



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: HOMEBUSH BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (SSD-77443244)

APPLICANT MEETING

PANEL:	ANDREW MILLS (Chair) DUNCAN MARSHALL
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	KENDALL CLYDSDALE ISAAC CLAYTON
APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:	MATHEW PRYCE (Ausgrid) RADHA ROCKWOOD (Ausgrid) HAYLEY KARDASH (Ausgrid)
LOCATION:	ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE
DATE & TIME:	10:00AM – 10:45PM FRIDAY, 10 JULY 2026

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

MR ANDREW MILLS: Good morning, Radha.

5 **MS RADHA ROCKWOOD:** Hi.

MR MILLS: Morning, Hayley.

10 **MS HAYLEY KARDASH:** Good morning.

MR MILLS: Well, let me begin. I'd like to first of all acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Gadigal land and acknowledge the traditional custodians of all the lands on which we've virtually meeting today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

15 So, welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Homebush Battery Energy Storage System state significant development application currently before the Commission for determination. The Applicant, Ausgrid, proposes to develop the Homebush Battery Energy Storage System, a 200 megawatt/431 megawatt-hour battery and associated
20 infrastructure, approximately 13 kilometres west of Sydney's Central Business District in the Strathfield LGA.

My name is Andrew Mills. I am the Chair of the Independent Planning Commission and of this Commission Panel, and I am joined by my fellow commissioner, Duncan
25 Marshall. We're also joined by Kendall Clydsdale and Isaac Clayton from the office of the Independent Planning Commission.

In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of the information, today's meeting is being recorded, and a complete transcript will be
30 produced and made available on the Commission's website. This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its decision.

It's important for the commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it is considered appropriate. If you are asked a question and are not in a
35 position to answer, you may take the question on notice. However, following the meeting, the Commission will advise you in writing if there any questions taken on notice that the Panel considers a formal response. Any subsequent response or information provided to the Commission will then be published on our website.

40 I request that all participants here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time, and for all members to ensure that they do not speak over the top of each other, to ensure accuracy of the transcript.

45 So, thank you. With that, we'll get started. Perhaps I can ask if each of you would like to just simply give your names and titles for the record.

MR MATHEW PRYCE: Okay. I can start. Good morning, everyone, my name is Mat Pryce, I'm the Senior Project Manager for the Grid Scale BESS Team. I'm

responsible for delivering the best projects once they progress through development. I hand over to Hayley.

5 **MS KARDASH:** Good morning, everyone. Hayley Kardash here, Community and Stakeholder Engagement Leader responsible for engaging with the community and all stakeholders on the project. Radha?

10 **MS ROCKWOOD:** I'm Radha Rockwood. I'm leading the EIS and submissions reports and the scoping reports for the Grid Scale BESS Program.

MR MILLS: Thank you, all. You have a presentation that you've sent to us in advance of this, so I'm quite happy to hand back to you to then take us through that presentation. And if you're happy, we can ask you questions along the way in relation to that. I think most of what you've got in the presentation covers a number of the points, or most of the points, that we've put on the agenda.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, great. I'll just try to share that presentation, if it allows me to.

20 **MR MILLS:** Yes, please.

MS ROCKWOOD: No, it doesn't allow the share function.

25 **MR MILLS:** We can share from this end, I think.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes. The last time it did, I'm not sure why it doesn't this time.

MR KENDALL CLYDSDALE: Yes, apologies, Radha. It normally would.

30 **MS ROCKWOOD:** Yes. I'm just clicking 'share' and nothing's happening, it's not – yes.

MR MILLS: Allow to share, can't you, from the ...

35 **MR CLYDSDALE:** Yes, I'm just going to see if we can fix that. [Pause 00:04:15 to 00:05:06].

MR MILLS: You have the presentation, if you want to share.

40 **MS ROCKWOOD:** Yes, I'm OK if you do it.

MR CLYDSDALE: Yes, I'm just going to have to share it. Apologies, Radha.

45 **MS ROCKWOOD:** That's fine, no worries, yes.

MR CLYDSDALE: You just tell me when to ...

MS ROCKWOOD: To turn to the next slide, yes, sure.

MR CLYDSDALE: Yes.

MS ROCKWOOD: Okay, great. So, today we'll be presenting on the Homebush BESS. We can move to the next slide. We can move to the next slide. Yes.

5

Ausgrid acknowledges and pays respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of this land, and we honour Elders past and present, understanding their knowledge and wisdom ensures continuation of culture and traditional practices.

10

Thanks, you can move to the next slide. Okay, so we've already done introductions, but we'll give a quick overview of the Homebush BESS Project. I'll run through the key findings from the EIS and the Submissions Report and then an overall response just to the Assessment Report and conditions of consent, and then we can move onto questions.

15

We can move to the next slide. Yes – we've done that already, we've introduced ourselves. Okay, I'll pass across to Mat who'll just give an overview of the project. You can go to the next slide.

20

MR PRYCE: Okay, thanks Radha. So, the Homebush BESS is proposed on infrastructure zoned land located at 10 Homebush Bay Drive. The site's strategically located adjacent to the Mason Park Substation and in close proximity to both transport, utility and industrial corridors, with the M4 WestConnex to the south as well as the direct factory outlet (or DFO) to the northeast. Access into the site is off Homebush Bay Drive and the Transport for NSW slip road.

25

You can move to the next slide, please. Okay. So, the Homebush BESS is a 200-megawatt/400-megawatt-hour site. The batteries there are shown in two large groups in blue, and they are strategically split into three internal roadways to ensure safe access through and around the perimeter of the site. The remainder of the equipment, often referred to as balance of plant, is made up MV transformers, switchgear and cable, and that connects the BESS backup to the Mason Park Substation.

30

It's worth calling out there is a noise barrier or an acoustic wall, which is shown in yellow, and that extends around the perimeter of the batteries. Also shown in green is existing vegetation that's going to be left in the southeast side of the property, and that's going to provide a good natural screen to the development site. This is also complemented by landscaping, it's going to be shown on the external side of the noise wall.

35

40

The entire site will have full hydrant coverage, and it is also complemented by a firewater containment tank. Other facilities shown there are for temporary construction, and that includes the car park in yellow, the site office shown in green, and general laydown area around the site.

45

The next slide please.

5 **MR MARSHALL:** Actually, before we move on from there, if I might interpose. I mean, the noise wall is in part a bit indistinct in this plan, and I know there's other material. But, just referring to my IPC colleagues, I mean, it would help me to have a better idea of exactly where that wall is, particularly to the northwest, I mean, I get a sense of where it is to the other sides. But perhaps if we can somehow take on note that it would be helpful to have something that's a bit more distinct about where the noise wall is.

10 And I was just going to ask about the vegetation on the southeast side. Just if you could describe what that is screening beyond the site at that point.

MR PRYCE: So, you're referring to the vegetation in solid green ...

15 **MR MARSHALL:** Yes, yes.

MR PRYCE: ... that's highlighted? Yes. So, that's the existing vegetation that's already there. So, we propose to remain – yes, leave that vegetation in place so that those natural trees will be seen on the, I guess, on the other side of that property boundary.

20 **MR MARSHALL:** Sure. Could you describe what it is that it is screening on the further southeast of the site, or further to the southeast from the site?

25 **MR PRYCE:** So, that – yes, you can go, Radha.

30 **MS ROCKWOOD:** Yes, I'll just jump in. So, with the noise wall, I probably do have a better figure for you, Duncan, that we can send across to Kendall if you prefer. This EIS layout figure – you're correct, there's a lot of layers on there. The noise wall does wrap around the battery units, it's kind of running on the north and then down that south and west, it wraps around, so it hugs the battery units tightly, and that's been demonstrated as the most effective to get noise levels to be complied with.

35 And with that vegetation in that corner, that strip there, so we've kept that within our project footprint because we'll probably be doing a little bit of weed management and enhancement of that existing vegetation.

MR MARSHALL: Sure.

40 **MS ROCKWOOD:** So, further south, to the southeast, there's an existing industrial property that's right behind that site, and then behind that, there's a canal. And then on the other side of that is – it's about 150 metres away, is where we've got some – the closest residential receivers.

45 **MR MARSHALL:** Okay, okay.

MS ROCKWOOD: So, from those receivers is, they'll, like, when they're situated there now, they would just see vegetation screening, and then eventually the noise wall, because the noise wall we're proposing is about 8.5 metres high so it'll probably sit a little bit above that. Yes.

MR MARSHALL: Sure. We might circle back to that question about whether –

MS ROCKWOOD: Sure.

5

MR MARSHALL: – we get the plan from you or not.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, okay, no worries.

10

MR MILLS: Can I just ask also on that, and we'll come no doubt to fire risks and so on, but the firewater tank system, electrical fires as I understand it, and this is coming from a place of not being an electrician or having any electrical background, but I understand that water doesn't exactly – it's not the means by which you put out electrical fires. So, what's the purpose of the firewater tank system in that situation, and is there other forms, or is it part of the overall – I mean, just a little bit of explanation about how that works.

15

MR PRYCE: Yes, sure, I'm happy to respond to that one. So, I guess we have a previous site that is almost identical layout to this one, and that has since achieved Fire Rescue endorsement of a fire safety strategy. So, part of that previous project, we did pivot in our strategy of how we were going to propose hydrant coverage.

20

So, in response to Fire Rescue, they would like to see full hydrant coverage around the perimeter of the BESS. And you're right, it's not to actually put out the battery on fire, it's more a containment measure to use to cool down the surrounding batteries if they deem required as a mitigation measure to prevent further propagation of that event.

25

MR MILLS: Okay, thank you.

30

MR MARSHALL: Well, if I may just follow up. So, is this a case where you, if the batteries are on fire, you let the fire burn itself out and that's where you come in with the water to cool other batteries to stop the spread. Am I understanding that correctly?

35

MR PRYCE: Yes, that's correct, Duncan. So, the site is designed with separation distances and as a result, in the unlikely event of a fire, it is going to burn itself out. And studies have proven that propagation would not occur to surrounding batteries, however, if Fire Rescue would like to also use water, it is purely just to spray the surrounding batteries to keep them cool.

40

MR MARSHALL: Okay, thank you.

MR MILLS: Look, we're jumping ahead to an area that I thought we'd get to anyway, so if you don't mind, let's just keep pursuing it for a second. The separation of the batteries that you mentioned changed through the course of the development of this proposal. Can you give us a little background in relation to that – the separation was increased, I think?

45

MR PRYCE: So, there were discussions around separation distances and also around the previous topic discussed on full hydrant coverage. So, the proposal currently, and

design currently sits, is back to where it was initially at – basically, 2440 separation from Megapack front to front, and back-to-back spaces 460. So, that complies with the minimum requirements. There were also distances between Megapacks and transformers that were under discussion. And they're currently sitting at roughly 1.5 metres.

MR MILLS: Sorry, so you had a proposal, they out further and then came back. Sorry, I'm just trying to understand what happened in the process.

MR PRYCE: No, so the design never changed. There was discussion with the Department on that, but the design has never changed.

MR MILLS: Okay, my misunderstanding, I thought it had increased from the original plan. Okay, fine. And just the burning out that Duncan mentioned in terms of the particular fire in one of the packs, is that dependent on the technology that you've adopted? Do different battery systems operate differently in terms of that potential for if there is a fire?

MR PRYCE: So, I can only comment on the battery that we're proposing because I'm familiar with that. But I can take it on notice if you would like a more detailed response on other OEMs that our SME did look at during the procurement phase. But yes, this particular battery strategy is to let it burn out, however, prior to it reaching that, there are other mitigation measures that are used that will hopefully prevent a fire from actually taking place.

So, they've got temperature monitors that basically once they sense an increase in temperature, that is then notified by the SCADA control systems and then decision can be made to potentially isolate that battery and prevent it going into thermal runaway.

MR MILLS: And so, that's the preventative side of it. But if it does in fact have thermal runaway ...

MR PRYCE: Yes.

MR MILLS: Then, is there technology within the battery pack that dampens the fire, is that how it ensures that you don't have the spread? Is it the [cross-talk 00:17:01] chemical release or ...

MR PRYCE: So, there are also vents inside built into the Megapack to help release in the event of high temperatures. But once it reaches thermal runaway, then the strategy is to let it burn out.

MR MILLS: So, those vents are shut basically in that situation? Is that – do you starve it of oxygen? I'm just trying to work out how it operates.

MR PRYCE: Yes, so once the battery reaches thermal runaway, it's basically let it burn out – that's the approach.

MR MILLS: Sure, okay. So, there isn't a retardant within it as such?

MR PRYCE: No.

MR MILLS: No, okay. Thank you. All right.

MR MARSHALL: Andrew, if I may. Just to go back to the separation distances, and forgive me if I misunderstood, but I thought the answer that was just given was that the separation distances haven't changed, they were where they were originally. But the Assessment Report at page 15, para 61, seems to talk about an originally proposed distance of 2.44 metres and then a revised layout between units to 3 metres. So, can I just clarify, has the distance changed or am I misunderstanding something there?

MR PRYCE: No, the distance hasn't changed. There was discussions around that previously, because the initial design had basically a non-intervention strategy where there was no hydrant coverage around the site. And we also had the proposal of the 24/4 separation distance. However, after consultation with Fire Rescue and the Department, there were discussions around if the non-intervention strategy stayed consistent, that they would look into increased distances. However, the decision was made to implement full hydrant coverage around the site, and that was deemed satisfactory to Fire Rescue and the Department to therefore allow distances to remain.

MR MARSHALL: So, the separation distance is 2.44 – I mean, I'm talking in metres, I apologise, I think you're talking in ... But 2.44 metres separation or ...

MR PRYCE: Yes, so that's the front-to-front spacing, yes, that's correct.

MR MARSHALL: So, we're not achieving a separation distance of 3 metres.

MR PRYCE: No, we're not.

MR MARSHALL: So, there's something in the Assessment Report which doesn't make sense to me at the moment. Perhaps we'll flag that for further consideration then.

MR PRYCE: Okay.

MR MARSHALL: Perhaps you'd best proceed, please.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, we can move to the next slide. I think that was sort of the main assessment of the project. If there's any more questions we can delve into a bit more.

I'll just run through the key findings from the EIS. So, under soil contamination, as you can see in the conditions of consent, there are two inaccessible areas which are identified as data gaps, and that was because of dense vegetation in those areas which restricted equipment access to get in and do some sampling.

Overall, the detailed site investigation for the rest of the site was determined that the site is suitable for the proposed BESS development. Some of the results identified

potential acid sulphate soils, so we've been recommended to undertake an Acid Sulphate Soil Management Plan for the site.

5 The preliminary hazard analysis was undertaken and that also identified typical BESS hazards like fire and spill containment. Because the site was historically used as an overflow car park, there are some redundant poles that are situated on the site, and that was picked up as needing to be removed as well before construction starts. Overall, the project risk can be as low as reasonably practicable, and that includes following the OEM separation distances between the battery units and also maintaining the sufficient
10 buffers between the closest receivers.

With surface water, a water impact assessment was done for the project and that has ensured the project is designed above the 1% flooding event, and considered during the PMF (which is the probable maximum flood) event, and that's with regards to the
15 battery units. On-site detention storage was not considered necessary and that was because of the existing impervious area that the site currently is made up of. And with the treatment train that we've proposed for stormwater discharge, our urban quality guidelines would be achieved as well.

20 Moving to traffic and transport. The traffic impact assessment has assessed up to 50 heavy vehicles a day, and that the surrounding road network can accommodate this. We're currently discussing with Transport for NSW and Transurban for an access road interface agreement which will be how we manage our access into the site via that slip road.

25 The visual impact assessment concluded low to negligible visual impacts. And that's also been recommended as part of that to do urban design and landscaping for the noise wall.

30 With heritage, there were no artefact sites identified and the site is quite modified from previous land uses, so has a low value for potentially finding sites. But there will be an unexpected finds procedure which we will follow as part of our management plans.

35 The BDAR assessment concluded that the site is quite disturbed but there is one section of good-quality vegetation down in the southeast corner of the site and that has been assessed to require some offset credits which we'll be securing prior to construction certificate.

40 The noise and vibration impact assessment was completed and that's – the operational noise modellers determined that with reduced duty cycles, so that means the fan speeds are not at full capacity, they'll be running at reduced cycles during the day, evening and night, as well as noise walls to wrap around the site, so those are around 8.5 metres high. With those mitigations in place, the project will not exceed the noise trigger levels at the sensitive receivers.

45 I'll pass this across to Hayley to run through these findings.

MS KARDASH: Thanks, Radha. So, as outlined in the Department's Assessment Report, the community interest on this project has been very low. We know this

because we did very detailed community engagement between August 2024 and December 2025, that included more than 26,000 newsletter drops, and that was done over three phases of the project, so at key planning milestones. We door-knocked a lot of the homes nearby. We had an online survey which had very low responses, and the responses that came through were very mild in terms of the enquiries that we received. We held three pop-ups over that 18-month period, and the attendance at those pop-ups was also very low. We did have an online webinar planned but that was cancelled due to a lack of registrations in that webinar.

And over that process, we've held quite a lot of meetings with Council and MPs and our direct neighbours who have been more involved and more updated throughout the project. So, that included regular emails at each planning milestone, keeping our stakeholders informed throughout that process, and making sure we're working with them on a couple of the key elements and part of the project.

And we also did a workshop with our Aboriginal stakeholders to define their local priorities, because Aboriginal participation through our project and as we continue on is going to remain a really important part of how we continue to engage with our community.

On the social and economic front, the project is anticipated to create up to 100 jobs during construction, and 267 total employment opportunities including the indirect employment, \$180.5 million in terms of economic spend in the New South Wales economy.

And in terms of local and community impacts, impacts are largely contained to the construction, the temporary construction period, and will be carefully managed through the development of our Construction Management Plans and associated management plans as well as regular updates and notifications out to the community, to make sure we're foreseeing and responding to any concerns that they have throughout that construction process.

And in terms of operation, given the low level of activity on site once the project is operational, the community impact will be very, very minimal. And again, we'll continue to manage any enquiries that come through as we continue through that operational process.

Just on the next slide, if that's okay. And just one slide over again, please. So, in terms of a summary of our submissions received, the project was on public exhibition between 19 June and 21 July last year. We received 13 submissions from government agencies and Council, and a total of 61 public submissions; 92% of those public submissions were outside 40-kilometre radius of the site, and at various, I think there were only two within 10 kilometres, and one very local submission which was actually of support for the project. So, I guess the public submissions that were received through that exhibition period really reflect how experienced during our more detailed consultation to inform our scoping and to inform our EIS lodgement.

You can see on the screen a summary of some of those concerns that were raised during the public exhibition period. So, there were questions around the purpose and

benefit of BESS technology just generally on the network, property values, the modern slavery, all the – yes, yes, and fire safety, which we’ve spoken about today. Agricultural impacts, hazards, and then also just questions around site selection.

5 In response to the submissions received, there were quite a lot of assessments undertaken in response. So, we did additional visual impact assessments, more information on Aboriginal heritage, noise, traffic, water, and the hazard analysis.

10 If we could just go over one slide. So, I guess in summary, we’ve just popped up a summary of DPHI’s Assessment Report and we just want to note that, Ausgrid, we agree with all of the content in that Assessment Report. And we’ve also obviously been through the draft conditions and the recommendations within those draft conditions, and agree with everything in there.

15 And that’s it from us. We wanted to keep it really short and sweet, and obviously back over to the Panel for any questions, any further questions. Thank you.

MR MILLS: Thank you, Hayley. Duncan, did you have further questions?

20 **MR MARSHALL:** Well, yes, I do, thank you, Andrew, and they’re a variety of sorts and significance, I suppose. One of them was the bit of remnant native veg that was identified as being, I can’t remember the exact words, high quality or something like that, I mean, I’m sure this information is in the extensive documentation, but I think you were suggesting that some of that will be captured by the retained vegetation in
25 that southeast corner. I just wonder if you could speak to that for a moment?

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, sure. Within that patch of vegetation was a mix of degraded and good-quality vegetation, and we’ll be preserving a strip towards the back end of our property boundary of that vegetation. And that was also because of the outcomes
30 from a lot of the visual assessments, because it would provide additional screening.

And the site for the credits, it’s been assessed for removal of all the vegetation, but Ausgrid has refined the design and looked at our construction and worked with our construction contractors to ensure that we can still retain some of that vegetation,
35 because we don’t need to touch it and we want to retain it for that screening purpose. Yes.

MS KARDASH: I think it’s also important – oh, sorry, Duncan. I was just going to add to what Radha said. And we know that urban tree canopy is really important to
40 Council, so any way we can retain the urban tree canopy in the Strathfield area has been a priority of our project design.

MR MARSHALL: Yes. I wonder if part of that refined design, whether it may be possible to get a current updated plan or whatever showing what you think you might be able to retain of that good-quality vegetation, and presumably that works with your
45 need for offsets and credits and the like. But I just wonder whether that sort of documentation might exist.

MS ROCKWOOD: So, the vegetation that we've marked as for retention is probably the best indication that we can retain, the rest would probably be needing to go for constructability and access around that noise wall which is going to go through. And then we've got that asset protection zone that needs to be maintained.

MR MARSHALL: Yes, I suppose what I'm diving into is, somewhere in the Assessment Report I read that there's one vegetation community or something which is regarded as good quality, and I'm hoping that that's the target for the vegetation retention.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, absolutely.

MR MARSHALL: But whether we can get a bit of an indicative quantitative indication of, you know, how much of that good-quality veg is being kept by the vegetation screening zone that you've identified, for example. I mean, reflecting on the fact you've said you've been able to do some more detailed planning for the construction and whatever.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, so you're wanting like an aerial footprint of the preserved vegetation ...

MR MARSHALL: Yes, I mean, they gave a number and I can't remember, and I realise it was small.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes.

MR MARSHALL: But if you can say that current plans indicate that 50% or 80% or 30%, whatever it is, is the retained vegetation, that might be a bit of a helpful thing to us to consider.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes.

MR MILLS: Duncan, just to clarify that question. Do you mean that percentage as a percentage of that particular quality of vegetation that you're looking at, that particular area?

MR MARSHALL: Yes. I mean, I'm mindful –

MR MILLS: [Cross-talk 00:32:56].

MR MARSHALL: Yes. I'm mindful of the fact that some of it's degraded, or most of it's degraded or whatever, but I did note that there was one community which was identified as being in good quality, and I guess it's, if we can understand how much of that good-quality vegetation is being retained, and ideally it's in that pocket in the southeast corner ...

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes.

MR MARSHALL: ... then that would be helpful.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes.

MR MARSHALL: Does that help?

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, that helps.

MR CLYDSDALE: Radha, we will confirm any requests in writing as well, so don't feel like you have to feverishly write all that down at the moment.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, no, that's fine. Okay.

MR MILLS: While we're on that topic, Radha. The new vegetation ...

MS ROCKWOOD: The landscaping, yes.

MR MILLS: What's the nature of that? Is there going to be tall – you know, are we talking just ground level vegetation? What's the mix there that you're looking at?

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, we're proposing to use lower and mid-storey species. So, we're consulted with Council and received a planting species mix list from them, so we'll be selecting some species from there and looking at the lower to mid-storey species, yes, and that's because of the maintenance around that noise wall, so that it's still able to be accessible.

And in terms of the offset planting, that was the Council recommendation for the canopy cover, we're looking at doing that at an off-site location in consultation with Council.

MR MILLS: Right, okay. And we are talking about, when you say low to mid-rise, we're talking something that's less than the 8 metres of the wall.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, definitely, yes.

MR MILLS: Yes, okay, thank you.

MR MARSHALL: What does mid-storey mean in terms of metres?

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, we wouldn't be going more than a metre, they'd be shrubs predominantly and groundcover species.

MR MARSHALL: Yes, well, leaving aside the groundcover, I mean, you can get very tall shrubs.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes.

MR MARSHALL: But are we talking about 4 metres, 6 metres, you know, what's the metric here?

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes. Well, we're proposing to do urban design on the noise wall as well. So, we were wanting to not cover that up. But in our current visual renders and based on what we need to do with the – and accessibility around that noise wall, they wouldn't be higher than a metre.

MR MARSHALL Right.

MS ROCKWOOD: The bushes, yes.

MR MARSHALL So, what will the rest of the wall look like?

MS ROCKWOOD: We've proposed – the noise wall supply or product that we're proposing to use, we're still refining that with our construction contractor, but there is one that we put in our visual renders that were on public exhibition. It's an acoustic wall product that's got a – which we can change the colour of, so we can soften that colour to make it green and grey so it's more neutral tones to sort of blend in. But then also doing some other additional urban design in consultation with the Aboriginal local parties in the area. That's the product that we're doing, and then there'll be the low shrubs at the front of it, that's sort of the proposed renders that we've got.

MR MARSHALL: I think when we were on site, we were told that the landscaping would be against the wall.

MS ROCKWOOD: It is, yes, yes. So, there'll be like the battery units and then there'll be like the access road behind that, then the noise wall would go, and then in front the noise wall between the property boundary fence with the DFO and the back there, there'll be some landscaping just in front of that noise wall.

MR MARSHALL: Mm, okay.

MR MILLS: Just in terms of the wall itself, Radha. That's a non-flammable wall? I know you say that you're [cross-talk 00:37:00].

MS ROCKWOOD: It's got fire-resistant properties as well, which is required, and we'll be looking at that as well.

MR MILLS: I'm going to sound like I'm just solely focused on fire things, but I have a broader remit than that, but it's more my wanting to get the best understanding I possibly can in relation to this. There's discussion there from, I think it was on the advice of Fire and Rescue NSW, that if there was the case that one of the battery packs went up, the plume would dissipate fairly easily and so on. Is it likely that there would be the chance that, for example, DFO would need to be evacuated in the event of such a fire because of the smoke?

MR PRYCE: I can probably step in and answer that one. So, currently we're in the process of commissioning a fire safety study for Homebush BESS, and as part of that fire safety study they will do obviously detailed modelling of that event (excuse me) and consequences of that off-gas and what that impacts.

So, currently the draft fire safety study has already been presented to Fire Rescue and they've since made some comments around that, and there's some further refinement to go on that off-gas modelling because they've come back with a few clarifications and our consultation is just in the process of folding those updates in, and they will then be submitting the revised fire safety study.

MR MILLS: Okay.

MS KARDASH: We will also have an Emergency Plan that we'll be developing before commissioning, and that Emergency Plan will be developed in consultation with DFO and other local stakeholders to make sure it really considers everything around the site.

MR MILLS: Okay.

MR PRYCE: But to answer your question, currently, the fire safety study is suggesting that there will be no impacts to the DFO shopping centre itself.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, to reiterate that, the preliminary hazard analysis also concluded the same thing, so that used the OEM's fire reports and modelled that. And because of the distance that we've got even between the car park which is outside, the distance that we've got from the closest battery unit and the car park, is deemed sufficient to not require evacuation.

MR MILLS: Okay.

MR PRYCE: Sorry. Just to clarify too, this will also be detailed in an Emergency Plan that will be done in consultation with Fire Rescue as well. So, that's still to come.

MR MILLS: Yes. That's part of the conditions, I think.

MS KARDASH: Yes.

MR MILLS: Terrific. Thank you. I also had a question. I understand you're in discussions with Council around a VPA.

MS KARDASH: Yes. Sorry.

MR MILLS: No, go on.

MS KARDASH: Yes, so, we will be entering into a formal agreement with the Strathfield Council. We've had conversations over the last few months. We have issued them a letter of offer for \$936,000 and that is being refined and that is with them at the moment to firm up. We will be entering into that agreement and closing it out before commissioning the battery and we have had conversations with Council in detail around that timing as well.

MR MILLS: Okay. Thank you. Duncan, do you have further questions at all?

5 **MR MARSHALL:** Well, Andrew, sorry, if I may go back. Radha, I just wanted to ask again about the renders. And you mentioned the renders that went on public display. I'm just wondering whether there are refined renders, I mean, I'm not saying go away and do them, I'm just saying, are the renders from back at the public display period the best available that we have at the moment for this development?

10 **MS ROCKWOOD:** The Submissions Report, a visual impact assessment that was done, that had some visual images of what the noise wall would like and the landscaping. But that's the latest that we've got, yes.

MR MARSHALL: Okay. Thanks.

15 **MR CLYDSDALE:** Sorry, just to interject, sorry, Panel. The Department's Major Projects Portal is having a few issues at the moment, so not all the documentation is currently displaying. So, if we are unable to access it, we may just ask for that to be sent through.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, of course.

20 **MR CLYDSDALE:** Yes.

MR MARSHALL: And I can drill down on another matter. The Assessment Report talks about tree canopy replacement planting.

25 **MS ROCKWOOD:** Yes.

MR MARSHALL: Now, anything that planted that grows to 1 metre I wouldn't regard as a tree.

30 **MS ROCKWOOD:** Correct, yes. That's right, we've got an offset planting strategy in consultation with Council. So, for the trees that we are removing for our site, we've had a surveyor estimate the number of trees that will be removed, and we're just in discussion with Council about doing the two-to-one offset planting ratio but at an off-site location ...

35 **MR MARSHALL:** Somewhere else.

40 **MS ROCKWOOD:** ... because, yes, we don't have room on the site currently, and Council are keen on that. And we're working with them to refine that and decide on the local park.

MR MARSHALL: Okay. It would be within the Council ...

45 **MS ROCKWOOD:** Of course, yes, yes.

MR MARSHALL: ... locality? Okay. So, are you anticipating any tree planting on site or not?

MS ROCKWOOD: At this stage, the landscaping we're proposing is only for lower to mid-storey species. We're retaining the trees that we can, which are on that southeast boundary, and there are other trees on the north of the substation which are being retained as well.

MR MARSHALL: Mm. And just again with the noise walls and their treatment. You talked about colours and you talked about urban design. Does that mean not just treating them with one colour or something but actually having, dare I say, a camouflage effect of treatment to the wall – is that what you're thinking, or have I got that wrong?

MS ROCKWOOD: No, that's what we were thinking. And Hayley, did you want to comment on how we're going to work that into ...

MS KARDASH: Yes, a couple of things. So, at the moment, the image on the screen is actually not – sorry, my ... The image on the screen is not the most recent render. So, it was updated for the Submissions Report in response to feedback from Council and DFO in regards to visual impact, so we did some more work on the visual impact. And the most recent renders that are in the Submissions Report actually do – yes, this is what, so they are more around that camouflage look.

We will be having conversations with Aboriginal stakeholders as well around a potential mural, but we want to make sure that that mural or any urban design is done in consultation. So, we have started very early conversations on that, but we haven't landed on a design or an artist or anything yet. So, at the moment, the noise wall and the current look and feel is what's on the screen. So, it does have that camouflage look and it is really about making sure we integrate into the landscape and retain like the greenery of the site as much as possible.

MR MARSHALL: Mm.

MR MILLS: I just noticed, if I might just jump in there, and I hadn't picked this up before. You've got a chain-link fence on the outside of the noise wall. Is the vegetation sitting on the outside of the chain-link fence or behind it?

MS ROCKWOOD: It should be between the chain-link ... So, the chain-link is our property boundary fence. Yes.

MR MILLS: Thank you. Sorry, Duncan.

MR MARSHALL: No, no, I think I've exhausted my questions for the moment.

MR MILLS: All right, as have I. So, thank you very much for your time today, greatly appreciate that and the information you've provided. We can close with that.

MS ROCKWOOD: Thank you.

MR MILLS: We'll follow up for anything that we want to get further information on, in writing too, thank you.

MS ROCKWOOD: Yes, thank you.

MR PRYCE: Thank you.

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MS KARDASH: Thank you so much for your time.

MS ROCKWOOD: Thanks. Bye.

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MR MARSHALL: Thank you.

MS KARDASH: Bye.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED