just a quick one. I think you might have just glossed over it on your slide. What are you proposing to do in terms of worker accommodation and social services, like health services, for example?

MR MEAD: Yes, sure. Yes, that's an important question because as you can appreciate being in a REZ, these are cumulative impacts that must be considered. So, from our perspective, in our planning application we have a proposed temporary workers accommodation camp on site. So, we would seek to either utilise and build and utilise a temporary accommodation camp on site, or we are in discussions with Transgrid for their Boooroorban camp on the Cobb Highway that they've used for Project EnergyConnect.

We would also expect that some staff would be split between Hay and Deniliquin regions, but we appreciate there is a housing constraint. So, our primary focus would be on temporary accommodation to take the load off the local towns. And we're also considering things like health services, because we need to make sure we don't put an undue load on existing services in the towns.

MR PEARSON: Okay. Thanks, Tim. I think that completes the questions from commissioners, so thank you for that, and if you could resume your seat. And I'm going to call John Clark forward. John, you've got 10 minutes to address the Commission, I believe, on behalf of yourself and also Save Our Surroundings Hay.

MR JOHN CLARK: I might have to apologise, ladies and gentlemen. I haven't got any money to hand out, unlike the previous speaker, I lost count of how much he was handing out.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm a born and bred Hay boy, I'm 82 years young and I'm

a retired grazier. I've worked on the land all my life. There was a short break when I was 24 years old, I travelled the world for eight months. Unlike many who have been making our nation's energy policy, I make no academic claims. I'm just a very concerned citizen, greatly saddened by the direction our nation is heading.

On our property just north of Hay, we have seven windmills pumping more water for the livestock. On numerous occasions over the years, we would work all day on the bore pumps and while the wind blew merrily overhead. And as soon as we'd get it coupled up in the evening, the wind would drop and there was no certainty when it would blow again. While usually the wind would get up again the next day, the unreliability of wind power cannot be denied.

We're here to discuss the Pottinger Wind Farm development, 247 massive towers, the efficiency of which is highly debatable. The very recent closure of the Australian Blue Wind Farm in western Victoria surely is a warning to proponents of these developments that they are highly risky ventures.

The risk of BFAS contamination to the surrounding farmlands is highly concerning. If the toxin does get off the blades, the surrounding farmlands will be useless for both cropping and grazing. I don't think it's worth the risk.

I don't pretend to be an expert on so-called renewable energy. I just intend to say it the way I see it. Like many of you, I have a bank of solar panels at my home, hopefully to reduce my power bill. The energy company, Origin, was offering incentive to invest in solar. That incentive was an attractive feed-in payment for all the unused power that went into Origin's system. That good arrangement worked well for about a year, until the letter came in the mail. I was advised that the feed-in payment for all the unused power that was to go to Origin would change and be reduced to almost zero. No apology, no explanation, it was just changed.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, what I suspect may happen to the lucky hosts of the solar and wind farms enticed into the arrangement at about a thousand dollars a week, a rental almost too good to be true, and very hard not to accept.

The huge renewable development companies will prove, in my opinion, to be a law unto themselves. And that would be particularly rankling when one considers the billions of Australian taxpayers' dollars supplied to as subsidies by both Conservative and Labor governments.

The best brains in Australia who have not got a vested interest say we must revert to coal-fired energy and gas, and later nuclear power, as a sensible and available energy.

When I learned this meeting was about to come on, I contacted an eminent scientist called Ian Plimer, many of you would know him, and asked if he would come to this meeting. Unfortunately, Professor Plimer is gravely ill in hospital, but he did manage to send me an email with a comment: "Come hell or high water, the Labor governments in Australia now feel empowered to destroy rural land with

solar and wind factories and the transmission lines they're from to try and have this country wired to intermittent power rather than using the tried and proven power generation of methods of the past which gave us cheap, reliable electricity. Kind regards, Ian Plimer."

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There wouldn't be a person in this room who wasn't aware of the ludicrous situation where Australia sells its coal to China, the biggest polluter on the planet, while Australia, the smallest polluter, makes the biggest sacrifice. That is the renewable lunacy. How stupid can Australia get? All this nonsense in the pursuit of net zero while the Chinese build hundreds of new coal-fired power stations, we pull ours down. The Chinese must be splitting their sides laughing at us. The biggest polluters on the planet shovelling shiploads of coal out as fast as they can and making no attempt to lower their emissions.

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All over the world, renewables are on the nose. Huge untruths have been stated about their perceived benefits. We are destroying the countryside to power our cities. This BS about encouraging manufacturing is Dreamtime stuff. No manufacturer will start up without solid permanent energy, and that's what renewable is not.

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The greatest problem Australia faces today is the political ambition of net zero. That policy is being dumped all over the world, but as usual, Australia will be the last to reject it. In the meantime, massive damage will be done to our rural landscape. None in the cities, of course, just to our beautiful bush.

25

With Australia's debt now a trillion dollars, and just in case anyone's got any doubt about what a trillion dollars is, it's a thousand billion. That's a fair bit of money to be in debt. We'll be selling our paintings off the wall next. Hold onto your hats, Australia, the next three to six years might be a very bumpy ride. Thank you.

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MR PEARSON: Thank you, John. Our next speaker is Sandy Symons. I hope I got the surname right. Just to let everyone know, we've got the heater cranked up as high as possible. There is tea and coffee available at the back if you're super cold or you just need some caffeine. So, over to you, Sandy. And Sandy, you've got 5 minutes please.

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MR SANDY SYMONS: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, Mayor, Hay Shire councillors and guests. I come to this meeting as a self-appointed cultural attaché of Hay, a long-term resident (four generations) and at the moment, I'm living in Albury.

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I was probably one of the first Hay residents to voice my disapproval publicly at the renewable projects in the Riverina, and I wrote a letter to the *Hay Grazier* entitled "Windmills of the Gods." An extract of this letter sums up how I feel about the renewable wind towers and how they are a blight on our landscape.

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I quote, "I hate these giant monstrosities on our landscape. Banjo Paterson would

be rolling over in his grave. His iconic poem, *Clancy of the Overflow* states, ‘He sees a vision splendid on the sunlit plains extended, and at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.’ We would have to change that to, ‘He sees the vision eyesore that would rock an old bushie to the core. And at night, those giant blades that would bastardise the stars.’”

We value the heritage of our landscape just as much as the people of Queensland value their rainforests. We have dry forests and they have a unique beauty that brings peace and mind to the soul, especially at sunset and sunrise on our vast plains.

I recently read an article addressed to our fellow Australians which has been written and sanctioned by Rainforest Reserves Australia. With some pretty heavy hitters and eminent Australians signing off on this letter. These include Dick Smith, Australian of the Year 1986. Jenny George, past ACTU President. Warren Mundine, Indigenous leader. And a host of experts in renewable energy, conservation, nuclear energy, economics, and representatives from the Greens, military and defence, and traditional owners. Fifty-eight people have co-signed this letter. I recommend you read it.

I think it will go down in history as one of the defining documents in Australia of this era. The President of the Rainforests Australia, Carolyn Emms, I believe, will be talking today. So, I look forward to her commentary. This letter – and that is the reason why I’m here, because I read this letter – this letter paints a dire picture of Australia’s economic future and the consequences of relying on renewable energy to power the country and the economy of the future generations.

In a world where the truth has been all but abandoned, where facts become fairytales and vice versa, I have neither time nor the capacity to fact-check the pros and cons of renewable energy in this debate. Instead, I’ve put my faith in people that I respect and the people that I have a gut feeling are telling the truth, and the people who are passionate and patriotic about Australia’s future.

In other words, I have a great faith in this letter to all Australians by the Rainforest Reserves organisation, and would recommend that we all should read it, including the independent commissioners who are our hosts, if they haven’t already.

I’m sure that our friends in the Hay Shire Council who put a premium on looking after their constituents have read this letter, taken its contents onboard, as they too have a great responsibility too, because this is all happening on their watch. The Council has the job of reaping the rewards for the community and in our town, and I wish them well all in this area. That is the only positive outcome I can see in this whole debate. And spend it wisely.

This leads to my final analogy in what I believe will happen to Australia, and I pray to God that it doesn’t. With an expensive, intermittent and unreliable power supply, who will take ownership of these outcomes in the future if it all goes pear-shaped? Hands up, anyone?

5 If the renewable energy plan goes ahead successfully and Australia is a beacon to the rest of the world in this area, I will happily have eggs splattered all over my face and eat my words. But if this letter comes true, then the carnage inflicted on our economy, our standard of living and our defence will be catastrophic.

10 I look around and don't see many young people here, or under 30 years old here today, which is why us oldies are here, because we are worried about their future and their children's future. Australia could well run into a brick wall and could well run into the Great Wall of China. Thank you.

15 **MR PEARSON:** Thank you, Sandy. Andrew Sleigh please, for 5 minutes. Oh sorry, Andrew's on the phone, so Andrew, we're just sorting out the audio, we hope. Okay, let's try now, Andrew, please.

MR ANDREW SLEIGH: Okay. Can you hear me?

MR PEARSON: Yes, we can, yes.

20 **MR SLEIGH:** Okay. I'd like to extend a good morning to everyone in the room and apologise for my absence today. Our family operate a mixed farming business 40 kilometres north of Jerilderie near the Dinawan substation, neighbouring both the Origin Yanco Delta Wind Farm and the Spark Wind and Solar Project.

25 These two projects alone total 350 wind turbines and 700 hectares of solar panels, which I understand will be over 70% of 2.5 gigawatts of the access rights allocated recently. We also have 4 kilometres [unintelligible 00:45:04] transmission lines running through our property, with an extensive significant footprint.

30 This morning I'd like to talk about the process, the lack of planning, and the accountability of renewable energy projects in the South West Renewable Energy Zone. The process by which these projects, such as Pottinger, received access rights, lack credibility. There was never enough clarity provided to ensure the best projects would be awarded access rights.

35 AMEO were vague in outlining the criteria they would use to allocate the access rights. The process lacked the transparency the projects of this size would in normal circumstances would be an essential part of determining the desired outcome. Surely, if adequate planning was undertaken, the Dinawan substation would be in a more central position within the zone to attract a wider geographical spread of renewable projects in the southwest, enabling greater access for proponents southwest of Hay, where the applications exceeded the current 40 1.2 gigawatts capacity into the East Connect line.

45 I would also like to note that 14% of the renewable infrastructure granted access rights is outside the zone – 32 turbines of the Yanco Delta Project south of Yanco Creek, and 450 hectares as Spark solar panels east of Kidman Way. Both of which are outside the South West Zone.

5 The Virya, now Origin Yanco Project, received over 40% of the rights access capacity recently. It had supposedly ticked off all the necessary regulatory requirements. In December 2023, New South Wales [Planning 00:47:10] granted planning consent for this project, indicating that in their view this project was in a favourable position to be successful in the AMEO bidding process. The project was then acquired by Origin in March '24.

10 The Yanco Delta EIS was very short in specific detail. It had no plan in securing easements for transmission lines, severely underestimated the environmental impact of the project, had no plan for a 710-person camp, minimal fire control measures, no provision of increasing telecommunications, no road maintenance or upgrade details, no provision of water, and finally, no acknowledgement of the impacts to our local community and our neighbouring landholders and their businesses.

15 Locally, we believe the Yanco Delta Wind Farm gained a rushed approval for reasons outside meaningful consideration. Because of the scant nature of the original EIS, we are currently writing numerous submissions and comments on changes and modifications to this specific project through the EPBC public portal.

20 It is simply not good enough that projects such as this can receive New South Wales planning consent and yet be so poor in content within the EIS. We can assume that from this example that not only have the government regulatory requirements been relaxed, but the renewable energy companies themselves have taken full advantage of the government's obsession in rolling out renewable energy projects of this size, urgently meeting questionable emission targets.

25 Energy companies themselves need to be made more accountable for the construction and management of their projects going forward and show greater respect to nearby neighbours. Our small community is extremely concerned and anxious that these developments such as Pottinger are operating under a separate set of rules. And that we are not recognised for the increasing cost these projects will have on our businesses.

30 Now is the time for EnergyCo to take control of a detailed plan in the South West Zone and take a coordinated approach to minimise the [unintelligible 00:49:41] impact Pottinger and other developments have on the unique landscape.

35 Regional New South Wales, in closing, is going to pay a huge price for the lack of planning, coordination and leadership in this renewable energy rollout process. I, along with other neighbouring landholders to these projects, feel extremely let down by the process.

40 Thank you for your time.

45 **MR PEARSON:** Thank you, Andrew. We've got Annette Wheaton in the room – for 10 minutes, Annette, please.

MS ANNETTE WHEATON: Hello, my name is Annette Wheaton, I live at the Rock. Recently, or last year, we were greeted with, "You're going to have the big BESS battery and a solar panel factory planted next to you. How do you feel?"

5 Well, I can tell how I feel but you wouldn't want to hear it. Anyway, we've been fighting it and carrying on. We don't want it there. The same as most people wouldn't want it here.

10 Yesterday, I got this letter. This is from the council. Wildlife endangerment. This is going to you, sir. We have been asked to take our barbed wire off our fences, from the Wagga Council, because of the squirrel, it's getting caught in the fence. And I'm going, I rang them up and I said, "What about Transgrid, with the eagles hitting the wires? What about the solar panels with the birds diving into them, thinking they're water?" You know what the answer was? "Oh, we didn't know about that." Why didn't they know about it? They sent out this rubbish, but they didn't know about all the deaths from Transgrid and the solar panel farms. You watch the wind turbines cut them up as well. Yes, they won't leave anything.

20 Anyway. Now, to my point. Who and what has given the government social licence to destroy our agricultural land, our community, our farming families, and our environment? It wasn't me. In my opinion, this experiment is doomed to fail.

25 When did Australia start supporting slave labour, ignoring modern conditions? The Act 2018, example, 5,000 Uyghur slave labour panels at Bomen and a million more planned. Why does Australia accept slavery? You know, we're proponents, we're supporting it, bring it here. We're wonderful people, we can criticise everyone else for how they treat people. But when it comes to us, mate, we all embrace their slavery.

30 Okay. Our brainwashed kids at school. Where are they? Where are our kids here to support this or to knock it down? They're not here. They're being brainwashed to say all this rubbish is wonderful. All this rubbish is, you know, clean, green energy, when we know that it's not.

35 Where in the world is the temperature consensus consistently at 2 degrees Celsius hotter than normal? I can't find this information anywhere, and this is the crux of all this rubbish, the electric rollouts and anyway, that's one of the things.

40 I know over time that the way measurements of temperature have changed from manual to electric, and when we take temperature readings years ago, we took them twice a day, probably at the back of the post office, and now we have the weather stations on the airports with the jet engines and the thrusts and they still couldn't get the temperature up to 2 degrees above Celsius in any given place. I can't find it. Has anyone looked? Probably not.

45 Why are we putting electricity systems owned by overseas companies here in Australia? Why? Do we want to be taken over by China or any other company that comes in? They can switch the power off anytime they like. They own it. Where's

ours? You know, where's our ownership of our energy system? We haven't got it. No one cares. It's all about money, isn't it? It creates a big security risk.

5 I asked Cameron Collins, Wagga Council, "What infrastructure is in place for the millions of used spent solar panels in the Wagga area?" Answer: no plan for a facility. And the Wagga tip does not take spent solar panels. "Well, what do you do with them?" I asked. His response was, "The company are responsible for disposing of solar panels." I thought, oh yes, good-o. Besides – ah, hang on.

10 Right. Duty of care means no harm. Property values of neighbouring properties have dropped just at the mention of having solar panel farm or batteries or wind turbines. I mean, if you're looking at superannuation, that is harmful. If you're looking at you're just mental attitude, that is harmful.

15 We always love driving across the Hay iconic plain, its natural beauty and its quintessential start to be Australian outback. Moulamein, all this area, is wonderful. I often bring visitors to Hay and to One Tree, Moulamein, round this area, because this area, in my opinion, will be ruined not only for farming but tourism as well.

20 I look at Griffith. Griffith is reclaimed desert. You can grow bagasse on the once-arid soil, thanks to irrigation. And, in my opinion, Hay could be the same if the government sorts out their irrigation systems and if the soils and waters have not been contaminated by leaching of chemicals from BESS batteries, solar panels and
25 wind turbine factories.

I looked up how arid countries power their country. Gas and oil. What a surprise. We have at least 800 years of coal reserve, one-third of the world's uranium supply, and an enormous gas supply, so why the rush to destroy our country, and
30 why are we not using these resources until we have another proven – this renewable is not proven – resource, reliable system, less expensive, less invasive, less destructive of our farmland and our environment.

35 Look at how much mining is done to produce a wind turbine and solar panel compared to a coal mine or a gas mine? You've got your bauxite mines, you've got your lithium mines, you've got every other mine, and then you whinge about a coal mine. My God.

40 Matthew Cranston wrote yesterday in *The Australian*, "Federal government spend on climate change has reached a staggering \$9 billion, up from \$6 million in the last decade. Up 400% in the last term of the Labor Government." I'm not an economist, I don't think it is financially or environmentally viable.

45 We are losing vast amount of food production, agricultural land, vast amounts of our rainforests, which has now become the new Amazon, scientists searching for Indigenous medicines and native foods. And let's not forget the large tracts of land and trees in the Kosciuszko National Park that have been just disseminated for wind turbines. And don't forget the koalas that get hit on the head with the

hammers.

I thought these areas were protected. They're protected until, you know, someone says, "Okay, they're not protected anymore, we'll just go and rape them and pillage them and it doesn't matter." But a farmer can't pull down a tree without permission. Yes, well, go figure that.

This is my story of why our neighbourhood decided to form an action group in the middle of harvest last year, the busiest time for farmers. The immediate neighbours were sent a copy of a DA for a proposed battery farm. Well, that's it. Oh, all right.

Proposed battery solar farm. We were given two weeks to forward a submission. The Council thought it would get in under the radar. I think by memory the DA was 800 pages. I went and asked for a group extension to the Council and they said, no, we had to do it on an individual basis because we had to put in individual submissions.

Not to be deterred, I contacted our local members both state and federal. The councils then decided to give the group an extension. After that bit of nonsense, we decided that we better start an official anti-renewable group and that's how and why Farming First Riverina was formed.

The development is in the hands of state plan. Unfortunately, yesterday ...

MR PEARSON: Thank you, Annette. We're going to keep going, and Noel Hicks, I think, is in the room. Noel, could you come forward for – and I think you're speaking on behalf of Save Our Surroundings Murrumbidgee as well as yourself, for 10 minutes, please.

MR NOEL HICKS: Thank you, Mr Chair, and also I believe I'm speaking on behalf of the MIA, I think I've got 5 minutes for Pottinger and 5 minutes for the MIA.

MR PEARSON: Yes, correct.

MR HICKS: Okay, thanks very much, Mr Chairman. In a prior time in my life I was a federal politician where on occasion one had to decide what they believe was good for sections of the community they represented and what was good for Australia. Sometimes these did not coincide. This may not have suited some of my constituents.

I'm no longer in that situation as a federal representative. Having once represented Hay, I feel I'm in a position that is counter to a number of people in the area. I believe I am coming down on the side of Australia. The whole concept of net zero by 2050 will prove to be a nightmare for our nation. But we have spent or imported probably more than a trillion dollars on achieving it. No one, including the government, knows just how much, and that's a tragedy.

This expenditure along with other handouts by the government will, I believe, create a severe financial crisis. And despite the doubtful rhetoric of the nation's leadership, we will still not have a reliable power source. We are doing this when China, to name one country, that is belligerent towards us, presently provides 30% of world carbon emissions. And despite building solar and wind farms, is reputedly building two coal-fired power stations per week. How much Australian coal is used in this enterprise, I'm not sure.

They are also constructing a myriad of nuclear power stations. The leadership knows that it has to have a reliable power source which over the decades has greatly lifted the standard of living of its people. A cheap, reliable power system has enabled them to have the largest army and navy in the world, thus challenging the United States.

Without a reliable, cheap power source, within a short while, there will be revolution in their country. This means that China, like India and Russia and other major polluters who have not signed up to the Paris Accord, will not stop burning coal and gas until a new cheaper source of power becomes available. At the moment, nuclear power is their way to reliability, while we as a nation continue to potter along with a nightmare plan which makes China, a potential enemy, richer, while we become a mendicant state.

The Pottinger development along with many others in the pipeline presently aids, abets this situation, with large companies such as AGL and Someva heavily subsidised by federal and state governments handing out taxpayer money to get the local populations on side. This is not a way of providing cheap power but providing expensive power at the wider taxpayers' expense.

If the subsidies were not available, I doubt if there would be a solar industrial complex, I call them the SICs, in existence. One thing that troubles me is that when I was a federal member, I represented many farmers and graziers. Owning their properties, they nearly all to a man or woman reiterated they were merely custodians of the land and were deeply concerned with conservation of their properties.

That appears to have changed and now they welcome developers to construct solar industrial complexes on their land, destroying landscapes and disturbing native flora and fauna. In this case, 1,066 hectares. I can understand that the money is too good to refuse, particularly for a struggling farmer. Like many, I would probably take the same action. And therefore, the only way to stop this destruction is by legislation that prohibits these large developments. This will not occur under the present governments.

One of the main concerns is that the present situation causes dissension amongst the joining or close neighbours and in some cases I've seen, the once good friends no longer talk to each other. Hay and the Riverina are renowned in Australian poetry song and literature, and many people travel to the area surrounding Hay to

view the saltbush plains and sunsets etc. I cannot imagine travelling to the region to view wind turbines and the associated aerial cables and batteries etc.

Because of the backlash of the coastal population against wind farms being located offshore, and increasing construction and maintenance cost, I doubt that many will be constructed. This means that more of these installations will be located inland. Already it is estimated that to obtain the net zero in Victoria, one-fifth to one-seventh of Victoria will be covered by SICs, which is inconceivable. It is anyone's guess what will occur in New South Wales.

I've read the Environmental Report for the Pottinger Project, particularly in the decommissioning of these complexes in the future, which may occur as it has with the Codrington Wind Farm only 25 years old since its construction near Port Ferry. The problem they still face is what to do with the unrecyclable large blades. I know that the developers of Pottinger and another location have decommissioned some wind turbines and blades.

If I read correctly, the Codrington blades disposal is still a problem. And in the case of Pottinger 25 years later, as Codrington must have 25 years ago, are hoping that over the coming years, new materials will emerge that can allow them to be recycled. Sounds a bit like the hydrogen green energy story.

It is my hope that whatever happens, the Pottinger developers bear the cost and not local government, in other words the ratepayers, in getting rid of this detritus. It is estimated by the year 2034, 15,000 tonnes of composite waste will be accumulated.

The irony of this project along with many others of similar ones, is that rural Australia is carrying the total burden supported by relatively few subsidised handouts aimed at keeping the local population happy. [Unintelligible 01:07:21] in the public arena states that the power generated will serve 830,000 homes with clean, affordable power. Any thinker would know affordable power is a misnomer and that most of these serviced houses will be in capital cities. These populations would not even know where Hay is located, and the mess being located in its vicinity.

Then we have 2,000 I call "was construction" jobs, many will fly or drive in and out with some having accommodation provided, I should imagine. Having seen this mainly in mining areas in the short term, it may provide some income, but in the long term, how does this benefit the area?

When Australia faces many immediate problems, such as the lack of even a moderate defence deterrent, a faltering health system and education system that needs help, a shortage of housing, and even a lack of suitable communication systems particularly in some rural areas, to provide taxpayers money for an unreliable power system that will not be able to power our blast furnaces, our manufacturing industries, our business houses, and most importantly at this time in our history, we'll restrict our defence capability, is a farce of the highest order. I

hope Australia wakes up before it's too late.

Mr Chairman, I am an old man and soon none of this will affect me personally. However, I do fear for my progeny and what they will have to face in the future if Australia continues on this path to energy production. Mr Chairman, I prophesise that when politicians wake up to the fact that we now live in the nuclear age, and we do not wish to use fossil fuels as a cheap base energy supplier, nuclear energy is the only way to go, as 33 nations throughout the world are already aware, including Saudi Arabia, one of the major oil producers in the world, is turning to nuclear.

Thank you, Mr Chairman, and the committee for providing me the opportunity to speak. Although I know my small contribution will be like whistling in the wind, at least it allows me to make a contribution.

And now, Mr Chair, if I may, I'll go on with the MIA ...

MR PEARSON: Where are we up to time-wise, please? No, no, no, in terms of Noel's speaking spot. Okay, so you've probably only got 2 or 3 minutes, Noel.

MR HICKS: Okay. I'll rip through it.

MR PEARSON: Thank you.

MR HICKS: In 1912, following the construction of the Burrinjuck Dam, the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area was established at great cost to a fledgling nation and the state of New South Wales. It was Australia's original food bowl. It was designed to provide a reliable produce to the nation, even in times of drought. It's now the nation's fourth largest irrigation area of approximately 600,000 hectares. Today it is one of the most diverse and productive regions in Australia, producing food and fibre and contributing \$5 billion annually to the economy.

It is still regarded as a major engineering achievement. The main towns of the area are Leeton and Griffith, which were purpose-built and are unusual, as up until now they have been growing. Whereas sadly, most rural towns are shrinking.

Developed at great expense to both the fledgling Federal Government and the New South Wales state governments, mainly by soldier settlers returning from the First World War, many with injuries both physical and mental, the project slowly grew. Some were not successful, mainly because the blocks were too small, they had little agricultural training, and for other reasons that many of those [unintelligible 01:11:00] successful.

Only a small quantity of Australia's land is arable, 4.1%, compared to Afghanistan 12%, 11.5% China, USA 16.6%.

Mr Chairman, you're able to give me an extension, aren't you?

MR PEARSON: One minute, if that's okay?

MR HICKS: One minute?

5 **MR PEARSON:** Well, one minute from the second bell, sir, and we've been talking for – so I'll give you a little bit longer, but could you please sort of compress ...

10 **MR HICKS:** With this arable land, only 5% of it is under irrigation. That means that there is in Australia only 0.002% of land under irrigation. This irrigation land produces 30% of Australia's agriculture production. Now the MIA food bowl is threatened with the lessening of this valuable asset because of the introduction of so-called solar renewables which are in fact solar industrial complexes. The misnomer of calling these developments "farms" and if they are large,
15 [unintelligible 01:11:56] will be laughable if it wasn't so misleading.

I've got to rush through this.

20 The other points to be raised in our present and future immigration intake, the food that will have to be supplied for this country and our exports will not be enough, given the recent couple of years of extra people coming here. A difficult situation being faced by irrigators at this time with higher costs of fertilisers, fuel, electricity prices, power supplies and developers to mention a few.

25 Add to this the threat of Murray-Darling Basin Water Back Scheme sanctioned by the authority of the present government, it would appear that the governments are working seriously against the supply of a viable MIA in its major centres of Leeton, Narrandera and Griffith. Already the wonderful image of the MIA is changing because the SICs are being installed, with valuable food-producing land
30 being made unproductive, a society of poles and wires appearing.

Griffith and Leeton have a thriving tourist trade from people who wish to see various crops growing with a continental flavour. They're not coming to view SICs, [unintelligible 01:13:00] places like [unintelligible], Coleambally or Wagga
35 Wagga, [unintelligible] I have witnessed.

It would be a tragedy if the MIA is to meet the same fate. This is particularly so in all SICs and batteries throughout Australia, at best provide only 30% efficiency power reduction. The MIA has been a very unified community with close
40 settlement. The subsidised taxpayer money being provided to those who are content in receiving a price to have SICs installed is causing grief for those who are not the chosen ones or refuse to have the installations on their properties.

45 **MR PEARSON:** If you can just wrap up, and you can provide your speaking notes to us, that we can read at our leisure, so ...

MR HICKS: Thank you very much, Chairman, I've just got a couple paragraphs.

MR PEARSON: Sorry, we've just got to keep the meeting moving.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I know [unintelligible 01:13:45], could use those 5 minutes. Has anyone taken that up?

MR PEARSON: Sorry, we're just going to keep proceeding. I'll talk to you in the break about that. Noel, if you can just ...

MR HICKS: All right, Mr Chairman, I'll just finish. I've left a lot out, it doesn't matter.

MR PEARSON: Just the main points, and provide the notes, we can all look at them at our leisure.

MR HICKS: I think we get the message that MIA is so important. Irrigation areas in Australia provide 30% of the production of agriculture. We cannot afford to have that land covered by SICs.

MR PEARSON: Yes.

MR HICKS: I'll just finish off. In my opinion, the money wasted on unreliable renewables is better spent on the immediate things facing Australia, since increasing our defence spending against a belligerent China who continues to be one of the world's greatest polluters. We won't go into the matter of slave labour, how slave labour is being used to provide the solar components.

I would add that anyone who would want a SIC on arable land in Australia, and in particular in irrigation areas, has no sense of responsibility – in fact, I believe is bordering on sacrilege.

I ask that the government to stop this madness as a matter of great urgency. Sadly, may I say that I know what I have relayed will not make the slightest difference to the government's tsunami of SIC installations, but I believe saving Australia is more important than governments trying to save face on their madcap non-reliable renewable energy scheme. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

MR PEARSON: Thank you, Noel. Okay. What we're going to do now is just take a brief 10-minute break, and it will be 10 minutes. It's 11:07 now, so let's say we'll be back here at 11:20 to resume the meeting. So, thank you all.

[Meeting break/music plays 01:15:35 to 01:32:15]

MR PEARSON: Okay, thanks. We're resuming the Pottinger Wind Farm, Day 2 public meeting and I'm going to call on Judy Jarratts, who's in the room, to come and address the Panel for 5 minutes, please.

MS JUDY JARRATTS: Thank you. Good morning, all. I'd like to raise some serious concerns about the environmental and health aspects of this project.

5 Can you provide to me the honest and transparent evidence that every additional stressor and cost to the environment has been factored into this project? Every extra vehicle and machine on and off the roads, including their full running costs? Every tonne of CO₂ emissions produced and required to construct, transport and erect for every single element of the project be accounted for? Including the enormous concrete base required.

10 Has it been explained to you how a wind turbine renews itself? They are replaceable, not renewable, and not recyclable. Therefore, they are an enormous burden on our environment.

15 Has it been disclosed to you exactly how the project will be decommissioned? And where every part will be, again, transported to be disposed of?

Has it been disclosed to you where the used lubricants and oils will be disposed of? Thousands upon thousands of litres throughout the lifetime of the project.

20 Has the shedding of PFAS been addressed? As these enormous towers deteriorate around us. PFAS, a forever carcinogenic toxin, is now linked with testicular and kidney cancers. It's not 1 tower or 10 towers, it's literally hundreds of towers, and almost a thousand 90-metre blades.

25 Has there been testing of soils in and around similar past turbine projects?

Have the effects of seismic vibration been measured and monitored in all directions?

30 If any of these questions have not been honestly and transparently answered, then this project should not go ahead. We cannot forsake our environment for the sake of a dollar. Making 1 kilogram of cement adds 1 kilogram of CO₂ into the atmosphere. And whether it's in Australia or overseas, it does not matter.

35 One turbine base requires 700 cubic metres of concrete, approximately, which is equal to about 1,700 tonne in weight. Add in the emissions for the production of the steel, the fibreglass and the increased number of heavy vehicles which are also required, and there are emissions in overload. One tonne of fibreglass produces 2 tonne of CO₂ emissions, and there are 741 90-metre blades just for this project, or somewhere thereabouts.

40 I'm not sure the weight of the fibreglass in just one blade. But I would appreciate an answer.

45 How much total CO₂ emissions will be emitted at the completion of this project, both here in Australia and overseas? A full disclosure of the environmental cost is required. That's a full disclosure.

If these basic questions aren't being asked or answered fully, then this project

should not go ahead. If our country was truly concerned about minimising CO₂ emissions and saving our planet, then we would stop selling our resources to other countries, those who are making the components and who contribute so highly to world emissions.

This project is pollution and destruction on a grand, unimaginable scale for little if any benefit. I was listening to a renewable projects engineer on the train recently, in discussion about renewable projects. And quote/unquote, he said, “They are not about saving the environment, they are about the money.” Now, that stuck with me.

So, I ask you, can you in good conscious give an approval for something that will be true and heavy burden to us, our environment, and many future generations? Is that what you want for your family? It’s not what I want for mine, nor for our community.

We don’t know what we don’t know until we look and listen in a different space. Have the courage to look and listen before you make your decision. The environments and our health depend on it. Thank you for your time.

MR PEARSON: Thank you, Judy. The next speaker is on the phone and that is Annette Smith. I think you’re good to go, Annette.

MS ANNETTE SMITH: Start now?

MR PEARSON: Yes, please speak.

MS SMITH: My concerns focus on environmental damage and the lack of community consultation. I am not averse to change or development, but I am strongly averse to the destruction of an environment in the quest of net zero. I am opposed to the construction of this wind farm with a disturbance footprint of over a thousand hectares in the Hay plains that will leave a legacy of irrevocable environmental, land and soil pollution.

In May of ’23, we celebrated releasing endangered plains-wanderers into adjoining farmland to this proposed development. And it will cause considerable impact on their habitat and survival. Despite claims made in the EIS, animals and birds do not observe habitat corridors or wind curtailment strategies to ensure that wind turbines do not have an unacceptable impact on birds. There should be no carnage on birds.

There is no mention in the EIS of the other mammals, reptiles and birds such as stubble quail, barn owls and blue-winged parrots, which are also known to frequent the region. Our national emblems, the kangaroo and emu alongside the short-beaked echidna, and reptiles such as shinglebacks, blue-tongues, skinks and goannas. Why were not these species noted or listed in the EIS, or do the criteria rely solely on endangered species?

The South West Renewable Energy Zone was imposed upon us, and I was dismayed that the declaration was interpreted by the Hay Shire Council to have full licence to support the introduction of wind turbines and solar farms into our landscape. Shire Council and media announced these development proposals as a fact accomplished, leaving myself and others in the community bewildered that this could have transpired so quickly, despite our local opposition.

Council claims lengthy consultation, yet I can find little evidence to support these claims. Apart from a summary of the 10-Year Economic Transition Roadmap, developed as part of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program. I see that those discussions now underpin their document, “Fundamental principles for successful renewable energy development in the Hay LGA.”

The only people to benefit from these developments will be the hosts and neighbours within the REZ. There is no drought-proofing and resilience building for the rest of our agricultural community.

Under the guise of these consultations, a dozen influential community people or thought leaders from across Hay were brought in to help steer the discussion forward. How and why these people were selected is unknown, suffice to say that they were vetted to support the united vested interests in renewable energy. So much for transparency.

Council request that all parties intending to invest or develop in this region contact them as a first step before engaging with individuals and organisations in the community, to be introduced to their community road map and their fundamental principles to ensure a coordinated and efficient approach. I quote, “By doing this work now, the Hay community has the opportunity to prevent overwhelming and uncoordinated engagement from occurring and can keep the overall experience positive rather than each and every project engaging with the community.” Unquote.

It is my view that the document was designed intentionally to be offered as a shortcut to bypass the basic wills of community consultation. Every development application is different, and every location of a proposed development is different. So, I fail to see how one size can fit all.

The initial Pottinger development application barely saw newsprint in Hay, given the Someva representatives attended a virtual roundtable discussion presented by the Hay Shire Council staff and councillors in September of '24. None of these meetings constitute adequate community consultation. Oh sorry, none of these meetings constitute adequate and fair opportunity to object according to the rudimentary guidelines of community consultation.

Too short notice or 3/4-hour pop-up that is placed outside Council enforced the message and media enforced the message featuring staff members, councillors, hosts and energy providers continuing to drive the dogma. I can assure you that the planning and information of this development and the disastrous

circumferences is not ensuring it will happen with us, it is happening to us. Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Thank you, Annette. David Landini for 5 minutes. David, if you're in the room.

MR DAVID LANDINI: Commission, commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, I'm very pleased to be here. My name is David Landini, I'm the President of the Riverina State Group. We of course are advocating state formation with Riverina.

The Riverina State Group promotes the prosperity, the wealth and the prosperity of the people in the Riverina. This is currently under many, many challenges at the moment. But on one side of any scale of any wealth creation or any benefit of people, you have the wealth creation and the prosperity on one side. On the other side, you have waste and cost and expenses that make us poorer. And unfortunately today, the Pottinger Wind Farm is on the side that makes us all (pardon me) poorer.

There's a few things I'd like to raise about this policy, and before I do that, the Hay Group of the Riverina State Group, the Hay branch of the – the Hay members of the Riverina State Group have already developed a policy in 2023 about this project, and this, my speech will be a summary of that policy.

The first problem with the Pottinger Project is that it despoils the natural beauty of the Hay area. We are forced, when we come to Hay, to view structures that are very, very unnatural in an otherwise very beautiful area in its own way. All areas have different characteristics, and Hay is renowned for its beauty in its flatness and its sunsets and many other things.

So, these despoil the visual environment of the Hay area. And is that just my opinion and nobody else's opinion? It is the opinion of many, many people throughout the state of New South Wales, because the proponents of this project mainly don't live here, they live in the urban area of New South Wales, being Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. And much of the electricity that's generated goes to Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, but they don't build this project in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. And the reason they don't build it there is because it despoils their natural environment. So, they despoil our natural environment but not theirs. So, there is obviously a great injustice there.

The second problem with the Pottinger Project is that it makes electricity much, much more expensive than compared to what we already have. We will pay a lot more personally when we pay our electricity bills, and not only our personal electricity bills but when we buy any product out of the supermarket, particularly the refrigerated products, these, the cost level of that electricity will be added onto the cost of that product, and that will go right throughout our whole economy.

Now, we had a previous speaker speak about the financial and economic benefits of the Pottinger Project. But the reality is that this project will benefit financially a

very, very small portion of the population of Australia, and I would say it will be 1% or less. So, 1%, just for example, I'll round out and say 1% of Australia's population will be richer because of this project, and 99% of Australia's population will be poorer because of this project. So, that is the second problem with this project.

The third problem is that the premise that the Pottinger Project is based on is that burning coal in Australia causes catastrophic climate change. Now, this is entirely speculative, based on very, very dubious evidence. The predictions of the disasters by these speculators have all failed to occur. So, we can assume that the premise that it's based on is actually false.

And further evidence of that is the speculators who make such and such claims are in Australia and foreign, they are generally very, very wealthy, they fly in private jets, they travel around in 27-car processions, they burn up much more oil and fuel than we ever will, but they tell us that we can't do that. Which again of course is evidence that they actually don't believe what they talk about either, and if they don't believe it, they either don't believe it or they treat us with disdain or both. And for either of those reasons, we should not support that.

The structures are not only a visual despoilment of the area; they are also an emotional and mental despoilment. Because every time we drive into this area and we see these large structures, we have to recognise, or we're forced to realise that these things make us poor. Every spin of that turbine says, "I am making you poor and you will suffer." And that creates an emotional and mental anguish in all of us who are forced to see that – and we can't not see it because it's on the Cobb Highway.

So, in conclusion, I ask that all construction be halted, any construction that's already been completed be deconstructed and returned to sender. And if New South Wales and the Federal Government are adamant that this must be built, that these structures must be built, then I request sincerely that they be built where the people that want that electricity are. Build them in Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, but not here. Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Okay. Our next speaker for 10 minutes is Wade Northausen.

MR WADE NORTHAUSEN: Thanks everybody. Wade Northausen from Billboard Battalion. We actually do a lot of travelling around Australia talking about these so-called renewable energy projects, whether it be wind turbines, whether it be solar panels, whether it be transmission lines and so on.

So, I just wanted to touch base on a few of the points that we pick up, and I think that the Pottinger Wind Factory that we're talking about here is a classic example of many of these things. I realise that there's a number of proponents who do support this kind of stuff and in many cases it's the shire councils.

Now, I understand that some councillors or some people in the community here

who may benefit from it might really push for these projects. However, I don't think that they consider or are aware of the negative impacts. And some of the negative impacts that we've seen with a lot of these meetings we've been to and testimony from experts, there's obviously the pollution that comes from them, and no greater pollution of course than the harmful effects on people in the area.

They talk about noise of 40 decibels being okay, when no other industry has 40 decibels, and this is a thing that's reported by many, many people now, of the shocking physical effects that that has on people.

That's not to say about the pollution of the decommissioning of these things once they've had their time. And I think that the people who are supporting this have not really looked into all that kind of stuff. I think they're only looking at the dollar signs that are being thrown around all over the place here.

We also need to look at the reliability of the entire renewable energy sector. It is not going to be able to do what they tell us it can do. The whole thing is not going to be able to supply Australia with electricity, so therefore we absolutely must get back to coal-fired power, we must get back to possibly looking at nuclear. But at the end of the day, this stuff cannot work.

We look at the food production side of it, and the impact on agriculture. In our area just across the road, they want to be building these wind turbines as well. In Victoria, the renewable energy footprint is set to be covering 70% of Victoria's productive farmland. And this is horrendous stuff and people really need to consider what this is actually about.

Some of the people who we've spoken to in some of these meetings we've been to now talk about the contractual problems with this whole thing. And I know that the company that we spoke to through the avenue of a public meeting, we met with them, and I wanted to see some of the contracts, because they were telling us how great it is – you can pull 20 or 30,000 a year off a wind turbine. But I wanted to ask them, "Where are the contracts? Let me see what the detail is, particularly in the decommissioning." And what they said was that "The decommissioning cost will be borne by the company."

So, but they couldn't tell me which company that was going to be, if they were still going to be in business, if they were going to sell it to another company who would shirk their responsibilities, if the company in fact was going to go belly up and leave the landholder with the cost.

And one big telling factor here is that the Federal Government will not underwrite the cost of decommissioning here. They will not guarantee this. So, that tells you, you better expect problems. So, the costs that I've heard bandied around be to decommission one wind turbine is between \$750,000 to a million dollars per unit. So, that far outweighs the value of the property. So, if the landholder is left holding the basket or holding the baby, yes, they're going to lose their farm. Simple as that. So, there's a lot happening here that is very, very shocking.

The subsidies. If we look at the whole deal, the subsidies that we, the taxpayers, have to pay to put this horrendous failure of a system in place, is total adverse to everything we've been told over the last 30 years. We've seen Australian industries have been wiped out because governments have said they will not subsidise industry; industry has to stand on its own, it needs to be profitable in the marketplace. Well, this garbage is absolutely full of subsidies. If it wasn't for subsidies, that wouldn't be happening.

And what we're going to see is international companies take a huge amount and then clear off and take the money with them and leave us with a basket case that cannot survive.

We get down to what is the basis of the Pottinger Wind Factory. What's it based on? So, this is all based on the preface of climate change. That's where it's coming from. That's where its basis is. That's why the Pottinger Wind Factory is being proposed in the first instance.

We're seeing an enormous amount of this stuff happening across the world, in fact. And I would say that people need to drill down to what's actually behind it, and we're looking at policies now that are coming out of non-governmental, non-elected people who are really having a massive impact on our communities and on our economy and on our stability.

We have enormous reserves of coal which we dig up and export overseas for other countries to be secure and have economic security, but we shoot ourself in the foot. So therefore, the whole – it makes no sense. The logic does not add up, it doesn't stack up economically, commonsense-wise, environmentally these things are a disaster. I'm sure plenty of the other speakers have already spoken about the environmental impacts and others will speak about the environmental impacts, particularly on wildlife, the aesthetic value, the whole deal.

We drill down to what this is actually all about. And the whole climate change hoax is it's a thing that's been dreamt up by people who have political and ideological agendas. We look at the World Economic Forum, they talk about the Great Reset. We've got the United Nations who are on board with that. We've got the World Health Organization who also are on board with that. That's what this is about. This is about destroying our industry, our manufacturing capacity, our ability to create energy.

The energy bills that people are going to get, we're told constantly by the liars in government, that our prices are going to come down, that renewable energy is cheap and effective. Well, the hell it is. The costs are going through the roof, and they will continue to go through the roof. People will not be able to afford this, and I put it to you, that is actually the intention – to create a system where our country cannot rely on it. And the Pottinger Wind Farm, with its 1,300 megawatts of power and your 500-megawatt BESS, this is not going to be the answer. We see this all over Australia, and it can't work.

5 So, we want to look at the international treaties that this is all based on. The
Pottinger Wind Factory here is not based on commonsense or anything that's
going to work. The whole – the theory of course of carbon being creating climate
change, all garbage. As farmers, I can tell you right now, if you don't have carbon,
you don't have anything growing. We're seeing them supposedly blotting out the
sun. Now, this is how idiotic the people that run this stuff are, because they talk
about putting in solar panels and then they want to block the sun. That should tell
you everything you need to know right there. This has nothing to do with a
10 credible situation. This has everything to do with destroying our economy.

15 As I said, the International Health Regulations that Australia is looking at coming
in on the 19th of July will see the WHO assume the power that they can just
railroad this stuff through anyway; you won't be able to speak, you won't be able
to protest, you won't be able to say anything out against it, because of the ESG
scores that you are going to be looking at.

20 So, the basis of the climate change, we look back to *An Inconvenient Truth* from
Al Gore back 20-odd years ago, a bit better than 20 years ago. And Al Gore talked
about the polar icecaps would be melted by 2000, that a huge amount of the land
mass of the world would be under 20 feet of water – his words, not mine. The
polar bears will all be dead. Well, I'm happy to report that none of that's happened
because it was never going to happen. It is a fraud, it's a lie, it's a con. And that's
what these people supported – that's what they use to support it.

25 We heard Tim Flannery here – yes – we heard Tim Flannery talk about it's never
going to rain again after the 2010 drought finished. Well, we've got floods
everywhere. So, I think when we need to look at it, the whole thing needs to be
scrapped. We need to go back to reliable energy, baseload energy.

30 Thanks very much for the opportunity to speak. And yes, we'll be putting this up
on Billboard Battalion as well. And thanks very much for this opportunity.
Terrific.

35 **MR PEARSON:** Okay. Thank you. Our next speaker is Ross Johns. Ross
addressed the panel yesterday in Deniliquin, so Ross, if you can focus on anything
new that you wanted to tell us rather than repeating what we heard yesterday.

40 **MR ROSS JOHNS:** Thank you, Richard. I thought I'd focus on some
recommendations for the Pottinger Wind Farm. Ladies and gentlemen and
Commissioners, I'll give you a little of my background. I'm an amateur
ornithologist since I was five. My Auntie Audrey gave me a bird book about birds
on farms. I've been a director of an ASX 100 company, ABB Grain. I've also been
Deputy Chairman of the Grains Research and Development Corporation,
45 appointed by the Federal Minister of Agriculture. Director of Western Water,
which was the highest growth area in Western Victoria, close into Melbourne,
appointed by the Water Minister of Victoria and President of the Wimmera Mallee
Environmental and Agricultural Protection Association.

5 The plains-wanderer is a bird that is close to my heart. We used to see it at Wilma Briner, where I live. I went searching for the plains-wanderer last night, north of Pretty Pine. I didn't see any birds, and I didn't hear any birds. They're quite rare in the wild. But the Pottinger Wind Farm is right on top of the highest density of the plains-wanderer in Australia.

10 Recommendations. How can we mitigate the risk of losing this species? I think that 2% of the Pottinger Project value should be set aside for a captive breeding program. Now the Taronga Zoo actually has a captive breeding program at Dubbo in New South Wales, but I think that should be located here on the Hay plains in Hay or Deniliquin. And any project, any wind farm project within the historic distribution footprint of the plains-wanderer, should pay 1%. And that's in recognition of the Pottinger high population of plains-wanderer.

15 A net gain should be applied to plains-wanderer habitat within the footprint of the wind project, and control of feral cats and foxes should be undertaken on an annual basis on the wind farm footprint. So there's some measures that can actually mitigate the losses that will be incurred.

20 Microplastics and shedding. I spoke about that yesterday, and I forward you some detailed research work from Northern Hemisphere. And they talk about reindeers and contamination of the microplastics. I think what we should do in Australia is undertake a full Australian scientific review of microplastics and shedding.

25 Now that will take some time, but we've got dust, we've got high temperatures, UV radiation that impacts our wind blades, which are different to what's happening in the Nordic countries.

30 Community. I think fire risk is a huge issue in Australia, and there are some ways we can mitigate that risk. All wind turbines in the Pottinger site should be fitted with fire suppression capability. Wind farms should cease operations on total fire ban days. Farmers have a voluntary code of conduct where we get out of paddocks on high fire danger days. Wind factories across Australia should not be operating on total fire ban days. They've got an elevated fire risk, and potentially could have significant impacts on communities if a fire is started on those days. A larger and more effective ground firefighting capability should be paid for by the project, and those ground firefighting capacity could be at Hay and Deniliquin.

40 Lastly, decommissioning. Decommissioning is a significant issue. It occurs in a short period of time. Intergenerational farmers are multi-generation, five and six generations, and think long term. Decommissioning after 25 years is short term. There should be funds held by the landowners at the commencement of the projects to enable full and total decommissioning at the conclusion. Also, appropriate and thorough disposal of the blades, and that should be thought about prior to the commencement of the project.

45 And I'll leave you with one more little thought. Dorothea Mackellar: the "far

horizons” in Australia will be dead once these projects commence. Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Thank you for that, Ross.

5 **MR JOHNS:** Was there any questions?

MR PEARSON: Oh, I do have a quick one. When you said 2%, it should be said as like 2% of what?

10 **MR JOHNS:** 2% of the project value.

MR PEARSON: Okay, so 2% of \$2 billion?

15 **MR JOHNS:** Yep, because it’s a significant area of high density of plains-wanderer. Whereas the project in northern Victoria, which will potentially extinct the species in Victoria, should be paying 1% to a captive breeding program. And that’s in the best interests of Australia.

20 **MR PEARSON:** Okay, it’s an interesting thought. Thank you for that.

MR JOHNS: No worries, thank you.

MR PEARSON: All right, so our next speaker is Karen Masson. Thanks, Karen, 5 minutes.

25 **MS KAREN MASSON:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak and be heard today. My family are first generation cattle farmers in the Riverina, and aside from some personal and obvious aesthetic reasons, we chose the area because of its suitability to our vision. Perhaps that’s a similar reason why the large-scale
30 renewable developments have chosen the area as well.

Unlike the renewable developments, our choice of property was as far away from transmission lines as we could be. And sadly, that’s no longer the case. The truth of it is that if your farm is near a transmission line, you will be surreptitiously
35 targeted by renewable developers.

I’d like to think that a lot of real evaluation goes into these large-scale renewable developments, and that it’s not just because government is pushing towards its target, no matter the cost, and that boxes are just not being ticked. Ideally, I’d like
40 the whole renewable energy to be transparent and regulated from a government level down, and planning panels such as yourselves being held accountable for decisions made. For knowing all that there is about a project and to make decisions without any political pressure or personal bias.

45 In all honesty, I don’t believe that there is community trust in that process. Members of the community have been grossly let down by the planning and approvals process. It is a process that not many are familiar with, and in my personal experience regarding renewable energy developments, it’s one that is

often flawed. In our local area alone, there are at least half a dozen energy companies with developments on the table, and many of these have changed name and even ownership throughout the process. In many cases, direct neighbours have never been notified of applications, whilst others felt too intimidated to lodge submissions.

CSU researcher, Dr Simon Wright, is currently undertaking research into the social licence surrounding the push to net zero. He's an outspoken supporter of renewables. He agrees that there has been a lack of serious community consultation. And he says, "The main goal of our research is to provide quality inputs at the policy formulation stage to the New South Wales Net Zero Commission and inform the rollout, particularly of rural communities in New South Wales."

Now this sounds to me as though renewables are a done deal. And granted, there's not much that can be raised that money and yet more impact studies cannot address, or failing good outcomes, yet more compensation paid. Wright reported, "I think there's been no plan, there's been no consistency, and we've seen examples where communities and particularly farmers were informed of what was going on by hard copy letter drop in their mailbox, which is often discarded as junk mail. And that's not community engagement."

Scoping reports by nature run into hundreds of pages, and I would dare say that there's an entirely new profitable industry in the writing of scoping reports and EISs, and that the many formerly out of work environmental scientists are now very gainfully employed.

The fact remains that many of these reports and documents are daunting, exhausting and incoherent in their language for many stakeholders," which is a term I don't really like, "What concerns me most is the speed in which these developments are progressing, being pushed through and the consequential irreversible collateral damage. The pressure is on to meet the Australian Government's target of 82% renewable by 2030. Maybe those figures have changed. This pressure is affecting the mental health and cohesion of our rural communities.

The energy companies wax lyrical about their gifting to the community, but there is nothing that they can offer the neighbour of a development when it comes to close to compensating them for the loss of the value of their farm, their home, their working environment. And that's all aside from the potential risks of fire contamination, loss of being able to be insured, the environmental damage. The fact is that no one wants to be the neighbour of a renewable energy factory. I don't believe that any individual or group of individuals should need to engage legal counsel over any renewable energy development, but this is what is and has been happening.

People are spending personal savings to protect their farms, and worse still, they seek compensation for property damages caused by flawed projects that were

greenlighted far too quickly. If there really is nothing to fear from these developments, then advocacy needs to be put ahead of any development. Legal avenues should be made available by the companies and the government departments, and they should be free and efficacious.

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In closing, I just wish to touch on decommissioning as others have done. Matthew Riley, Director of New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment, recently told the Upper House inquiry that the New South Wales Government has not introduced any bond system to cover the future costs of clean up and land rehab. Projects are treated as a private [unintelligible 02:12:07] between landowner and company. Are you able to provide a clean-up estimate for the Pottinger Project? Thank you.

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MR PEARSON: Okay, thank you, Karen. I think we have two telephone call speakers now. The first – oh, in fact, I think they’re one and the same. So, Jeanine Bird on behalf of herself and her husband Grant, is my understanding. Are you with us, Jeanine?

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MS JEANINE BIRD: Yes, can you hear me okay?

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MR PEARSON: Yeah, we can hear you, if you would like to keep talking, thank you.

MS BIRD: Is it echoing too much?

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MR PEARSON: No, it’s pretty good.

MS BIRD: Okay, fine. You’re ready then?

30

MR PEARSON: Yeah, yeah, please proceed.

MS BIRD: Thank you. Living a couple of hours east of Hay, we are very concerned about the individual and cumulative environmental, social and economic impacts in our larger region from the Booroorban Pottinger BESS. The renewable rush has shown a lack of oversight in conditions being put on energy companies to take responsibility for the future fallout. What hasn’t been talked about all along is the fact that we’re following in [unintelligible 02:13:28] to comply with that era.

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What we’re not told is that to the top echelon in the larger [unintelligible 02:13:35] sit at the table with the UN. Unelected in Australia, they operate hand-in-hand with the UN and financiers to get control of national [unintelligible 02:13:47]. Larger than national governments, they’re often one and the same at the top.

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We have been pushed by the UN into deregulation, privatisation, trade liberalisation, and the commodification of our entities such as energy, water and the separation of profitable sections from the unprofitable, like poles and wires, leading to structural adjustment. Mug taxpayers then pick up the bill for the

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unprofitable sections, when in fact they should never have been unbundled as they work together for the benefit of consumers, who are also the voters and supposedly the owners. But we are the displaced owners, displaced by UN dictates.

Our politicians made policy kowtowing to IPCs and Paris etc. This then leads to our structural adjustment in many ways. We've seen it in our energy and water markets over the years, and we're about to see it with the transmission lines and best systems.

Clayton's consultations work for proposers but not for the wider general public who don't get to hear about it. Media is in on the gig, benefiting from advertising, perhaps holding shares, so the community doesn't get to hear both sides, just the government line. It's happening everywhere, and Pottinger Wind investors no different.

At the local level, we are very concerned that the following issues have not been given due consideration. Wind turbines generate heat, raising soil temperatures significantly, scientists say. And this is already a hot region, so killing vegetation and making the surrounding areas hotter is ridiculous and counter-intuitive.

It isn't just individual impact. Birds and bats the turbines kill will attract feral pigs, foxes, wild dogs and cats. The impact will be cumulative then, because the ferals will hang around hunting the killing fields to vary their menu, putting calves, lambs and birds in danger, along with the financial viability of primary producers. And I can find no bonds or conditions of consent to overcome this.

Turbines are catching fire as BESS systems will too. Australia hasn't escaped this, and a fire on the Hay Plains in a good year will go for miles. It's hazardous because emergency services aren't allowed to attend fires at the source, and that is a very high risk. Toxicity will contaminate our environment. We live in a relatively toxic free region, and don't need toxic fire risk, or PFAS contamination or toxic smoke travelling for miles and miles on a breath of wind to cause health problems in thousands of people years later. It's the asbestos for which these companies will never be liable, and I can find no bonds or conditions of consent to overcome this.

On that note, landholders, not the energy corporates, will be held accountable. At the rate of corporates changing hands, all liability from original agreements will have been watered down, and it will all come back to the landowners. This is a deliberate ploy, and landholders will get a rude shock when they find they have nowhere to go.

Just as EVs in Europe and the US aren't being insured now, when turbines and BESS systems catch fire, landholders will have trouble with insurance. They'll end up possibly losing the farm over it, because all the neighbours for 100 miles could sue them. Even shire councils could be sued, and I just don't think this has been given due credence. I can find no bonds or conditions of consent to overcome

this. Already, underwriters are building sneaky questions into farm insurance, such as excluding silica dust.

Of course, PFAS and forever chemicals, which turbines are coated with, will break down. When it's in our water supply, artesian basin, soil and food chain via livestock, it's a future problem not considered. Who is going to pay for this asbestos of the future, when the whole thing blows up in 25 years' time? There are no bonds or conditions of consent to overcome this.

Livestock producers, and Hay's a large contributor, are currently having to tick off on whether their stock is grazed near solar panels. Is it the same for turbines? Are they worried about silica dust, forever chemicals, shedding from wind turbines? These underwriters at the top of their companies also own cross-shares in energy companies, so they know, and they don't plan to carry that liability. They're prepping for it already, and we won't get told until it's too late. Again, no bonds or conditions of consent to overcome this.

We have to ask why no one cares about livestock. Perhaps because there's been a sustained GROF policy, get rid of farmers, since the late '80s when I coined that term. It's reaching a global crescendo now. Fake meat has just been legislated in April by the Food Standards ANZ for quail-cultivated meat. It's just a matter of time. Bill Gates and the WEF will have their way, and voila, there'll be replacements for our healthy, well-produced livestock, which have been tainted by wind and solar. There are no bonds or conditions of consent to overcome this, because no one wants to know about it until it will be too late. It's a case of create the problem and then come up with a solution. In this instance, fake meat, another UN GROF policy implemented here.

Now, our New South Wales Premier has just said that the landowners will be responsible for decommissioning wind and solar sites, for it's up to them to make an agreement with the developer. This is like complaining to your mother-in-law about your spouse.

The developer is a financial heavyweight, getting a heap of taxpayer subsidies, so it's difficult for one little farmer or small group to get anywhere, because the balance of power is so heavily stacked against them. It's a case of divide and conquer. Landowners feel they have nowhere to go, and they're powerless to fight it, and banks often help that situation by putting the squeeze on, especially in drought. It's open slather out there and only lip service is given to it. There are no proper guidelines or conditions outlined to overcome this either.

Has a bond of any kind been taken for Pottinger? I can't find it. Why isn't it government policy to make the purveyors of PFAS chemicals in soil contamination provide for their future damage? This is not taken into consideration as a cost of renewables, but it should be, along with the unreliability of intermittent, unviable wind and solar, of course, but we can't talk about that today. There are no bonds or conditions of consent to overcome this. There should be governmental policy amendments to protect the future of all Australians.

I want to make people aware of one more thing, where there are no conditions in place to overcome it. Generally, there are a lot of energy companies with Chinese Communist Party ownership, and in many cases, they change hands, frequently sold or bought down the track. In the power generation space, I think 80 or 90% of wind and solar towers and panels and components are made in China.

Now, in mid-May, just gone, Reuters reported that China has a kill switch embedded into the components, that sensors have been discovered in solar panels and power transformers, so no doubt turbines, which would allow the CCP to shut down the whole grid remotely. Now, we don't understand war, but this would be a fait accompli if it ever happened.

This is a grave matter of national security, and I see no credence given to it in any way, shape or form. Now it's been exposed in mainstream media, we need control over this before any further approvals can go ahead. We cannot have such heavy foreign ownership and control of our power grid. Currently, modern slave labour in Australia is an issue, but we are being made slaves to foreign powers via high energy prices, which they've just told us will rise exponentially because of renewable power. And who cares a jot about all this renewable equipment being made by Uyghur slave labour in China? There's supposed to be proof provided, and it's not, but really?

National security for Australia should be to crank up reliable, affordable coal-fired power stations, and China is, with our coal. Coal, oil and gas are currently the only sources of cheap, stable and continuous baseload energy, and would mean our government and energy companies would not be wilfully ignoring its own national electricity rules. At the moment, they're all operating unlawfully outside of these rules. Rules state that we must have an energy grid and service that's secure, reliable, safe and affordable.

Individual and cumulative impacts of Pottinger and other renewables are being wilfully ignored. They put not only the future of agricultural land at risk, but our health, environmental health and most particularly, our national security. I can see no bonds or conditions of consent to overcome or address this, or that mitigate power prices in line with national electricity rules. Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Very good timing too. Thank you, Jeanine.

MS BIRD: Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Thank you very much. We've got Kevin Loughrey next on the phone, and Kevin, we do have your submission before us. You have 5 minutes to speak, and if you could try to stick to that, that would be appreciated. And we have your slides in front of us now too. So over to you, Kevin.

MR KEVIN LOUGHREY: Thank you very much. Slide number one. The prime role of the IPCN is ensuring that decisions regarding state significant

developments align with NSW planning policies and legislation, which are designed to promote the wellbeing of citizens, protect the environment and support economic growth.

5 Next slide. How does the IPCN perform this function? Through thorough research determining that the underlying reason for a project is valid, and the project will promote the wellbeing of citizens, protect the environment and support economic growth.

10 Next slide. Reason for this project is rooted in anthropogenic global warming in that it is believed that by reducing emissions of carbon dioxide, it will reduce the chances of catastrophic warming of the Earth's atmosphere. Has the IPCN investigated whether this reasoning is valid? If they had, they would know that anthropogenic global warming, also known as climate change, is a scam. Please
15 visit my webpage at kevinloughrey.com.au/climatefacts.html to learn why AGW is a scam and also watch the documentary climatethemovie.net.

From many different perspectives, all based in solid science, AGW is a huge fraud designed to destroy western economies to the benefit of the Chinese Communist
20 Party, create great wealth for a few and impoverish the masses. The IPCN has a duty to investigate this allegation. Has the IPCN done this?

Next slide. Promote the wellbeing of citizens. Returning to the prime role of the IPCN, given AGW is a scam, item 1 is not achieved by proceeding with this
25 project. I will deal with the economic damage done by these projects later.

Next slide. Protect the environment. As the IPCN is well aware, these windmills and batteries, not to mention the distribution wires, involve considerable
30 destruction of the environment. Unless they are absolutely vital, they should not proceed. Given their justification is based on a fraud, they are not vital to saving the planet and therefore should not proceed.

Next slide. Support economic growth. The total expenditure on subsidies paid by taxpayers and consumers of the renewable energy industry in Australia from 2008
35 to 2025, including wind and solar farms, rooftop solar, solar water heaters, and related energy efficiency measures like low-powered light bulbs and efficient water heaters, is approximately \$50 billion, most of which went to the Chinese Communist Party. For this figure, 25 coal-fired power stations could have been
40 constructed.

Next slide. The economic effect of intermittent injection of electricity into the grid is well understood by anybody who has studied power engineering as I have. The
45 green line on the right-hand side is the gradual introduction of intermittent power into our grid. The red line shows how the cost of electricity has steadily escalated as a consequence of this.

Okay, the next slide. Cost of electricity using brown coal is somewhere between 2.5 to 3 cents per kilowatt hour. This is a graph which is derived from data

provided by AEMO, the QED quarter one, 2022.

Next slide. The cost of electricity versus the consumer price index can be seen in this graph. You will see that from 2008 to the present day, the cost of electricity has skyrocketed to the detriment of all consumers and the economy of this country.

Next slide. Failure to obtain meaningful performance commitment by the IPCN. The IPCN has not demanded from suppliers of these systems any commitment to a meaningful performance specification. Such a performance specification from this system with a 0.9999 confidence level of supply satisfying demand. The answer to this is likely to be 20 cents per kilowatt hour, whereas brown coal is six times cheaper.

Next slide. The IPCN's obligation based on its core criteria; let's check it. Does it promote the wellbeing of citizens? No, definitely doesn't. Does it protect the environment? No, definitely doesn't. Does it support economic growth? No, it doesn't. The IPCN must not allow any future projects of this nature to proceed unless the proposers can prove what I have just presented here to be false.

Next slide. Are there any questions? That's four minutes and 41 seconds.

MR PEARSON: Okay, I don't see any questions from Commissioners. Kevin, that was a very clear presentation. So, thank you for that. We are going to now move to our next speaker. Emma Hick, also on the telephone. No, no?

MR MICHAEL WRIGHT: She's not available.

MR PEARSON: Okay, so we'll go to Ann Hare who is in the room, I think. Ann, thank you.

MS ANN HARE: It's got to be right in front of my face. Well, I did have good morning, but I suppose it's good afternoon now. I'm Ann Hare from Moulamein, which I'm happy to be on record. I'm an irrigation farmer with my husband and my three sons, and we are third-generation farmers.

In Australia, we have best practices and farming regulations which we farm under. So, I'd just like to go to the first speaker's delight in not having any local objections. When this installation is going at a pivotal point of the Murray-Darling Basin, it's everyone in the basin that is local to that, what will be affected if we get runoff, microplastics. So, it's the whole lot of us from the top to the bottom. We are the locals who are inundated by all these projects.

I also noticed there's about 15 workers paid in this room by the IPCN and by, is it Somaveve? I just wanted to let you know, previous meetings that we've been to, we've calculated what is our cost as farmers, not paid by anybody to stand in this room. So, me to my business, I'm \$6,000 for the day, as would other farmers be. Because jobs aren't getting done. We aren't home running our businesses. We

aren't in the office doing our accounts. So, I just want to know who do I send that account to? The IPCN, the government, or Somaveve, for all these people in this room. For every meeting we have to come to. This is my fifth I've attended for renewable, not so renewable, energy.

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So, I wanted to speak about microplastics. They've been spoken about a little bit. Microplastics are a 5-millimetre size. They end up in the environment. They do enter the food chain. They're included in what we eat, we breathe. They come from a breakdown of large plastic items, wind turbine blades, solar panels, as well as synthetic fibres, tyres, packaging, microbeads, commonly used plastics that just get left laying around.

10

But we have these in our environment already. But the huge impact, I don't think the cost or the impact of humans or the environment or the animals have really been factored or properly costed. And what will be the clean up? How will that happen? Since we're going to be willingly putting all of these microplastics into the environment.

15

So, I'd like Somaveve – sorry if I pronounced it incorrectly – to answer that question. How are they going to clean them up? Oceans Integrity cleans it up out of the ocean. They do an amazing job. They're a huge company. How are we going to do that from groundwater? We don't have open oceans. We can't net them with small microscopic nets and bring them in. How are we going to do that, when they all end up at the bottom of the Murray-Darling Basin, impacting me on my farm because I irrigate. This is where the catchment, this is where it comes from. As do all the other irrigation farmers all along the Murray-Darling Basin. How? I can't think how.

20

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Why we would even dream of putting more microplastics into a system like the Murray-Darling Basin, it begs belief. And Australia had banned PPAs in – PBAs, beg your pardon, in 2012. Why are we letting them in? In these constructions? I don't know why either. Someone must have been a bit higher up than me to allow that.

30

I just wanted to say, I agree with Ross wholeheartedly. Where is the review of microplastics? I've been able to find nothing in reading all your bits and pieces. You know, when you sit in Sydney at your desktops, or Canberra or Wollongong or wherever you are in the city, and then you come out to rural areas and tell us quite adamantly what we will have, what we will be doing, you honeymoon the hosts, you get them on board with bags of cash, and then the rest of us are just left with it. I see nothing that has addressed microplastics.

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And I do agree that the landholder should have to put away some of the bags of money that they're getting. But I also think that the developer should match that dollar for dollar for decommissioning. Because that hasn't been addressed either. And the wide eyes of the hosts are just on the bags of money. Thank you.

45

MR PEARSON: Okay, thank you, Ann. We're going to have three more speakers

and then we'll take another short break. Our next speaker will be John McBratney on the phone. I think John, if you can speak, John, that's fine.

5 **MR JOHN MCBRATNEY:** Okay, you're very garbled. I'm not hearing you very well at all. Can you hear me?

MR PEARSON: We can hear you pretty well. I hope you can – you don't really need to hear us. So, we can hear you well.

10 **MR MCBRATNEY:** Okay, fine, that's all I want to know. Okay, shall I start?

MR PEARSON: Please.

15 **MR MCBRATNEY:** Okay, very short and straight to the point. I'm a retired professional engineer in electronics and electrical disciplines with over 50 years lab and field experience. I object to this project on technical grounds. As a design engineer, my previous role was to ensure designs performed to design brief, exceeded the minimum specification, met lifetime operational requirements, were reliable, could be easily maintained, were fully documented and were cost
20 effective. Wind farms, in fact, all of them, not just this one, fail on all the above points.

25 They cannot provide the design power output on demand due to variability of the weather. They cannot be built without subsidies, not cost effective. Their failure rate is unacceptable. Fires [unintelligible 02:35:52] failures. Maintenance is difficult. The fundamental failure, however, is that the wind generation cannot be guaranteed on demand. The average capacity factor for wind turbine generators ranges between 30 to 40% depending on location.

30 By comparison, coal-fired stations run about 85 to 90, nuclear further up than that. It is a mechanical impossibility to build a wind generator that meets normal grid power supply requirements, without the inclusion of a reliable fossil fuel power support generator available 24/7. They are, therefore, a costly mechanism of poor reliability, unsuitable for power generation operation. I consider them a waste of
35 public money and subsidies. All such should cease. If they are cost-effective, they should stand on their own without subsidies.

That is my opinion as a professional engineer. Thank you.

40 **MR PEARSON:** Our next speaker is also on the phone. I'm just checking his availability; Stuart Bonds. Stuart, you have up to 10 minutes to address the panel.

MR STUART BONDS: Hello.

45 **MR PEARSON:** Hello, Stuart. You have up to 10 minutes to address the panel if you'd like to start talking now.

MR BONDS: Okay, great. No problem, thank you very much. So, my name is

Stuart Bonds. I'm speaking on behalf of One Nation. First, I want to make it clear that we are objecting – sorry, I've got a feedback coming through the phone.

5 First, I want to make it very clear that we object to the proposed development of the industrial wind project in the Riverina. The 247 turbines, battery storage system, and hundreds of kilometres of transmission lines should go to Warringham or somewhere else in the city, not here in the Riverina. After all, those communities voted to support these projects with subsidies. Without these subsidies, they would be unprofitable, which is the first indication that they
10 shouldn't go ahead.

There is a common mistake made by our brothers and sisters in the more urban centres of our country, and that's that these projects should be put further out west. Because from their grey, concrete-filled jungle, there's nothing here but sand and
15 rocks. That's what it looks like to the people that this doesn't directly impact. This needs to happen to save the environment. They don't want them in their backyards.

Perhaps people in these concrete jungles should go onto Google Maps and zoom
20 in on the Riverina, and they'll quickly discover that despite the Riverina supplying half of the food in the country that's feeding Sydney, the Riverina is the very environment that they're trying to save. There is no environment left where they live, and now they are destroying the environment further out west.

25 The people that live in the food bowl of Australia do not want these projects in their communities. Besides their horrible aesthetics, the invasive nature of the transmission lines, the bird deaths, the fact that these projects can be sold over and over and over again, there's no rehabilitation bond put down, that we need to put down with our mining projects, so that we make sure that the area is cleaned up
30 and handed back in a suitable condition for future generations.

Besides all those minor details, these things will never work as a baseload power supply. If you look at the wind over the last 48 hours in Hay, right where you're sitting, these things hardly would have spun at all. In ideal conditions in Australia,
35 these turbines will only spin 35% of the time over a year, maximum. These are physical limitations put in place by Mother Nature, and they cannot be – they're undoubtable.

40 Naturally, the more of these projects that come online, it's making our electricity grid increasingly unstable. The Australian energy market operator that monitors our electricity grid that steps in when they're required to prevent Spanish-style blackouts, in 2012, they had to intervene zero times. In 2017, they intervened 100 times. 2021, 400 times, and 2024, 1,300 times. Now these projects are sold to the public as making our grids cheaper and more reliable. If this is the case, why is the
45 data going in the wrong direction?

There was a state of the nation talk at Tomago Aluminium in the Hunter over the last couple of days. This was about the plant's security for the future. That plant

uses 25% of the state's electricity, has 1,100 direct employees and thousands of contractors. So, there are thousands and thousands of individual livelihoods that are depending on the productivity and viability of that manufacturing plant. And past 2028, let's just say the future for that plant looks very bleak. There are many people that attended that meeting that will be looking for new jobs.

Instability of the electricity prices and inability to lock in long-term contracts because of the 5-minute intervals that are now controlling our grid, and the decisions made in rooms like the one that you are sitting in now, are killing our ability to manufacture goods and the stability of our industries.

Australia is the largest exporter of seaborne coal in the world. Japan is one of our main customers, and they are burning hundreds of millions of tonnes of our thermal coal. They have a thriving manufacturing base with such industries and brands as Toyota, Honda, Suzuki, Komatsu, Hitachi, Sony and Panasonic. They are using our thermal coal and our natural gas to power their manufacturing facilities. Why can't we continue to use it here? They are not having these conversations about shutting down their manufacturing plants, yet we are. One would ask, why?

This committee has forbid us to talk about the company that is proposing these abominations on the Riverina, so we won't even mention the country by name that is manufacturing these turbines. But let's just say it's not in Australia. There's been questions raised about the ethical sources of labour in the country of origin of these turbines. There's also ethical questions about the sources of labour provided for the cobalt that goes into the lithium batteries for the manufacturing of these things.

We are far too concentrated on the output and the emissions from the energy sources at the end of these projects, and not concentrated about what's happening going in. We make similar mistakes with the emission standards on our vehicles. We just check what's coming out of the exhaust. We do not check what's going into the intake. When you take the emissions reduction systems out of our vehicles, your fuel efficiency increases by 25%. Wouldn't you think that that would be taken into account when you're producing these systems?

And as a mechanic, and when I was trained in this area, I asked the teacher why, why we don't consider this. And he said, "I get asked this question every time I teach this topic, and I'll give you the same answer. Nobody looks at the inputs, because they only care about the output." Like these renewable projects, stripping back tens of thousands of square kilometres of bushlands, what we like to call the environment. So, stripping back the environment to save the environment of the future seems counterproductive to me. Like burning more fuel to get less emissions out the back of a vehicle.

So, nobody seems to care about the inputs, the destruction done. We only care about the end-product. We seemingly only care about looking good, not actually doing good. This project is not about doing good, it's about looking good. And it's

tied into an entire system that's based around that fact. Electricity in the modern day is the fundamental human right. And the more of these projects that are being put into our grid, it is making it less reliable and less affordable.

5 We once had the cheapest, most reliable grid in the world. And as you can see by the statistics that I put up before about AEMO interrupting the grid 1,300 times in the last year, we are building instability into the grid by continuing with these systems. I don't believe the people of the Riverina want it, and I would like to see it not go ahead, as like a lot of these other projects. I thank you, the committee, for
10 its time, and good luck to the people of the Riverina.

MR PEARSON: Thank you, Stuart. Okay, thank you for that. Our last speaker before a short break is Adi Paterson, who is also on the phone.

15 **MR ADI PATERSON:** Hello.

MR PEARSON: Hi, Adi. Can you hear me all right?

20 **MR PATERSON:** I can. I'm just trying to get away from some people doing some work outside here.

MR PEARSON: Okay, we can hear you well.

25 **MR PATERSON:** Excellent.

MR PEARSON: But if you need to relocate yourself, that's fine.

MR PATERSON: Yeah, I'm pretty close to being away from the noise.

30 **MR PEARSON:** Okay, no problem.

MR PATERSON: Cool, I'm up here.

35 **MR PEARSON:** Okay, you're now sounding quite windy, but that's okay.

MR PATERSON: Yeah, I'm just going to turn around so I'm out of the wind.

MR PEARSON: Okay.

40 **MR PATERSON:** Cool. How's that sounding?

MR PEARSON: That sounds good, Adi. So, if you address the panel for 5 minutes, please.

45 **MR PATERSON:** Yep. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm coming from the position of being very concerned about our ability to successfully deliver on the AEMO plan for electricity, and in general to provide a quality of life for Australians that is based on reliable, always on, low-cost electricity, in a

context where we are using the capability of our supply chains that can currently support baseload power supply which is mainly from brown and black coal. Which obviously has to be replaced to decarbonise our grid, while at the same time avoiding the ecological damage which is caused by wind turbines in particular, and avoiding the problems of intermittent, un-dispatchable supply becoming essentially the replacement for baseload power in our country.

So as a result of that, I've focused attention over the last few years on understanding how our grid system works, and what the cost basis of the large infrastructure part of the grid, which is the main high voltage grid, which supplies the bulk of supply into the eastern part of Australia. And I think it's poorly understood that the large grid is essentially a single machine that has to operate 24/7 by 365, and that that grid cannot be driven by low energy intensity, un-dispatchable power supplies.

So, if we are concerned about the quality of life of Australians, and we are concerned about the long-term impacts of climate change, those two things together say we need the lowest cost, shortest grid that we can get with reliable inputs of power. And globally, the only countries that have achieved this is countries with hydropower, like Portugal and Norway, all with large, well-established operating grids that are based on nuclear. And the primary example, of course, is France.

Some countries have got a mix, where they have a beneficial mix of renewables plus nuclear. An example for that is Canada, or parts of Canada, where they have got hydro plus wind plus nuclear in that part of Canada, which is essentially – sorry, there's a train going by here – which has essentially got a combination of hydro, can do large reactors, connections to the US grid, and an extensive and growing wind and solar capability.

The other part of my analysis is the fact that I started my career in batteries. And the idea that batteries are a dispatchable source of electricity is simply not true. Batteries are essentially buckets of electrons, and they're expensive and they have short lives. So, the best lithium batteries, for example, have a maximum life at the moment that is guaranteed for eight years, and a possible extension of life up to 15 years. There are no plausible improvements on lithium NMC and lithium-ion phosphate batteries at present that can work. And as a result of that, we are not able to construct a grid using the inputs of these sorts of technologies.

And so my view is that it would be important to lift the ban on nuclear, not to decide to have nuclear yet, but to do the groundwork that will only be possible with responsible market actors, knowing that they are not facing the multiple levels of bans that are in place in Australia at present. So that's my sort of opening remarks.

MR PEARSON: Okay, thank you. So, what we're going to do now is take a short break. We'll come back at one o'clock sharp and conclude our remaining speakers after lunch. Not that we're getting lunch, I'm sorry. There's no food for you, no

food for us. So, tea and coffee, short break, and back at 1 o'clock, please. Thank you very much.

[Meeting break/music plays from 02:51:32 to 03:11:13]

5

MR PEARSON: Okay, thank you. Welcome back to the public meeting on the Pottinger Wind Farm. If everyone could please take a seat, and/or kind of suspend talking so that we can hear our next speaker. Our next speaker is on the phone, which is Ramila Chanisheff, and I think she is ready to go. So Ramila, if you could please address the panel.

10

MS RAMILA CHANISHEFF: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

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MR PEARSON: Yes, good afternoon. We can hear you pretty well. Thank you.

MS CHANISHEFF: Thank you. My name is Ramila Chanisheff and I am the President of the Australian Uyghur Women's Association. I am also the spokesperson for the Uyghur community here in Australia. I am here to talk about the human cost of the products that you are discussing today, so the wind farms.

20

Now, you would have heard in 2017, over 380 concentration camps came up, and millions of Uyghurs were rounded up by the Chinese communist regime into the camps under the pretence of re-education. Now, these people have spent many years there, and over the years, China has claimed that it has closed the camps. However, a report that has come out a couple of days ago from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism and also the New York Times, that these people are forced and trafficked out of East Turkestan, or the Uyghur region, into mainland China to make the components and also build the whole product of the products that you are intending to bring into Australia.

25

30

Uyghur forced labour has been a very important issue for our lives, because I am an Uyghur myself. But it has also been a very secretive and very difficult topic to talk about with the Australian government, especially when it has strong ties or strong trade relations with China. We can ensure with credible evidence that the products that you've brought in or are bringing in and the supply chains that you are connecting with is more than likely, highly likely, that Uyghur forced labour is being used.

35

With the modern day Slavery Act in Australia, we have to ensure that industries abide by the morals and ethical values that we have to ensure that the products that we bring in are not made by Uyghur forced labour. The human cost of any product that comes into Australia that has saturated our markets, whether it's wind turbines, the batteries, electrical vehicles, solar panels, everything else that you can buy out in the street that is made in China has been highly, has been related to Uyghur forced labour.

40

I'm saying this without – I'm trying to say that without emotion, because I myself

5 have got cousins who have disappeared into the camps. Every Uyghur person that lives in Australia and in the diaspora can vouch that their immediate family members or their friends and relatives have disappeared into these camps. China uses state-sanctioned forced labour to traffic these people into these areas, whether it's mining or making the products.

10 Now, Uyghurs do not have a say whether they can go or whether they want to stay, when an official member comes knocking on their door. They will have to go, for the threat of being taken into camps or imprisoned arbitrarily. So I beg this committee to reconsider when making or exploring the idea of bringing wind farms, the electrical, the batteries, the electrical components of these products into this country, that Australian industries, that Australian consumers and the Australian government, whether it's federal, state, local governments are not complicit in the Uyghur forced labour, using Uyghurs as slave labourers into making these components. Thank you.

20 **MR PEARSON:** Thank you for that, Ramila. And I would note Ramila has made previous contributions on that issue to the Planning Commission. There is legislation that specifically requires those issues to be addressed, so we haven't sought to duplicate that through our consents. But we do agree it's a very important issue and that the applicant should be well aware of that in terms of its supply chain sourcing.

25 Our next speaker is Alan Moran, who is also on the phone. Yep, so Alan, if you could address the panel, please.

MR ALAN MORAN: Yes, hello. I'm Alan Moran. I'm representing Regulation Economics on the Australian Environment Foundation. Can I go ahead?

30 **MR PEARSON:** Yes, yes, absolutely. We can hear you well.

35 **MR MORAN:** Yes, good. Well, the proposal is predicated on the basis that more renewable power is required to support some preordained, quote, "energy transition," unquote. Its aim is to replace coal, which presently supplies 60-odd percent of the state's electricity, and which current policy says is ageing, more costly than wind and solar, and has unacceptable emissions of carbon dioxide.

40 Now, the consultants estimate annual benefits of the project on New South Wales' economy of up to \$486 million direct and indirect output, something like \$134 million in household income, and over 1,000 direct and indirect jobs. Such benefits may be achieved if the project were to be developed by private enterprise without being reliant upon subsidies from government directly or indirectly.

45 But it has a great many of those subsidies. Without subsidies to renewable power, Pottinger and any other such facility would not be developed. Hence, in a competitive market, they cannot possibly bring increased wealth. The subsidies behind this have steadily risen since their original introduction 20 years ago and now amount nationally to about \$16 billion a year. They comprise the subsidy

equivalent to requirements on energy retailers to incorporate designated renewable sources within the supply mix.

They include direct purchases by the government, at premium prices, of these energy sources. They include direct taxpayer subsidies, which in New South Wales are about \$386 million a year from the state government. And they include the requirements on consumers to reimburse the additional cost of transmission lines, like the South West Regional Energy Zone, which are needed because of the dispersed and less dense supply of wind and solar.

So though commercial for the sponsors, the project's costs are considerable. In addition to its market revenue, the Pottinger Farm will obtain a subsidy through the large-scale generation certificate scheme, which is currently about \$20 per megawatt hour. And if the expected level of production of about 3.4 million megawatt hours per year is achieved, its subsidy from that scheme alone would amount to \$70 million a year.

So what we can see is that in spite of those subsidies, the more of them, the higher the energy price. If we look at the share of wind and solar within total production and the price, we can see that those countries with the lowest share, and they include Russia, India, Korea, have the lowest prices. Whereas countries with the highest share; Germany, UK, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, have the highest prices.

In addition, there is a considerable risk, more risk of blackouts with renewable-heavy markets. Spain and Chile in recent months have demonstrated the fragility of these with nationwide blackouts. It's sometimes said that the aging nature of the existing coal plants brings increased loss of power, but this isn't so. The AEMO in its 2024 Statement of Opportunities showed that between 2019 and 2024, New South Wales coal generators unplanned outage rates actually fell from 17% to 5%, in spite of the plants growing older and being obliged to accommodate subsidised renewables by operating stop-start, rather than continuously as they were supposed to do.

So basically, what we've got is we're subsidising this entity, it's causing increased costs to the consumer in spite of the subsidy. And basically, the only justification for it is that we're worried about climate change from CO₂ emissions. But Australia, of course, is only 1% of those, and it's inconceivable that it would make any difference, especially when the rest of the world is moving against them. So, I would urge the Commission to reject the proposal, which is against the public interest.

MR PEARSON: Okay, thank you for that, Alan. The next speaker is Lynette LaBlack, who is in the room with us today. So over to you, Lynette. And I think you also have some slides to show.

MS LYNETTE LABLACK: I'll just kind of scroll through them as you recognise that that's where they should be. Of course, you can very well see what's happening here. This has happened to us. I'm a neighbour to industrialised

solar. Never heard a thing about it until after it was approved. So that's how much consultation the department do, the developers, it's just non-existent really.

5 Pottinger swindle factory is an unethical storm of neglect and abuse of nature. It's all pain and no gain for Australia, as energy poverty renewables are the asbestos of the future. Predatory Transgrid and parasitic Pottinger Wind are not acting in Australia's best interests at all with their pathetically fragile, unreliable, weather dependent, bankruptingly costly, insecure, ecocidal infrastructure that doesn't work most of the time, designed to make Australia weak, and our most hostile enemy increasingly stronger.

10 Australia cannot possibly remain a democratic sovereign nation when Pottinger's unethical, insecure camera surveillance turbine monstrosities and battery bomb include remotely disabling and overheating fire-creating, sabotaging spyware, 15 cyberware, and the ElectroNet/Transgrid combo are given free rein to experiment on the public, just like Transgrid's Broken Hill blackout future with their sabotaging project EnergyConnect, now enabled without any engineering facts, scientific rigour, integrity or ethics by the non-independent, rotten regulator to be a law unto itself, plundering our precious countryside for no Australian benefit 20 whatsoever, when project EnergyConnect is 46.56% controlled by the State Grid Corporation of China, the Chinese Communist Party. Good luck with that, everyone.

25 The Climate Change Authority Chair's New South Wales Renewable Infrastructure Roadmap, which he orchestrated as New South Wales Energy Minister and Treasurer, can only be described by the best of experts as shambolic policy making, dangerous to grid operation and totally mad. Even worse, the heart of this disaster is here in the southwest, emanating from the insidious Dinawan substation, with ex-Chung Kong infrastructure's Spark infrastructure, and 30 TransGrid running dodgy EnergyCo.

35 And the Climate Change Authority Chair's previous right-hand energy policy director having somehow managed to snag a spot on the NEM expert panel. That's the National Electricity Market expert panel. And his delusional Executive Director of Energy at New South Wales Treasury in 2023 is now acting CEO of the Australian Energy Market Commission, setting Australia's electricity rules. This incestuous fake green swamp with vested interest tentacles all benefiting China cannot continue.

40 Key characteristics of a parasite and a predator apply to Someva's Pottinger Wind and Transgrid's totally unnecessary sabotaging project EnergyConnect. They live on or within a host for survival. They benefit from the host. They obtain advantages from the host. They harm the host. Parasites negatively impact the host's health through various mechanisms.

45 Predators ruthlessly exploit others without pity or compassion for others, in a way that shows no thought or worry about the pain caused to others, and this includes us. Someva's AGL plan shows a lack of care that demonstrates reckless disregard

for the safety or lives of others, which is so great, it appears to be a conscious violation of other people's rights to safety. Despite these glaring realities, as usual, the department's Pottinger wind assessment addresses none of the repeatedly highlighted renewable treachery that's cursing Australia, and to date, the complicit IPCN has rubber stamped it all.

I guess you know, as Dr Who said in 1977, "The very powerful and the very stupid have one thing in common. They don't alter their views to fit the facts. They alter the facts to fit their views."

It's incredibly disingenuous to hear such profound disrespect for the Booroorban southwest area, and for Australian agriculture by Someva, saying they have deep care for our land. They respect Indigenous people. This is not a park. This is a fake green vested interest flush fund. There is nothing mentioned in the Department's assessment of the groundwater supplies being muddied by pile driving for the massive wind turbine bases, or the inevitable, irreversible toxic impacts to our essential life sustaining soil and waterways, including Nyangay Creek, [Yirroli 03:28:00] Creek, Curtain's Creek, channels, drainage lines, which all traverse the site, with Coleambally outboard drain irrigation channel flowing to Yirroli Creek.

As wind turbines are a fake green scourge shedding tons of microplastics from wind turbine blades, known as leading edge erosion, after only a few years of operation, and lithium batteries, lithium battery bombs are also a life-threatening chemical and Bis-FASI PFAS contaminant. You can see in these photos that this stuff is going to end up all over our agricultural land, in our waterways, in the air. This will affect not only us, but our children and our grandchildren. Forever chemicals that you can never get rid of. There's absolutely no mention of any of this in the department's assessment, and it's about time that they do something about it.

The same applies to industrialised solar. It's all coated. All the solar panels from China are coded in PFOS. Various types of PFAS are now listed on their updated draft of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, and we need to know what is actually in these.

So I would like you just to – I don't know what you've been doing because I haven't been looking at this – but just go to the pictures of the slave labour. Start with the slave labour. Can you see that one? Oh, okay. We'll just go back to the start maybe, and then I'll just look at – and then scroll through and I'll talk to the ones here. So next one. Yeah, well, obviously, this is what it's going to do to all the travelling through the areas, blocking off roads, not going around corners.

Now this, the next one, this is Berrybank Wind Turbine, two years old. Look at it. A storm in Victoria in February. The same thing happened with a heap of solar panels in the same area, all bent and twisted. But somehow that just did not appear in the media. We had to get a photo from Mr Riordan, the MP because the media doesn't want to report these facts.

Next one, please. Bulgana, was it last week or the week before? Big fire in their turbine out there. Don't see that in the assessment report. Next, please. This is the microplastic shedding from the turbine blades with only a matter of a few years. This is why they don't actually guarantee the leading edge of wind turbine blades for long at all, I think it's five years, because they start to fall to pieces, and then you end up with this bisphenol A shedding into the air, over the land, over the water. It's actually lethal to young children and as toxic as blue asbestos. And this is supposed to be clean, green and sustainable.

Okay, next, please. They're sticking this stuff on the turbine supposedly to make them less noisy, I think, but they're flying off, telling people to wear helmets because they're going to hurt you if they hit you. Keep going, please.

Next. That's just – and this is all the junk that's going to end up all over our countryside. And this is Transgrid. This is what you call clean, green energy going through the Kosciuszko National Park. This is jolly Transgrid, just like wrecking Australia for no reason.

Next, please. Thank goodness someone's got some sense, and this is what needs to happen with Pottinger. Next one, please. Big battery fire. Can't put them out, burn for days. Extremely toxic, life-threatening. Smoke, also a PFAS risk. Next, please. And this is, yeah, well, there's no fire extinguisher, according to CSIRO, to actually put these out.

Next, please. This is what's already happening at Wagga. PFAS, agricultural land not being able to be used anymore due to the RAAF-based stuff. This is going to – this is what's happening with renewables as well. Keep going, please.

And now there's a Commonwealth ban. Solar panels and electric wiring source from China are both coated in PFOS, perfluoro-octane sulfonate. And also lithium batteries are a toxic PFAS contaminant. The same with the wind turbines, with the bisphenol A. This is, there's a ban from the 1st of July. So hopefully the IPC is going to take that into account and make sure these components are properly assessed.

Next, please. It's just about finished. Here's our little Australian painted snipe. Very, very rare. Lives around, or goes to the, frequents the Balranald area. This is apparently their flight path. Don't see that mentioned at all by the department in any of their assessment. And shamefully, the environmentalists who love talking about this bird, they won't even speak up, because they're funded by the government.

Next, please. Same little, just another picture of our Australian painted snipe we need addressed.

So obviously unreliable intermittent solar wind and batteries are not in the best interest of consumers at all, because they basically defy every aspect of the national electricity law; price, quality, safety, reliability, security, supply of

electricity, reliability, safety and security of the grid.

Next, please. Oh, and again. Now I just wanted to follow up on Ramila. Because whilst I do hear the IPC say that, oh, they don't want to repeat what's already been addressed with modern slavery, this is not being addressed. We have an Anti-Slavery Commissioner in New South Wales and we have a Chair of the Anti-Slavery Committee, who's actually the Wagga MP. They have both now for nearly two years failed to talk in the media about industrialised solar wind and batteries.

They have deliberately done this, because they know if they actually address this, the transition will stop. Because 100% of the solar panels are being sourced from Uyghur slave labour supply chains. Lots of the wind turbines, all the cobalt in the turbines and the batteries is being sourced from slave labour supply chains in the Congo and elsewhere. And the most shameful fact that such a terrible situation where the west is reliant on the worst slavery conditions in at least the [unintelligible 03:35:51], it's really wrong.

And I encourage the IPC to take a lead on this, and ensure that that new condition that we actually achieved in 2022 dealing with modern slavery, where the company have to prove prior to construction that none of their components are linked to slavery, is enforced. Because the Wagga Council ignored that, and they're building it, because they actually want this. They don't care if it's unethical. They don't care if it doesn't work. They just want the money.

And there's also an amended stormwater management plan condition that has also been ignored. Prior to construction, the company has to write a contamination response procedure. And I don't think they want to do that either, because they know their stuff is contaminating, and the department continue to just trust the developers. As we've previously been told by a department planner and environmental assessment officer; we're just trusting the developers. Well, it's about time that the IPC start trusting the independent experts that do not have vested interests. Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Thanks, Lynette. Okay, our next speaker is Grant Piper on the telephone. Grant, can you hear us?

MR GRANT PIPER: Yes, I've got you [unintelligible 03:37:38].

MR PEARSON: Yeah, and we can hear you well, Grant. So please address the panel.

MR PIPER: Thank you, Commissioner. Slide one, please. I apologise, a lot of this is repetitive from previous meetings that we've all been involved in before. Slide one, general aviation hazard. There's 247, 280-metre turbines is an obvious aviation hazard if an aircraft is forced to descend to remain clear of cloud. Pilots unfamiliar with the area in bad weather will be in particular danger.

Slide two, firefighting. Water storage on site is minimal for the serious grass or

bushfire and is insufficient as aerial firefighting large tankers such as C-130 or 737 will be severely limited near the project.

5 The bush, slide three, the bushfire report in the EIS only considers the risk of bushfire to the project assets, rather than the risk to the local properties' infrastructure and public from fires caused by the wind, solar and BESS.

Slide 4. The addition of 247 ignition sources of bushfire is asking for trouble.

10 Next slide. Turbine fires are not uncommon as the slides of recent events show.

Next slide. Blade throw of up to a kilometre increases complexity of dealing with a turbine fire.

15 The next slide is a video of a large tanker working, which you may have seen before. This is a video of a 737 in March '24. The firebomber drops at less than 200 feet using the fuselage length as a reference. Turbines will be 920-feet high for comparison. The bushfire report does not mention aerial firefighting and thus does not consider the adverse effect on the ability of large tankers to work a fire near tall wind turbines. Nor does the report consider the inability to extinguish battery fires, or the prohibition on RFS entering industrial solar projects to fight a fire due to toxic smoke and restricted evacuation and manoeuvring space.

20 During fire season, farmers keep RFS tankers and private firefighting vehicles loaded at the ready, and the proponent should be required to do the same. It is unfair to rely on local landowners and RFS volunteers as these are limited. Additional conditions of consent should include no turbine operation in high fire danger conditions, and equipped and trained fire crews to be maintained in the project area at all times during fire season.

30 Next slide. This is serious business.

Next slide. Parking the turbines in bunny ears position is irrelevant for large fire bombers operating in smoke and turbulence.

35 Next slide. Land and water contamination. Bisphenol A; no consideration of contamination caused by the project, or specifically blade erosion, is mentioned in the recommendation report or the conditions of consent.

40 Next slide. There is no acknowledgement of blade erosion, and the consequent spreading of BPA from the epoxy over the land and water.

45 Next slide. Contamination of the food chain or exposure to microplastics, PFAS and asbestos are belaboured over by the press with long running inquiries, court actions and compensation schemes at huge cost. And here we have a future unsolvable contamination problem in the making, and it gets ignored.

Next slide. Failing cancelling the project altogether, a condition of consent must

be the effective and transparent land and water contamination monitoring.

Next slide. Our farm produce will potentially be banned from markets if it cannot be proven to be free of contamination.

5

Next slide. Rehabilitation. Massive foundations are left with 2,000 tonnes of concrete in each.

10

Next slide. A condition of consent should be that turbines be mounted on pier type footings rather than mass gravity foundations.

Next slide. Next slide. These use one third of the concrete and leaves a much smaller footprint after turbine removal. Next slide.

15

Next slide, counterproductive to the stated aim. Immense local destruction of farmland and habitat is contrary to saving the planet. Across Australia, we've tallied 41,000 turbines in planning.

20

Next slide. Neither the government via the Department or EnergyCo has provided usable spatial maps of all the proposed projects or assessed the cumulative impact.

Next slide. These pictures are from Lotus Creek Wind Project in Queensland currently.

25

Next slide. A different environment to the South West REZ, yes, next slide, but this serves to highlight the blind ideologically driven destruction that man is capable of.

30

Next slide. How many Teal or Green voters would agree with this?

Next slide. The Member for Warringah does not support wind turbines in her electorate, but supports them everywhere else.

35

Next slide. All these projects are mined, transported, manufactured, built and decommissioned using fossil fuels.

Next slide. And this has to happen every 25 years or so.

40

Next slide. A continuous cycle of mining and consumption.

Next slide. And local degradation and destruction.

Next slide. Next slide. Next slide. Next slide. And next slide.

45

The South West REZ has an approved network capacity of 2.5 gigawatt. This project alone is 1.4 gigawatt of installed capacity. What amount of total installed capacity is expected for the REZ to be able to [unintelligible 03:42:42] 2.5 gigawatt? Other South West REZ wind projects are Baldwin, the Plains, Dinawan,

Bullawah, and Wilan, totalling over 500 [unintelligible 03:42:51] projects.

Slide 37. The local capacity of less than 30% [unintelligible 03:42:57] the massive overbuild is required.

5

Next slide. The Commissioners should consider the massive overbuild as a total economic and environmental cost due to its inefficiency.

10 Justification. The project has justified grounds for a well-documented CO₂ reduction goal. The EIS [unintelligible 03:43:15] is driven by the UN agenda 2030 sustainability goal. These lofty ambitions seem to conflict with reality and overstate the [unintelligible 03:43:24] play in the world.

15 Next slide. Wishful thinking does not make a power generation system work. [Unintelligible 03:43:30] does not change the laws of-physics.

Next slide. Using inefficient methods of power production means ultimately more resources are used.

20 Next slide. More natural resources generate the power [unintelligible 03:43:42], plus the extra transmission, next slide, plus storage [unintelligible 03:43:46] generate no power.

25 Next slide. And then firming to back it all up, next slide, or destroy any environmental pollutants, next slide, and add to the [unintelligible 03:43:56].

30 Next slide. These are [unintelligible 03:44:00]. The New South Wales government's intentions regarding farm and food production are opaque. The Emissions Reduction Act 2023 is touted to codify the 2015 Paris Agreement principles, but it's [unintelligible 03:44:15] the Paris Agreement proviso that lower emissions are to be achieved in a manner that does not threaten food production.

35 And the National Electricity Law does not prioritise food production over the other longstanding objectives of price, quality, safety and security. The National Electricity Law only [unintelligible 03:44:32] as an objective in September 2023. These objectives are to be given little priority.

40 Next slide. If we consider who benefits, it seems to me the same people as always. The [unintelligible 03:44:43] as well as the commodity traders.

45 Next slide. Shows the [unintelligible 03:44:48]. [unintelligible 03:44:51] and AEMO are deficient and are not reliable with regard to [unintelligible 03:44:55] most efficient development pathway. Both have been funded by experts and organisations working in this field.

The proponent claims that this project can provide [unintelligible 03:45:06] and reliable power. Technical analysis and experience in Australia and other countries

show that this is clearly not the case. There is no [unintelligible 03:45:13] improving in this project if the whole scheme is counterproductive day-to-day.

5 Mining and exporting gas and coal can burn energy, while the private [unintelligible 03:45:21] of its use here [unintelligible 03:45:24].

Next slide. Man-made deductions [unintelligible 03:45:28] to negate [unintelligible 03:45:29] Australia may do.

10 Next slide, as in war, next slide, and regular natural events. I'm absolutely in favour of minimising waste and doing things in the most efficient way possible. But all policy, no matter what is prominent, appears to encourage more.

15 Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Thank you, Grant. Thanks a lot, Grant. Our next speaker is also on the phone. Do we have them ready to go? Yeah, Rafe Champion. Rafe, if you can hear me.

20 **MR RAFF CHAMPION:** I can hear you.

MR PEARSON: Yeah, good. So over to you, Rafe.

25 **MR CHAMPION:** Well, thank you, Richard, and thanks for the opportunity to be included in this hearing. First of all, I should say that this is the 54th anniversary of June the 5th, 1969, when I arrived in Sydney from Tasmania via Adelaide. I describe myself as a retired dairy farmer with an agricultural science degree.

30 The point of that story is that I have been around long enough to see the rise of the climate alarm from the [unintelligible 03:46:44], and the net zero campaign that [unintelligible 03:46:47] out of it.

35 Two points I want to make. First is a general one about the precautionary principle. I will come back to that after a couple of more specific points. But just briefly, the point about that is that the interpretation of the precautionary principle has transformed radically from the early days of warming to the current day.

40 Now, moving on to a third point, which is one that Bill Kingston pointed out some time ago. It comes from Article 2 from the Paris Agreement 2015. After a number of words about the important and valuable things that we could do to mitigate climate change, there's a kicker at the end that it has to be done in a manner that does not threaten food production.

45 I'll just emphasise that. We need the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, but in a manner that does not threaten food production. In a manner that does not threaten bird production.

So, moving on to a specific concern. This is about the precautionary principle. The

precautionary principle was the driving concern in the early days of warming. Much less is heard about it nowadays. The question has to be asked, why there was so much warming without the Earth getting warmer. [unintelligible 03:48:47] clearly got better since we emerged from the cold of the little Ice Age. We are now urged to resist temperature rise in the order of 1.5 or 2 degrees to avoid terrible harms.

But in reported history, there are two periods when the climate is even more favourable for plants and animals and human beings than it is at present. These were the Roman warm period and the medieval warm period, when the temperature was probably 1.5 or 2 degrees hotter. This suggests we would do well to aim to get 1.5 or 2 degrees hotter. However, to avoid moving in that direction, trillions of dollars have been spent around the western world to get more expensive and less reliable energy, with massive damage to the environment. This suggests we need to recall this precautionary principle.

Now this precautionary principle means that whenever somebody is planning to do something which could remotely have some undesirable effect, they should not be allowed to do it until they can categorically prove that there's no harm. This means that even the most remote predictions about possible downsides of warming could be invoked to justify restrictions on burning fossil fuels that generate people reliable power.

So fast forward to recent times when Ivan Kennedy contacted the relevant government department raising concerns about the drying effect of wind turbines [unintelligible 03:50:39], which could increase the chance of fires, and moreover fires that would burn hotter and consequently spread faster. That looked like a bit of a hazard. Back came the reply from the relevant official that they would take Ivan seriously when he could provide theory-based scientific studies to support his concerns. No application of the precautionary principle there.

Never mind about that risk. Just come back in a few years after you've raised the funds, organised the research, conducted it, written it up, spent a couple of years walking it through referees that don't like it because they're in favour of wind turbines, bring it back and we'll talk about it.

So things have come a long way from the day when I came to Sydney. I hope the panel will consider all of the points raised in my written submission and the other submissions, and I hope that the panel will look at these concerns with the precautionary principle in mind, and also the injunction from the Paris Convention to do all of our good climate mitigation deeds in a manner that does not threaten food production.

So that's all I've got to say, thank you. And thanks for the opportunity.

MR PEARSON: Great. Thank you, Rafe. We next have John McGrath on the phone. And John, can you hear us?

MR JOHN MCGRATH: Yes, I can, sir. How are you?

MR PEARSON: Yes, I'm very good, John. We can hear you, I think, so if you'd just like to address the panel.

MR MCGRATH: Okay, well, yes, firstly, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to address the panel, and I'll just bring in my own thoughts, and then I'll go to speaking on behalf of the Landscape Guardians.

MR PEARSON: Yes, sure.

MR MCGRATH: Okay. Sorry, I just can't see the paperwork here. Okay, so there's 200 and, supposedly 247 wind turbines for the Pottinger Wind Farm development with an alleged output of 1,300 megawatts. Referencing AGL and Someva, the Pottinger Energy Park Project, this will be supported by a 400-megawatt/1,600-megawatt hour, big scale battery connected to Project EnergyConnect, the transmission line. EnergyConnect has a bidirectional, meaning both ways, capacity of a 330kV transmission line of 800 megawatts. Therefore, alone with this project, there is a discrepancy of 500 megawatts in power transfer between the alleged output of 1,300 megawatts and 800 megawatts. It's just not feasible.

In another project within the South West Renewable Energy Zone, is it Junction Rivers wind turbine development, there's 750 megawatts. There's two parts of that energy zone. VNI West, referencing [AIA overview 03:54:16] has a transfer capacity of 1.93 gigawatts. The discrepancy [unintelligible 03:54:22] is 800 megawatts from the 3.56 gigawatt output of the South West Renewable Energy Zone. So you've got 800 gigawatts of discrepancy just in VNI West alone.

What I'm pointing out is the planned transmission infrastructure failed to have the capacity to transfer generation out of the South West Renewable Energy Zone. Therefore, why are we, why are further generations also planned and approved with our due diligence, and I've raised this for 21 years, been applied to proposed transmission infrastructure capacity to transfer that generation? Basically, there's over-generation on the transmission model. There's only, this is only one aspect of approving the Pottinger Wind Farm SSD 59235464. So, the IPC needs to consider that before approving the project. Sorry, I'm rushing this, but I just want to make sure I get through it.

Now, I'll just bring up some stuff on behalf of the Yass Landscape Guardians on the Pottinger Wind Farm, which is State Significant Development 59235464.

Why are generation sources being planned hundreds of kilometres from load centres of the New South Wales east coast, meaning Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, a distance of over 700 kilometres, referencing AIA? Then for Victoria and Melbourne, over 500 kilometres, again referencing AIA. Proponents of so-called renewable energy cite marginal losses on transmission lines using high voltage AC are known to be high, thus exasperating the reasoning for

building intermittent generation sources 100 kilometres from load centres.

Now I'll go with the lack of – and you people should know this – lack of compulsory decommissioning legislation in Australia [unintelligible 03:56:22] these so-called renewable energy projects should ring alarm bells. Someva, and I apologise if I'm pronouncing your name wrong, advertised that they were here for longer the long run, the long haul for the Pottinger Energy Park Project. The reality is that any of these projects are on-sold with regularity, and once the project is on-sold, the infrastructure decommissioning agreement, if any, between the developer and the landholder, becomes null and void.

As an example, the original Crookwell Wind Farm approved by the Upper Lachlan Shire Council circa 1998, has been on-sold several times from the original developer, Pacific Power, currently owned by Tilt Renewables, and its approving authority, Upper Lachlan Council, can now not enforce decommissioning of these [unintelligible 03:57:19] due to a lack of the decommissioning contract. Meaning the Upper Lachlan Shire Council has a massive clean-up [unintelligible 03:57:26] on its hands for a redundant wind farm project. So, the approving authority and the host landholder should be aware of that.

Okay, the next thing I want to go on to is the environmental side of these things. The erosion and habitat destruction and lack of support by the New South Wales DPIRD compliance staff. And I'm using Rye Park here as an example. With the Rye Park wind turbine development construction, even with the multitude of complaints, and there were a lot of complaints and valid reasons to complain, against the original developer, Tilt Renewables, regarding habitat destruction breaches, massive and continuing soil erosion issues, the so-called New South Wales DPIRD compliance department [unintelligible 03:58:20], never been to the [unintelligible 03:58:21]. They never came near the project.

Besides impact on the habitat – besides Pottinger is going to impact the habitat of two bird species that I'm aware of. I might have a special interest in birds. The Major Mitchell cockatoo, which is vulnerable in New South Wales. The Plains Wanderer, which is endangered in New South Wales. Besides that, the Pottinger wind turbine development is directly in the watershed of the Murray River, and therefore the inevitable erosion would directly impact the Murray River.

So, Hay Shire Council and potential Pottinger wind turbine hosts, don't expect any assistance from the New South Wales DPIRD compliance department in the real event of environmental issues. Because of Someva's work practices – what I'm saying here, the New South Wales department will not back you in the event of any of these things happening.

So, I apologise if I'm rushing out a bit, but if the Independent Planning Commission would like a copy of my notes – I'm sorry, I haven't sent them in, but I can forward those in.

MR PEARSON: Yes, that'd be appreciated, John, if you could do that.

MR MCGRATH: Okay.

MR PEARSON: Thank you.

5

MR MCGRATH: No, there's no worries. There's several – that's only a few of the issues that are involved with these developments. But the department certainly doesn't help.

10

MR PEARSON: Yes, I'm sorry. You trailed away a bit there.

MR MCGRATH: Oh, sorry. There's only a few, that's only a few of the issues that are [unintelligible 03:59:59].

15

MR PEARSON: Understood.

MR MCGRATH: And the New South Wales Planning Department certainly doesn't help.

20

MR PEARSON: Okay, understood. Is that, does that conclude what you wanted to tell us today, John?

MR MCGRATH: Yes, that's all. I'm sorry, I've got through it a little bit quicker than I wanted to. I just wanted to make sure I got it in.

25

MR PEARSON: No, no, that's perfectly fine. And if you want to provide a copy of your written notes, that would be appreciated as well.

30

MR MCGRATH: No worries. Well, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

MR PEARSON: Thank you.

MR MCGRATH: And all the best, thank you.

35

MR PEARSON: Yes, thanks very much, John. Have a good day.

MR MCGRATH: Thank you.

40

MR PEARSON: Okay, our next speaker is Stan Moore, who's also on the phone. Stan, if you can hear me, please.

MR STAN MOORE: Oh, yes, I can. It's Stan Moore here.

45

MR PEARSON: Hi, Stan. If you'd like to address the panel for 5 minutes.

MR MOORE: Okay, thank you very much for the opportunity.

MR PEARSON: No worries.

MR MOORE: I'm getting a little bit of feedback, but I'll try and persevere. Thank you for the opportunity to – is that still there, or is the feedback just being corrected?

MR PEARSON: We can hear you. We might turn you up just a little bit.

MR MOORE: Yeah, no, that's fine. I'll begin then. Look, thank you for the opportunity, and I'm sure a number of the issues have been raised by presenters there today. The issue that I'd wish to address are a couple of these. Firstly, I turn to the response to submissions report, and that's quite enlightening. Because in the overview, paragraph 4, it says, "This project will provide reliable and affordable source of energy." Now, this is not the case, and I'll give you an example.

I live just east of the Great Dividing Range at Goulburn. And on last week, Tuesday the 27th, we received a damaging wind warning from the Bureau, 90-kilometre-an-hour winds. Now, off the back of that, all the wind farms were turning, and turning very strongly across the range. And there were stories or articles saying, look at the great generating capacity of these massive turbines.

Well, as the weather has it, on Wednesday, the wind dropped, and by Thursday for three days, we're in a big high and no wind. I can give you the example. I drove on Thursday, at 2:00 p.m. I drove across the range to Yass, and you can see from there on the way, probably of the order of at least six or seven wind turbine factories. None of them were turning. On my trip back home at 4:00 p.m., there was still no wind turbines turning along the range. So, you cannot say that these provide reliable source of energy. They are not reliable. They are weather dependent and therefore they are variable.

The other issue in the overview is that they help greenhouse emissions, and then they go and say, "associated with energy generation." They fail to take into account and mention the carbon emissions involved in the production of this infrastructure.

And also finally in the overview, they talk about a significant benefit to the Riverina and Murray region with the establishment, the development cost of what, some \$2.152 billion. This is a figure that is clearly made up, with a significant component being spent on the infrastructure. So, it's a nonsense to say that the area is going to benefit by that degree. I think that is a further lie that's being told.

In relation to cumulative impacts, and of course, this proposal is not very far from the Conargo wind factory proposal, apart from destroying the landscape, the developer is saying, trust us, and "As the cumulative impacts will be further considered and assessed in the post-approval management of the plan." Now, this is at the wrong end. Cumulative impacts should be addressed before these things are approved, not being left behind for the developer to say, oh, we're taking it into account, blah, blah, blah. So, I think from a planning point of view, that's

definitely around the wrong way.

And my last point is the decommissioning and removal of infrastructure. And again, when you come to the EIS and also the response to submissions, they come back and say they will remove infrastructure to a depth of 0.5 of a metre, and in order to – this is laughable – at the avoidance of environmental disturbance. This is an absolute nonsense because when they dig the trenches to put the infrastructure in place and the cabling, of course they disturbed the ground. And so why can they not disturb the ground and take everything up, and remove all materials and infrastructure that they’ve brought on the site? I think that’s probably enough from me, and look, thank you very much for the opportunity.

MR PEARSON: Thanks Stan. Okay, our last speaker for today is the Mayor of Hay Shire Council, Carol Oataway. Thanks, Carol.

MS CAROL OATAWAY: Thank you, commissioners, for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Hay Shire Council. My comments today are general in nature. Council will provide a separate submission addressing the specific conditions of consent.

Hay Shire is located at the centre of the South West Renewable Energy Zone. Our geography, sparse population and land use patterns make this region well placed to host renewable energy projects. Council recognises that developments like the Pottinger Wind Farm represent the most substantial change to our economy, landscape and community since settlement. Change on this scale must be supported through proper process.

This hearing, together with robust planning and genuine consultation, plays an important role in ensuring that renewable energy development benefits local communities. With this support in place, Council believes that the Pottinger Wind Farm can deliver real and lasting value to Hay, particularly in helping us diversify our economy and plan for a more resilient future.

We welcome the framework set out in the State Significant Development Assessment Report, especially the requirement for detailed planning around accommodation, waste, transport and water. These plans are essential to protect community infrastructure and services, and support our existing industry. The plans also present an opportunity to identify long term legacy outcomes for the community.

Council’s position is pro-development and pro-community. We support energy developments when they strengthen local capacity, respect existing industries and leave a legacy of shared benefit. From the outset, we’ve been clear that this transition must happen with us, not to us.

Council developed the fundamental principles of successful renewable energy in Hay. This occurred over a series of workshops, including town hall meetings open to the whole community. This document ensured that the community concerns

were addressed and opportunities maximised. It did not support one ideology over another but rather ensured that our community was at the heart of all discussions.

I am aware that over the past two years, there has been 12 opportunities for the community to attend community consultation with Pottinger, including a week-long open community review of the EIS as requested by the community at one of the town hall meetings.

Council has worked constructively with Someva and AGL in progressing the Pottinger Wind Farm. Letters of intent for community benefit funding have been signed, with a voluntary planning agreement now in development. This agreement is expected to deliver significant funding to Hay for the next 30 years, supporting projects identified by the community across 15 Council-led engagement sessions. These benefits will complement the short-term economic activity generated during construction.

The renewables industry is already supporting our local economy. Over the past three years of planning, developments such as Pottinger Wind Farm have contributed to increased spend in our accommodation, hospitality, food, retail and fuel sectors. This meeting is just one example of how the industry contributes to all sectors in our community. Many of you stayed in our motels, ate at our restaurants, enjoyed coffee at our cafes and fuelled your vehicles. That money circulates through our economy, supporting local businesses and jobs. For context, 55.4% of all economic activity in this financial year in Hay came from people outside of our region.

We are an open economy and rely on economic activity from outside our region for our economic wellbeing. At the same time, Council is mindful of the broader impacts. We remain concerned about how cumulative effects will be managed as the Renewable Energy Zone is delivered. It is important that projects are sequenced, coordinated and implemented with clear oversight and accountability.

The issue of cumulative impacts across projects, including energy generation, transmission and logistics, remains a major challenge. While planning documents address this in principle, the delivery of coordinated outcomes will require stronger leadership. EnergyCo must be equipped to manage this coordination on a whole of government basis.

Council notes that the waste management plan, as required in the SSD report, must be developed with local government involvement. Construction and decommissioning waste, if managed locally, could support new industry and employment through a circular economy approach.

On water, we ask that developers limit reliance on open market purchases, especially during low allocation years. Access to affordable water is essential for our primary producers. Council supports a coordinated approach to monitoring cumulative water use across the REZ.

Regarding transport, local roads and bridges are not currently equipped to support the scale of equipment required. The Hay Bridge in particular presents a constraint. We support the inclusion of transport and access management plans but emphasise the need for Council to have a clear role in responding to road impacts and local concerns as they arise.

While much of the discussion to date has focused on construction, I want to emphasise the long-term significance of the 35 operational jobs committed under this project. For Hay, that number matters. These are skilled ongoing roles that will help anchor families in the region and contribute to the long-term viability of local businesses, schools and services. They mark a shift from temporary investment to sustained renewal.

Agriculture will always remain central to Hay's identity and economy, but like all regions, we must adapt. Renewable energy offers a second pillar of economic resilience, not in competition with farming, but alongside it.

In closing, Council would like to formally express the support for Pottinger Wind Farm. We recognise the potential for lasting economic benefit, and we are committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure these outcomes are delivered in a way that protects and strengthens our community. Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Okay, thank you, Mayor. And you mention that Council would make a submission in relation to the proposed conditions of the consent?

MS OATAWAY: Yes, yes.

MR PEARSON: Okay, great. Thank you. Any other questions, Commissioners? Thank you.

MS OATAWAY: Okay, thank you very much.

MR PEARSON: Thank you very much. Okay, look, that does bring us to the end of proceedings. I just want to briefly run through. It was a very full day, and I'll just run through some of the things that we've heard today.

We've heard a bit, there is, in the room, there's certainly concern about distrust in the renewable energy rollout. Many speakers expressed concerns about the broader direction of national energy policy, particularly the rollout of renewables in rural areas.

There was a fair bit of scepticism, I think, about the effectiveness of wind energy in addressing climate change. There was also some scepticism about climate change. A view this transition places an unfair burden on regional communities for the benefit of urban centres and cities. Many of you highlighted fears that large-scale wind farm developments will despoil the natural beauty of the region, damage the food bowl, including the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, and fragment rural communities. The loss of rural amenity, mental health impacts and a

perceived emotional toil from living near wind farm infrastructure were raised.

A reasonable amount of criticism of the planning process, what was seen as inadequate community consultation, lack of clarity regarding network access rights and transparency, inconsistent government messaging, calls for greater transparency. There was the social licence issue was raised, which is an incredibly important issue to all industries, but particularly a new emerging industry. And the lack of binding commitments around decommissioning and waste management came through clearly.

There was concern about some quite specific environmental impacts. There was a lot about microplastics and PFAS. There was endangered species such as the Plains Wanderer. There was some positive suggestions about how that might be differently and better managed. Fire safety, bushfire fighting was an issue raised. A lack of holistic assessment of long term environmental and health impacts, suggestion for more rigorous scientific reviews, and requests for developers to contribute directly to local mitigation programs and firefighting capability.

Yeah, I mentioned this earlier, there was certainly some speakers spoke about climate change. I do have to reiterate we're not here to set policy, we're here to implement policy, and we're absolutely here to consider the environmental impacts of the project that's before us, which is the Pottinger Wind Farm. But it's fair to outline that there were concerns about national security, energy sovereignty and undue foreign benefit from subsidies were also voiced.

The issue of modern slavery in the construction of solar panels and wind farms was raised, and that has been consistently raised through hearings of the Commission. It is an issue where there is a legislative basis, but we'll consider requests to impose a condition of consent in regard to this. We would certainly obviously entirely want the applicant not to in any way compromise that issue and its sourcing of materials. And multiple contributors talked about alternatives such as nuclear energy as a lower, a more reliable, lower impact alternative to renewables.

I just reiterate, I'm running through what we heard today, not what we as a panel necessarily think. We need to move on now and consider all those things that we've heard from you today, and I'll just mention cumulative impacts as well. That was an issue that was mentioned, and certainly is something that the Commission has previously and currently turns its mind to quite seriously in relation to projects such as this.

So they're a lot of the issues that we heard today. Our next step is to move forward and consider what we've heard today, consider what we might hear in submissions, which close at 5:0 p.m. next Thursday, the 12th of June. So you can submit your notes from today, or you can make separate submissions and post them to our website, or by email or post.

I just would like to wrap up today's meeting by thanking everyone sincerely for

giving their time to come today, and/or talking to us on the phone. It was really appreciated. I do apologise for the lunch mix up. We thought we were going to have a 5-minute break, a 10-minute break and a 5-minute break and there would be no time for lunch. In future, I think we need to have a little bit of a think about how we deal with that going forward.

So, thank you everyone. Thank you to my fellow commissioners, Michael Wright and Sarah Dinning. Thank you to the Office of Independent Planning Commission staff for gamely assisting us today to listen to all your concerns. Thank you to people who followed remotely. And – yes, just one second. I’m happy to talk to people briefly offline, but it’s not a debate for Q&A at this point.

[Member of audience speaking]

MR PEARSON: Oh, okay, so the Department of Planning is not appearing at today’s meeting, and that was as per the scheduled program for today. Because –

[Member of audience speaking]

MR PEARSON: Well, if you let me finish, because they have completed their assessment of this project. They have now submitted it to the Planning Commission. It is our role now to consider what they’ve provided to us and what you’ve told us.

If we think we need further information from the Department or from the Applicant, we will request that, and that will be made publicly available so you’ll be able to see that.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: They’re always present.

MR PEARSON: Yes, they have been in the past, you’re correct, but we’ve taken the view that this may actually work better in the way that we’re presenting it today, because they have finished their work on this project essentially, and their work is the Assessment Report that is on our website and available for you to review.

So, I’ll take your comment on board, but I’m going to conclude the meeting now and thank everyone for attending, and have a great rest of the day. Thank you all.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED