

MR J. HANN: We wanted to make sure that we'd seen the site even though, look, it – this is not so much about the amenity issues of the site, as much as obviously related to the impact on the township of Bulahdelah, and obviously in light of the determination report of the department, we felt it was important that we actually – to
5 come here and see what's going on.

MR R. PAMPLIN: Yeah. That's great. We definitely support that.

MR HANN: All the cables don't tell a lie, so we do record the meeting - - -
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MR PAMPLIN: Yep.

MR HANN: - - - and we'll kick that off now. So I've just got some formalities - - -

15 MR PAMPLIN: Yep.

MR HANN: Louise, Richard, if that's okay - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.
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MR HANN: - - - and then we'll – we'll get into - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yep.

25 MR HANN: - - - the proper part of the session, if that's okay.

MR PAMPLIN: Sure. Yep.

MR HANN: So I'll explain the – what goes on. But this is really just the protocol
30 of what the Commission – how the Commission works, because I'm not sure whether you've had - - -

MR PAMPLIN: No.

35 MR HANN: - - - any experience - - -

MR PAMPLIN: No.

MR HANN: - - - of this before.
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MR PAMPLIN: No.

MR HANN: Okay.

45 MR PAMPLIN: I don't think there was a lot of experience in councils with this.

MR HANN: Okay. All right.

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. We were asking the planning yesterday in Newcastle, and um they were going, “Oh, there’s been a couple in Sydney, but we don’t know of any others”.

5 MR HANN: Yeah. Okay. All right. Well, look, obviously this is the Independent Planning Commission, and so Peter and I are part of the panel, and the secretary of which is Helen and Brad, and Matthew there is in charge of all the electronics. But, look, I’ll – I’ll just go through this and it will make a bit more sense, if - - -

10 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah, sure.

MR HANN: - - - you could bear with me. So, good afternoon and welcome. Before we begin, I’d like to acknowledge the traditional owners on the land on which we meet, the Worimi People, and I’d also like to pay my respects to their elders, past
15 and present, and to the elders from other communities who may be here today. So, welcome to the meeting today. This is Linfield Property Nominees Proprietary Limited and NGP Investments (No 2) Proprietary Limited, the applicant – stop my page flicking – has lodged a request to review the Gateway Determination for a planning proposal, seeking to amend the Great Lakes Local Environmental Plan
20 2014, to facilitate the development of a Highway Service Centre at 9844 Pacific Highway, Bulahdelah.

So, my name’s John Hann, and I’m the Chair of the IPC Panel today. Joining me is my fellow Commissioner, Peter Williams, and the other attendees are Helen Mulcahy
25 and Brad James. In the interests of openness and transparency, we record the meeting, and we upload the transcript onto our website. The meeting is part of our consideration of the matter, and it will form one part of several sources of information that we use to prepare and complete our advice back to the Department of Planning and Environment. So, it’s important for us to be able to ask you
30 questions, and primarily just to clarify things. But, look, if you’re not able to specifically answer that, but you feel you could but you need more time, take it on notice, if you could provide a response to us in writing, preferably within seven days, just so we can make sure we’ve got this process as efficient as possible. Sooner than
35 seven days would be much appreciated.

MR PAMPLIN: Okay.

MR HANN: That material that you provide us will go up on our website as well, so just bear that in mind. When you’re speaking the first time, could you just introduce
40 yourself, and then we’ve got that - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yep.

MR HANN: - - - accurately recorded. And just when we’re talking, if we don’t talk
45 over the top of each other, it’s easier for Matthew to make sure that he’s ascribed whatever we say to the right person.

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

MR HANN: So, on that basis, that's the formalities. If you've got any questions with that, given that this is the first time you've – you've been part of the
5 Commission's process, I'm happy to answer those.

MR PAMPLIN: No. That's quite clear, thank you.

MR HANN: All right. So, look, we're obviously familiar with the documentation
10 that relates to this proposal. We're obviously particularly interested in Council's position, given that it has changed from 2014 in terms of the review, and also, I think, going back to 2004 with the current policy. I think it's still the 2004 policy in terms of the overall Highway Service Centre policy, so we're – probably the best thing to do is if you could take us through your most recent – the basis upon which
15 the Council has placed its most recent position on this, and also if you could help us, explain what changed between 2014 and today - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: And then we'll also go from there.

MR PAMPLIN: Okay. So, actually, what I was going to talk about exactly meets that. Ah, I just wanted to sort of take a journey through – where Council started, to where it's ended up at this point in time, ah, just to - - -
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MR HANN: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: To give that background.

MR HANN: No, that's great. Yep.
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MR PAMPLIN: So, some of the things you mentioned there will come out when I just go through this, but if you wanted to stop and elaborate, by all means – you know, just - - -
35

MR HANN: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - let me know along the way, or at the end, whatever suits. Sorry, I forgot to introduce myself at that stage, or – for the record. But, yeah,
40 Richard Pamplin, Acting Manager of Strategic Planning, ah, Midcoast Council. Ah, yes, so the issues surrounding Bulahdelah for us really came to a head with the then Roads and Traffic Authority, um, planning to bypass the town. And certainly there was a lot of concern in the um business and general community, about the impact that a bypass would have. And we're not just talking about Bulahdelah here for us as
45 a council. The Great Lakes Council at the time was also areas like Nabiac and um, to a lesser extent, what was happening at Coolonglook – there was an as well.

Ah, obviously we were cognisant of Karuah to the south being bypassed as well, but as it sits in the neighbouring LGA, it wasn't really our prime focus for the work that we did at the time. So, what Council did was to try and get an understanding of those concerns from the community and businesses, and work up a position that we
5 could actually, um, I suppose, try to minimise the impact that a bypass would have on our towns and villages, and in particular, with a focus on Bulahdelah. So, the um – the aim obviously, ah, that we ended up coming up with is the best solution was to prevent Highway Service Centres, and ah actually nominate these areas.

10 They weren't necessarily – as I think, was a term we made up at the time, they were actually calling Highway Services towns, and Highway Services villages, instead of actually having those on the periphery of towns and villages. So, we thought that that would actually be the best way forward. We worked with the RTA on developing that strategy, which it was finalised and adopted in 2004 - - -

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MR HANN: Yes.

MR PAMPLIN: And so with that work, it then led on to inclusion in the RTA's, you know, and the Department of Planning, through the ministerial direction, and
20 their own strategies on Highway Service Centres.

MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: So, obviously, there can always be exceptions, and it was noted in
25 that strategy, that the Ayres Rock Roadhouse which was near the Tea Gardens turnoff, was an exception to this, was established. It was on the highway, had direct access off the highway, it had 24-hour approval. So, even though we had a strategy, saying, "We don't want those", it was already there.

30 MR HANN: What's the – what was the nearest – what is the nearest town to Ayres Rock?

MR PAMPLIN: Ah, it would – the – in a – by the highway, in the higher speeds,
35 yeah, it's definitely going to be Karuah - - -

35

MR HANN: Right. Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - but from a local perspective, of where you would actually go
40 to, would be the Tea Gardens area.

40

MR HANN: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: Lower the speed road though into that area, so it would actually be
45 quicker to get to Karuah which is in the next local government area, of course.

45

MR HANN: Yep. But as you point out, it was actually already in existence, already had approval - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

MR HANN: It was already operating and, so on, yes.

5 MR PAMPLIN: It had been there for years - - -

MR HANN: Yeah. Okay.

10 MR PAMPLIN: - - - so, we – we didn't ignore it - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: We acknowledged it in that strategy - - -

15 MR HANN: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - that there was an existing exception to council's point of view and policy going forward there. And – so, with that in mind, obviously we've reflected since that time – is, well, "What happened", you know. "What did the
20 bypass do to areas like Bulahdelah?"

MR HANN: Yep.

25 MR PAMPLIN: So, with the focus on Bulahdelah, we saw that there was an immediate, um, impact on – say, we lost one service station. The Caltex service station closed pretty much immediately. The highway was, um, bypassed. That could have been - - -

30 MR HANN: How many service stations were there, fuel service stations in Bulahdelah pre-bypass?

MR PAMPLIN: Three. So, there's three. There's still two remaining.

35 MR HANN: So, one's closed?

MR PAMPLIN: One's closed.

40 MR HANN: So – and the reason I wanted to clarify that is we've heard different numbers today - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: - - - on that very question.

45 DR P. WILLIAMS: We've – we've heard up to six.

MR HANN: We've heard six, and there's two remaining. Now, we've got – the last part seems to be inconsistent.

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

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MR HANN: Then we heard four.

MR PAMPLIN: Um, my - - -

10 MR HANN: So, no, that's - - -

MS L. MORRIS: We can take that on – sorry. Louise Morris.

MR HANN: Would you mind just confirming - - -

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MS MORRIS: Yes.

MR HANN: - - - because it does go to - - -

20 MS MORRIS: Yes.

MR HANN: - - - sort of - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Impact.

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MR HANN: - - - part of the important aspect we're trying to deal with.

MS MORRIS: Without checking, I would agree with Richard, that there were three major service stations - - -

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MR HANN: Okay.

MS MORRIS: - - - and one has closed now.

35 MR HANN: Yeah.

MS MORRIS: I – I'd like to check.

MR HANN: Okay. No, that – thanks.

40

MS H. MULCAHY: Does that include the United one up the road a bit, or is that out of the town?

MR PAMPLIN: The – look, that is out of the town. That was - - -

45

MS MULCAHY: Okay. So, you're talking about the town centre?

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MS MORRIS: Yeah.

5 MR PAMPLIN: The one to the north, just while we're touching - - -

MR HANN: Yeah. Just here, yeah.

10 MR PAMPLIN: - - - on that, um, was purchased by the RTA, and closed it down, um, after the bypass. The, um – the reason that it could actually reopen was that they did establish existing use rights for that.

MR HANN: Use rights, okay.

15 MR PAMPLIN: And that was mainly based on, um, a petroleum company still having an existing lease over that land for that, ah, use, and was able to reopen, you know, um – I - - -

20 DR WILLIAMS: So, it hadn't closed for more than 12 months?

MR PAMPLIN: No, no, it had.

DR WILLIAMS: Yeah.

25 MR PAMPLIN: The – the position which was put to council which was, ah, accepted – I can't quote it, it was a number of years, ah, ago now, but we might have to take that on notice, to find out the actual background, and we seek legal advice, or what have you, but we obviously accepted a position - - -

30 MR HANN: Right.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - that, you know, existing use rights were maintained for that.

35 MR HANN: Okay. So - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah, rather than actually having continuously – you know, it stopped operating for 12 months, or whatever - - -

40 MR HANN: Yes. Right.

MR PAMPLIN: It was actually based on other reasons because it was certainly closed a lot longer than 12 months.

45 MR HANN: Yeah. But a petroleum company had a lease that they wanted - - -

MS MORRIS: It was ongoing.

MR HANN: - - - presumably to continue to be honoured?

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah – yes.

5 MR HANN: So, when the bypass was then complete, it was reopened on the basis that there was an existing lease, and council accepted that there was existing use rights?

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

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MR HANN: Okay. No, look, that's fine.

MR PAMPLIN: That's right.

15 MR HANN: No. That's – yeah, that - - -

MS MORRIS: Is that enough detail?

DR WILLIAMS: Yeah. No, that's - - -

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MR HANN: Yeah. No, that's fine.

MR PAMPLIN: As long as you're satisfied.

25 MR HANN: We – we don't really need to go into any further details. Just giving a context to the fact that there is a – I don't think we call it a Highway Service Centre
- - -

MS MORRIS: No.

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MR HANN: It's a fuel - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. It's – it would come under a definition of a service station for us because it's - - -

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MR HANN: Service station?

MR PAMPLIN: - - - actually accessed off of a side road - - -

40 MR HANN: Yep. Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: Not direct access off the highway.

MR HANN: Service station.

45

MR PAMPLIN: Whereas you could potentially try to argue – which is not what council is doing. Council's position is that this application is for a Highway Service

Centre, but it is technically off of a side road, but they say – ourselves and the Department of Planning, in their report on the Gateway refusal - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

5

MR PAMPLIN: You know, said, no, that – that they were viewing it the same as council, as a Highway Service Centre – um, rezoning for that – for that use, even though it's off a side road. It's only 150 metres - - -

10 MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - from the actual highway itself.

DR WILLIAMS: Yeah. Okay.

15

MR PAMPLIN: So, there's been no contention from us, or the applicant, or anyone else - - -

MR HANN: That's fine.

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MR PAMPLIN: - - - about the difference in semantics between - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

25 MR PAMPLIN: - - - service stations and Highway Service Centres. But the interesting thing about the one that's opened to the north, or reopened, is that we haven't actually been – had the ability to see the impact or not on Bulahdelah of that. It hasn't closed the other two, which were still in operation afterwards. Ah, there could be a number of factors, that you actually have an increase in highway usage
30 every year. The, ah, RMS estimate that it's two-and-a-half percent increase in traffic each year on the highway, and that's what they've projected to continue into the future. Ah, I think that state was a few years ago now, but it's still one that's being used regularly, so there could have been, ah, a case that um the impact would lessen by increasing traffic anyway, so these service stations here weren't, ah, affected to a
35 degree that they would actually consider closing.

DR WILLIAMS: And, Richard, you were saying that one station did close was the Caltex - - -

40 MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

DR WILLIAMS: - - - and they closed pretty quickly after the bypass.

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

45

DR WILLIAMS: And that would have closed before the other service station opened – reopened with RMS?

MR PAMPLIN: Well – well before.

DR WILLIAMS: Yes. Okay. So, that's had no impact on – one way or the other
- - -

5

MR PAMPLIN: No, no.

MR HANN: Okay.

10 DR WILLIAMS: - - - on the remaining service stations?

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

DR WILLIAMS: Yes. Okay.

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MR PAMPLIN: So, yes. So, the start of the impact obviously was the Caltex, but what we've seen over time is the, um, the impact on businesses in, um, Bulahdelah itself. We have had a re-orientating of what they're actually doing. You still had, you know, the local service ones like your butchers, your bakers, and what have you, but what we've had is a – we're changing more from a – you know, because the highway used to go through it, and you used to have the quick takeaway, ah, shops that you could actually get in - - -

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MR HANN: Yes.

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MR PAMPLIN: - - - which is – the function of a Highway Service Centre, you know, does, a quick fill, quick – you know, takeaway, and off you go on your journey. Um, Bulahdelah has refocused from that, and has been, ah, I suppose catering more to your niche markets, like your – you know, your grey nomads, through your RV-friendly towns – um, work that we've actually done, you know, with the community here. The – ah, there's a free camping spot, for example, on the other side of the river, ah, just as you're coming from the south, opposite the town. Ah, it's extremely well-used by RVs – caravans, and that sort of helps support the businesses in the town, not just the locals - - -

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MR HANN: There are services - - -

MR PAMPLIN: You know, people buying meals - - -

40 MR HANN: - - - at that particular camping facility – there are services there in some form - - -

MR PAMPLIN: No.

45 MR HANN: Toilets, or anything like that?

MR PAMPLIN: No. Just – it's just a free - - -

MR HANN: You can just park your van there?

MR PAMPLIN: Yep, park your van.

5 MR HANN: Yep. Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: Ah, a lot are self-contained these days.

MR HANN: Sure. Yeah.

10 MR PAMPLIN: For the majority of them, um - - -

MR HANN: All right.

15 MR PAMPLIN: And so it serves a good function for those wanting to be off the highway a bit, and have a bit quieter peace rather than a rest area - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

20 MR PAMPLIN: And also helps – um, you know, the IGA, for example, you know, with people buying food, and they cook in their caravan, or buying a meal at the pub or bowling club.

MR HANN: Sure.

25 MR PAMPLIN: My understanding is that the bowling club over time has actually done quite well from an increase in, ah, the meals that they've been offering there, so it is catering to a certain market of visitors in that respect, rather than the quick stop highway - - -

30 MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - that you used to get. You know, so it – like any town, you have to adapt, ah, to changing circumstances - - -

35 MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - so that's why Bulahdelah has done over time. As I mentioned, you're still going – you still had the retention of businesses which catered mainly for
40 your local market, your butchers, and what have you, um, but the area Bulahdelah has also served – and it was before the highway bypass, and still is now, is an important gateway to the Myall Lakes National Park, and ah, you know, we've got active businesses in the area that cater for visitors and going into there. Ah, you've got the houseboat hire, for example, down on the river – the Myall River, which
45 actually goes into the Myall Lakes National Park. That's - - -

MR HANN: Has that gone from two – two operators to one, as we heard earlier today?

MR PAMPLIN: Um - - -

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MS MORRIS: I'm not 100 per cent certain about that - - -

MR PAMPLIN: I'm not ah - - -

10 MS MORRIS: I would have to check that, but I'm happy to check that, if you would like.

MR HANN: Would you also mind just checking that for us?

15 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR HANN: No, we heard earlier today that there were two operators - - -

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MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

MR HANN: - - - but now that's declined.

25 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. Or whether they've actually had an increasing number of boats, I'm not sure either. Um, we – see if we can find any information - - -

MR HANN: Okay.

30 MR PAMPLIN: - - - on that for you. I can't guarantee that we could actually find anything though. Ah, there's also, I suppose, a different sort of tourists for the area which are becoming quite – more common, and that's happening everywhere. It's not just around this area, Bulahdelah. You're getting people staying at farm stays, cabins, rural holiday homes, and they're needing a point to go and access your shops
35 and services, so Bulahdelah services that for the surrounding district - - -

MR HANN: Okay.

40 MR PAMPLIN: - - - and they will continue to do that, you know, regardless of whether it's bypassed or not. You still have that sort of activity going on - - -

MR HANN: Yep.

45 MR PAMPLIN: - - - which increases, um, generally over time. What has changed for council is really, um, community opinion and business sentiment. That's what council has based a large part of its decision-making on, regarding, ah, this application. Through talking through the community, particularly our councillors.

You know, we're aware that, um, the community is open, and um, to new business opportunities, would provide additional employment for Bulahdelah. It's, um – and it's been well supported by the local Chamber of Commerce as well, for that employment-generating factor. The current application quotes around 30 jobs that it
5 would actually create at the Highway Service Centre, and the community is very supportive of additional employment opportunities, albeit that it's, um, not in the actual what you might call the CBD of the town. Ah, we're – but it's – it is important for the locals around that, so a lot of council's decision-making has been based upon that, and council is, you know, are listening to our community, and
10 you're never going to get absolute consensus on these sorts of things - - -

MR HANN: No.

MR PAMPLIN: But there's certainly a general feel of the community that, you
15 know, we are open to more business opportunities, we do, you know, welcome more jobs – yes, in the area, whether they're for locals or the new people who might move to the area. Ah, there's also an understanding from council that the business adjustment that we've had to go through as a, um, a business community here, in particular, you know, is probably concluded as such. You know, the highway impact
20 and the, um – that initial sort of impact that you get from that, ah, there's certainly a feeling from council that that has concluded. But you need to keep - - -

MR HANN: So, the 2013 shock, if you like - - -

25 MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

MR HANN: - - - of the bypass - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Seven years down - - -

30 MR HANN: - - - takes a while to work its way through - - -

MR PAMPLIN: It does.

35 MR HANN: They're saying, or you're saying that - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: - - - you know, six years later - - -

40 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: - - - your experience, that's - - -

45 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: It was probably – it's – there's not going to be much - - -

MR PAMPLIN: No.

DR WILLIAMS: Is there much else you can - - -

5 MR HANN: - - - further negative impact - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

MR HANN: Is that right?

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MR PAMPLIN: Yes, that's right.

MR HANN: All right.

15 MR PAMPLIN: There's always going to be a "but" to, you know, discussions like this. Ah, and for us, we feel that you're still going to get business transitions, ah people – businesses come and go, operators change - - -

MR HANN: Sure.

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MR PAMPLIN: - - - but also niche – niche markets change, and what you're orientating yourself for. So, the – in particular, the ageing of the population in Australia, the amount of people buying caravans and going round Australia and going on road trips all the time has increased. And I think we'll see more orientation of that for businesses over time, and areas like Bulahdelah capitalising on that. Probably not that dissimilar to a lot of country towns, having to cash in, for want of a better, um, word or term, to that opportunity. You know, we provide a sort of a lifestyle area just for people to stop, but also to support the local economy.

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30 MR HANN: Yes.

DR WILLIAMS: Sorry. Just clarifying that point, Richard - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

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DR WILLIAMS: So, what you're saying is that in terms of business adjustment, the – the shock of the impact that's now being met, or accommodated - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

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DR WILLIAMS: Um, and now council – or the community is moving into a phase of readjustment to - - -

MR PAMPLIN: To - - -

45

DR WILLIAMS: - - - new economic opportunities - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

DR WILLIAMS: - - - now that – now that they've got over that initial - - -

5 MR PAMPLIN: Yes. To - - -

DR WILLIAMS: - - - impact of the bypass?

MR PAMPLIN: It's a normal outside influences - - -

10

DR WILLIAMS: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - rather than the immediate one of the highway bypass.

15 DR WILLIAMS: Yeah. Could – sorry, but just while I've got you.

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

20 DR WILLIAMS: Could I just go back one point, sorry. You did speak about community opinion and the very clear strong community opinion now - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

25 DR WILLIAMS: What sort of tangible evidence does that take? Is it just, you know, representations made to councillors, or is it something that you can actually put your – you know, more quantitative terms to express?

30 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. It's certainly something that – it was, um, I haven't attended myself. It was, ah pre-merger of council, but the Great Lakes Council, ah, did – had, you know, staff represent at a meeting in Bulahdelah. I think it was quoted in the planning proposal application - - -

DR WILLIAMS: Yeah.

35 MR PAMPLIN: And the, um – I suppose the shift of opinion was noted at the meeting – it wasn't council's meeting. Council attended - - -

MR HANN: This was a meeting that was a forum in this hall - - -

40 MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

MR HANN: - - - that was run by the applicant.

MR PAMPLIN: That's right.

45

MR HANN: Is that the one we're talking about?

MR PAMPLIN: Yes. That's – that's the one.

MR HANN: Yeah. Okay. And council attended that?

5 MR PAMPLIN: Yes. Council staff attended at the time – not myself personally - - -

MR HANN: No.

10 MR PAMPLIN: And, um – yeah. Look, I suppose as staff members, we certainly listen to the community, as our councillors do as well, and there had been a shift of, I suppose, an opinion from the community. It was certainly noticed back then, before you know, we merged as we are now, and we talk about Midcoast Council, and how we're proceeding on that basis, but the um – you know, you've got to take all that history into account, and you know, what has changed, you know, is anything
15 different at this point in time? Should we consider an application for this? And that has, you know, got us to this, ah, position that we're in, so you know, based on that information, council accepted a planning proposal for – for the Highway Service Centre.

20 That doesn't mean council was going to approve it overnight and sent it away. It was actually council was saying that we will accept an application. So then look at the, ah, individual merit of that. What we tend to do is under our council's policy, is actually issue, ah, applicants with advice on whether they, um, are deemed to meet
- - -

25 MR HANN: Yes.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - our strategic merit. It's not the Department of Planning's - - -

30 MR HANN: No.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - consideration of a strategic merit, but our own council's, um – you know – and there's a couple of things in there, is that either it's in a current endorsed strategy, or that it's of something of benefit, wider benefit to the, um, the
35 community. And so, it's obviously not something that's in the current strategy or policy of council, so it was around the, um, the benefit to the community to consider the application. So, the application was, you know, lodged with council. Um, the first thing, of course, we wanted to actually understand in more depth was the, um, impact on existing businesses.

40 MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: Um, and trying to see if it could be determined what that actual impact is, whether that impact can be mitigated, and whether that's appropriate for
45 council to support. The – we had an independent planner that actually helped us assess and process the application – David Crofts from, um, Strategy Hunter, who was our consultant for that, independently engaged by council to actually do that

assessment. He's got a background in economics, and was, um – we worked with the, ah, applicant and their, um – their own, you know, consultants, who actually said, "No. We want a greater understanding of what the impact might be". Certainly we ended up getting to an end point, where it is very hard to quantify an impact of something that might go into an area, and what that might have on this specific location.

So, we ended up having to, um, do – get them to do a more work and assessment on surveys, the qualitative-type information rather than a quantitative, you know - - -

MR HANN: This is your independent consultant?

MR PAMPLIN: Which we've said that – to the applicant, you know, that it's not satisfactory - - -

MR HANN: Right.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - until you can show us more work - - -

MR HANN: Right.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - regarding, ah, the assessments and surveys, and trying to determine that impact as far as we can go with that.

MR HANN: So, this was based on the first survey which had 132 - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

MR HANN: - - - respondents, that's right?

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: But not in a holiday period?

MR PAMPLIN: Not in a holiday period. Yes.

MR HANN: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: And we were trying to establish – because we actually fought as council and staff, that it would be quite different during a, um, holiday period - - -

MR HANN: Right.

MR PAMPLIN: So we were trying to establish, you know, what's the year round impact of such a development occurring. Ah, we were actually quite surprised. The results were very similar, ah, for that. Um, and, look, the - - -

MR HANN: That was the Easter survey, is that right?

MR PAMPLIN: Yes, that's the Easter one.

5 MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: So, that was the one that they did because we requested it - - -

MR HANN: Okay.

10

MR PAMPLIN: - - - to, ah, get a formal council opinion on the merits of this application, having already accepted an application, but that's not the actual assessment. So the assessment was undertaken. Ah, obviously we looked at all the government policies and what have you, that affect any application along the way, but of particular concern to council was what would the impact be, and could we mitigate that impact. Ah, so having sought that extra information, we pushed as far as we thought we could push the, um, the level of knowledge that we wanted to get out of this, and our understanding of the area. It's - you know, the - we didn't believe we would actually get to a situation where we could actually say, "Okay. This would actually equal an economic impact of X point whatever million dollars per year", or what have you.

15

20

MR HANN: Yeah.

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MR PAMPLIN: We didn't actually think we could get to that, and um, it was, yeah, borne out in what the information which was able to garner from the application. We couldn't get that certainty, um so we were then looking at, "Well, what are the opportunities in Bulahdelah, and if you're going to do any offsetting of impact, how would that relate to the opportunities that Bulahdelah have" because rather than try and do something completely different in Bulahdelah, it was like, "Well, where are the trends going? You know, where have we had to adapt to - Bulahdelah as a community?" It's post-bypass anyway, and where does that lead us, and can we actually do something to actually promote and help that along, that would mitigate an impact of having a Highway Service Centre just outside the township here?

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You know, rather than just going, "Yes" - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

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MR PAMPLIN: - - - you know, the application says it will create X jobs". We can't tell you whether that would lose Y jobs". You know, we haven't been able to establish that. So it was actually looking at that sort of, um, you know, opportunity. The - like, we're very cognisant of the, yes, it didn't meet council's policy, and regardless of it being one of the former councillors for Great Lakes, you know - - -

45

MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - council accepts all the previous merger documents, so we're not arguing against that in any way. It was about, um, you know, how – what was it trying to achieve? Has anything changed, and where does that lead us now? So, certainly the community sentiment has changed over time, you know, to – you know, we believe, will open the door for us as a councillor to consider this application. The
5 intent of the original Highway Service Centre strategy from council was very good, very valid, and we agreed with that. You know, it was trying to help support the economic viabilities of our towns and villages, you know, post-bypass.

10 But moving on from then, you know, where – where are we now? 2004 was a while ago, and you know, I mean, what does the future mean for areas like Bulahdelah. So, that was all in the background mind when we were looking at this, how it did or didn't meet, you know, current policies of council, ministerial directions, and what have you, because even though it's not a nominated location, you know what I mean,
15 obviously there are, um, ways to consider things which aren't nominated. And for us, the sticking point was always going to be about the economic impact. And we believe that that's the main crux of what we're trying to actually get to as ministerial direction, as well as the impact on the town. Yeah, it's dealing with the impact on the infrastructure, but we don't believe this is going to have much of an impact on
20 the highway infrastructure because of the existing off-ramp is really good, well-located, and could be easily accessed for a highway service. And so for us, it was more about the economic impact and how that related to ministerial direction and council's policy.

25 MR HANN: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: Where that led us to, as I was saying, with the ability to offset that, um, and what – as a council, we received an offer to enter into a planning agreement from the applicant. Ah, it's been documented in our work - - -
30

MR HANN: Yes.

MR PAMPLIN: And through discussions with the applicant, we did tailor that towards what that might look like - - -
35

MR HANN: Yes.

MR PAMPLIN: And so we were looking at, um, leveraging off, um, how the town has changed over time. There's always improvements you can make in a town, of
40 course, so we did put things like, ah, you know, main street improvements and landscaping, um, you know, things that might have come out as reflecting the heritage of the town, whether it's through street lighting or other means. We left that sort of open, and said, "Look, there's some work we believe could be done in that respect to help the town". Ah, this leveraging off the ah free "Friendly Town
45 approach that council has taken for Bulahdelah with the community, which is quite a strong factor for this, ah, community here, in businesses, is how can we actually improve that, you know?"

What additional amenities, infrastructure do we need, um, to actually go that next step in that regard? So that was just put in there as, “This is what we want to investigate”, you know, as part of that. A business assistance package was seen as an essential component from council and council’s independent planning consultant, to actually work with the businesses. If you’ve got a lot of small businesses, mum and dad-type operators, they’re not necessarily in the space where they can be looking at the niche markets and merchandising, advertising, all of those sorts of aspects, um. You know, it could be unfamiliar to your small business operators, um, so what we actually saw is a really good advantage in doing that, having someone employed as a specialist in that area, to work with our local businesses, to help them improve, do better, ah, you know, capitalise on opportunities, but also, you know, let that lessen or negate the impact of the Highway Service Centre itself. That was the intent behind identifying the, um, business assistance package, as we called it, as part of here. And, you know, we’re not sure of the impact that it would have, but the last thing we put in there was about having a local promotions area in the Highway Service Centre itself which would actually come through a planning agreement, and they would have to do it in a Highway Service Centre.

MR HANN: Could I just ask, Richard - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

MR HANN: - - - just - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Certainly.

MR HANN: So, while we’re on this – this particular topic. Is it an assumption then that the net impact would be negative, and that therefore the mitigation opportunities are essential, or it’s just that it’s too – it has proven to be too difficult to quantify what the actual impact would be? In other words – I think you mentioned 30 jobs - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Jobs.

MR HANN: - - - would be generated?

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

MR HANN: I think we’ve seen a figure of 60 quoted in the application, but you know, we’re not going to argue about that here.

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. No.

MR HANN: It’s – but which is a substantial number.

MR PAMPLIN: Oh, yes.

MR HANN: My – from the data we've seen, I think 80 jobs were lost in the bypass – pre-bypass to 2016 - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

5

MR HANN: - - - so 30 is a substantial - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

10 MR HANN: So, coming back to my point - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

15 MR HANN: What's the basis – what's the assumption council is making here is that it will be overall negative, and therefore it must be offset with mitigation strategies, or you're just not sure? You can't pin it down - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Ah - - -

20 MR HANN: The metrics?

MR PAMPLIN: You know what, it's a bit of both. Look, we certainly can't pin it down. Ah, as I say, we haven't been able to quantify the actual impact that that would have - - -

25

MR HANN: Okay.

30 MR PAMPLIN: - - - but that being said, um, we do believe as a council that it would be likely to have an impact on particular businesses. Let's say the service station as a good example.

MR HANN: Right.

35 MR PAMPLIN: I would expect a new Highway Service Centre right there could have an impact – we could well, this is me, you know, guessing the future, which is what you're talking about here, is that, um, you know, maybe we do lose another service station - - -

MR HANN: Yes.

40

MR PAMPLIN: - - - if one opened out there.

MR HANN: Yep.

45 MR PAMPLIN: Ah, less people may stop. Ah, we – looking at those surveys which, um, – look, they're opinions obviously given by people, ah, you know, at the time, and maybe 30 per cent of people who were stopping at those times - - -

MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - say that they might have stopped at a Highway Service Centre
- - -

5

MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - otherwise, where those people were just visiting Bulahdelah
and not spending money and just, you know, having a – their own packed lunch on –
10 in a park, or what have you. Like, the assumption is that they're probably spending
some money in the town, and so our understanding would be that it would have an
overall, um, impact on Bulahdelah itself. And what we wanted to do is make sure
that any such impact would be, um, mitigated. So, um, there's no dollar figure on
this. What we were actually doing and resolving as a council was to say if we get a
15 successful gateway, that um, we would actually work with the local Chamber of
Commerce and the community in developing this package that would form the
component of the, um, planning agreement. Only then, once you work out exactly
what it is, can you actually cost what that is. And so our process for that would have
been to work with the community, ah, Chamber of Commerce, and get a package
20 together, have some consultation with the applicant about that package - - -

MR HANN: Mmhmm.

MR PAMPLIN: Whether they agreed or not, to actually then put that to council, to
25 actually bed down the issue of a planning agreement, before we ever considered
going on exhibition with the rezoning – the planning proposal.

DR WILLIAMS: So, it's still early days. The - - -

30 MR PAMPLIN: Yes. It - - -

DR WILLIAMS: The applicant seems to be quite happy - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

35

DR WILLIAMS: - - - with the planning agreement.

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

40 DR WILLIAMS: But obviously the details are still to be - - -

MR PAMPLIN: The details are yet to be - - -

DR WILLIAMS: - - - nitted out.

45

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. Not just hashed out, but actually formulated.

DR WILLIAMS: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: You know, we've got the – the broad scope - - -

5 DR WILLIAMS: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - of what we believe should be in a planning agreement, which the applicant was happy to agree with - - -

10 DR WILLIAMS: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: To then put in the letter of offer to council. And, ah – so we're more than happy to accept that. We think that that would be a way forward. Ah, it's what Bulahdelah, yeah, could do with, move forward. And, um, so we wanted to
15 investigate that, ah, see what public opinion was about, how we dealt with that, what was the opinion of the individual businesses as well, around issues like the business assistance package, and I mean, how could that be tailored to help all sorts of businesses here. You know, does the person have to be an expert in all type of business? Are we more after an expert in marketing?

20

What are we actually after, you know, for that, and therefore what's a person going to cost, and how does that put into there, because the applicant also needs to know what they're signing up for, from a costs perspective, to any planning agreement, rather than an open-ended thing that they will fund, whatever council wants. That's
25 not – you know, we need certainty, both sides, on what a planning agreement would actually do.

DR WILLIAMS: And, Richard – sorry, the – just following on from John's question about not necessarily quantifying the impact, but just trying to get an overall
30 assessment of the impact if the Highway Service Centre was to proceed.

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

DR WILLIAMS: Um, are you saying that overall, it would happen nett – adversely, like, impact, and what you're looking to offset that, or are you saying it will have an adverse impact, but its nett impact overall would be positive, otherwise you wouldn't be supporting it? But, nonetheless, what you're trying to do is offset what negative impacts are also tied up with – with this project?

40 MR PAMPLIN: Certainly, um, the feeling from council is that from a jobs perspective, it would probably, um, have a nett overall positive impact - - -

DR WILLIAMS: Mmhmm.

45 MR PAMPLIN: - - - but it's still going to have a negative impact - - -

DR WILLIAMS: Yes. Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - on businesses.

DR WILLIAMS: Yes. I understand. Yes, okay.

5 MR PAMPLIN: Ah - - -

MR HANN: Okay. No, no.

10 MR PAMPLIN: It's a delicate line that I'm walking there - - -

DR WILLIAMS: Yeah, yeah.

15 MR PAMPLIN: Is that, um, it's all this – it's about belief and understanding obviously - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

20 MR PAMPLIN: - - - of what this might do because you're not in a position to quantify it - - -

MR HANN: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - and so that, um - - -

25 MR HANN: And some businesses, I guess – yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: Look, some businesses – for example, if I said one of those service stations - - -

30 MR HANN: Yes.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - closed down, and they had five employees - - -

35 MR HANN: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: You know, I mean, that would obviously be a loss, but - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

40 MR PAMPLIN: - - - would the overall gain – and certainly council has been listening to the community and the Business Chamber about that overall gain, but what we want to do is not necessarily, you know, see much loss in Bulahdelah. We actually want to try and move forward, capitalise on the niche markets that they're already tapping into - - -

45

MR HANN: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: See how we can improve on that, and you know, make sure that we actually see Bulahdelah, um, you know, prosper in the future.

MR HANN: Does – yeah, okay. Um - - -

5

MS MORRIS: Well, possibly build on what's – what Bulahdelah has already done. I mean, the Highway Service Centre might offer something different, and it might be a new economic - - -

10 MR PAMPLIN: It's certainly - - -

MS MORRIS: It's hard to say.

15 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. Look, I was saying that earlier on, is that, yeah, Bulahdelah has had to refocus, you know, from being a highway town, for want of a better word. You know, it was going straight through want – people were quickly stopping for service stations, yeah, the quick fuel and other sorts of things. Ah, their food that might be on offer in some of those. Ah, you know, we – we have seen that sort of change.

20

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: That being said, we've still had new businesses, ah, open in Bulahdelah. Ah, the Oliver's um food – food outlet.

25

DR WILLIAMS: When did they open, Richard?

MR PAMPLIN: Ah, that would have been - - -

30 MS MORRIS: That's a very good question.

MR PAMPLIN: It was about 12 months ago - - -

MS MORRIS: After - - -

35

DR WILLIAMS: Quite recent, was it, or you mean 12 months - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Oh, it's - - -

40 DR WILLIAMS: - - - after the bypass?

MR PAMPLIN: No, no, no. It – it was more recent, um, yeah.

DR WILLIAMS: Oh.

45

MS MORRIS: I'd have to check that - - -

MR PAMPLIN: We'd have to – we'd - - -

DR WILLIAMS: Do you know how many it employs? Any – any rough estimate?

5 MR PAMPLIN: Ah, not – not offhand, no. Ah, the Chamber would probably be in a better position to do that.

DR WILLIAMS: Okay. Because that's the only hard evidence we've got to date
- - -

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MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

DR WILLIAMS: - - - in terms of - - -

15 MS MORRIS: It's difficult.

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. It's - - -

MS MORRIS: It's very difficult - - -

20

MR PAMPLIN: It – it is.

MR HANN: That's the only business we've heard that's actually opened - - -

25 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: - - - since the bypass, but - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

30

MR HANN: - - - there may be others. It's just - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

35 MR HANN: I mean, it's often quoted.

MR PAMPLIN: But, yeah. One of the issues there is that, you know, as a council we're looking at the overall impact - - -

40 MR HANN: Yes, of course.

MR PAMPLIN: Competition isn't something that we necessarily consider direct competition - - -

45 MR HANN: No.

MR PAMPLIN: Certainly from a paying perspective.

MR HANN: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: And we're sort of trying to be very careful about how we dealt
with this application. We were talking about the impact on the business community
5 - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - rather than individual - - -
10

MR HANN: No. Understood.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - businesses.

15 MR HANN: We were just looking for examples of what's closed.

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

MR HANN: Don't – we don't care - - -
20

MR PAMPLIN: What the - - -

MR HANN: Like you, we're agnostic to that.

25 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

MR HANN: It's – and what's opened - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.
30

MR HANN: Whether it be Olivers or a - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

35 MR HANN: Whatever. Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. And - - -

MR HANN: But the only one we've heard of is Olivers, you know, so - - -
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MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. And for us it's been a tricky example because Olivers are
quite – well, more often than not, they're located in a Highway Service Centre - - -

MR HANN: Yeah. Yeah.
45

MR PAMPLIN: And so that's been a tricky one for us to – to get our head around
because they could be branching out to ah any type of market that they're tapping

into, ah, but – yeah. You might call it more of a slow food market. You know, they are a healthy food option - - -

MR HANN: Mmm.

5

MR PAMPLIN: - - - but, you know, what we're actually encouraging here in Bulahdelah, and it's how it's evolved over – since the bypass, is more about your cafes, your slower - - -

10 MR HANN: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: You know, get out of your car, have a walk around, go to the cafes, go to Olivers, what have you, and get that experience, rather than just being in a Highway Service Centre that usually doesn't have a lot of appeal, and you're just getting quick food and getting out of there. So, we could well find that Olivers is trying to branch out from there.

15

MR HANN: Okay.

20 MR PAMPLIN: We've been trying to – not to deal with individual businesses, as we just discussed - - -

MR HANN: Yeah. Yeah.

25 MR PAMPLIN: - - - so we hadn't actually approached, ah, Olivers for that - - -

MR HANN: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - because we were trying to be, um – you know, not playing one business off against another.

30

MR HANN: Just – just an inter-related question then to that is, there's been some discussion this morning regarding the master plan which – for the site, which I think the reference to that is that there's residential, a hotel, a brewery, tourist-type facilities that are part – that, um, are planned for the site, and that previous community meetings have documented that – that they are supportive of the Highway Service Centre proposal, provided that that link to other facilities on the site is progressed and maintained. Is – is that something council has taken into account/

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MR PAMPLIN: Ah, not specifically in this application because the application is just for the Highway Service Centre.

MR HANN: It's not part of this application, but it – but it is - - -

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MR PAMPLIN: It's not part of that. There was some information in the original application which we said, "That's not what your application is for".

MR HANN: Right.

MR PAMPLIN: “We can’t take that into consideration of what you might do or might come back for a rezoning - - -

5

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - for council, for – or a possible development. You know, we’re considering your application on its merits, for what you are seeking”, which is the amendment to schedule 1, to allow a Highway Service Centre in that location. Um, whatever else they may or may not do with, ah, land that they do or don’t own in that location – and they’ve looked at a fairly large block. You know, we didn’t want that to be part of this because it’s not part of the, you know - - -

15 MR HANN: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - rezoning of the land that we’re seeking.

MR HANN: Yep. Yep.

20

MR PAMPLIN: It – it’s too uncertain to try and deal with things like that from a council perspective, of what might someone do. Great if we had two applications on the table at the same time from that person. We go, “Actually, we’ll look at this, you know. Can we make that part of the one application”, and so that they’re contingent on one another, but otherwise, you’re not in a position - - -

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MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - to look at that.

30

MR HANN: No, I understand that. I think the way it was portrayed to us was that the – a level of community support for the Highway Service Centre was contingent upon the applicant also proceeding with other plans that they were obviously clearly aware of. So, we’re talking about community support here - - -

35

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

MR HANN: - - - or why the community would support something that’s got some inherent risk.

40

MR PAMPLIN: Oh, of course.

MR HANN: And it seemed to be offset by, or mitigated by the fact that there were much bigger plans afoot. I just wondered where the council has taken that into account in terms of the community support, not only - - -

45

MR PAMPLIN: It certainly would have made our position easier if it was part of the one application - - -

MR HANN: Right.

5

MR PAMPLIN: - - - because you could look at the overall jobs - - -

MR HANN: Sure. Yep.

10 MR PAMPLIN: - - - and see whether it clearly would offset any impact, ah, rather than just the Highway Service Centre itself. It's not part of the application - - -

MR HANN: Okay.

15 MR PAMPLIN: So, yeah, we had to sort of separate that. We were very well aware of the master plans and what the developer - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

20 MR PAMPLIN: - - - would ideally like to occur in that area. Fortunately, we have to consider the current application, um, because what happens if the rest of it never - - -

MR HANN: Yes.

25

MR PAMPLIN: - - - goes ahead?

MR HANN: Okay.

30 MR PAMPLIN: Ah, and obviously there could be confusion in the community if the developer is waving the overall master plan around, as well as talking about a Highway Service Centre - - -

MR HANN: Yes.

35

MR PAMPLIN: - - - as a separate thing.

MR HANN: Okay.

40 MR PAMPLIN: It is difficult for us with that because we're aware of it, but we're not considering it, um - and we didn't consider it in supporting this application. We saw it - - -

MR HANN: Thank you.

45

MR PAMPLIN: as a standalone thing, regardless of what they may or may not do in the future elsewhere.

MR HANN: That's crystal clear. No, thanks, Richard. No, no, that's useful for us. I understand that.

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

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MR HANN: Peter.

DR WILLIAMS: Just one last question. I – at the moment anyway. I think it's the last one, I hope.

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MR PAMPLIN: You're right.

DR WILLIAMS: Sorry, Richard. We see the – both the RMS and the department made a lot about the need for a strategic approach, and it's better if this goes back for review of policy, and um, back to the community – it's all transparent. And perhaps it needs weight to do that and all sorts of things - - -

15

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

DR WILLIAMS: And the applicant quite rightly says, well, it can't afford another five or ten years, or whatever, until all this is finally done.

20

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

DR WILLIAMS: Just in – and it also – also this might also answer a bit of a question about the extent of public consultation. When council got the draft planning proposal - - -

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MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

30

DR WILLIAMS: - - - was that put out on an exhibition at all, or up on council's website? Was the community made aware that that – that a proposal has – the draft plaintiff proposal had been received by council?

MR PAMPLIN: No. Council – probably, you know, similar to most councils. It actually only goes on exhibition when you've, um – the formal part of a gateway determination - - -

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DR WILLIAMS: Once you got the gateway determination - - -

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MR PAMPLIN: Yes. That we actually do that - - -

DR WILLIAMS: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: So, there's been – the only thing different about this application with regard to consultation was with the RMS. We wanted to, ah, gain an understanding of what their position would be - - -

45

MR HANN: Mmhmm.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - just to know what we're likely to have to address in – in the application. It wasn't a formal referral. It couldn't be because it – that happens after
5 the gateway - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - so we informally sought the opinion of the RMS.
10

MR HANN: Mmhmm.

MR PAMPLIN: It did take us about four months to get an answer, um, but we eventually got a position from them, that they didn't, um – it was tied up with
15 another application, you know, unfortunately - - -

MR HANN: This is the Tea Gardens one?

MR PAMPLIN: - - - so, they actually responded on both.
20

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: And nearly everything in the letter back was about the other one, not this one - - -
25

MR HANN: Yes. Yes, yes.

MR PAMPLIN: So it did make it - - -

MR HANN: Yes, yes. I did note that - - -
30

MR PAMPLIN: - - - really difficult for us to try and understand that, um, and just to see what the issues were with this one versus the – the other one. Um, we figured the other one's probably a little bit more out there in how it sort of deals with, you know
35 – it's not next to a bypass town.

MR HANN: Yeah. Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: It's – it's – it is a different sort of scenario.
40

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: And – so – yeah. Like, we've – we wanted to understand what that was, um, what positions we're going to have to deal with, issues that we need to
45 address in the application, to a standard that we felt would be enough to be considering a gateway for. So, that's what we did the work on that. So regardless of whether they support it or not, we wanted to have an understanding of that - - -

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - and move forward, and make it clear to our council also that there's, you know, a potential that the RMS will object to this application. Council
5 did, you know, support the application, so you know, we've gone forward, ah, on that basis. But, yeah, it's not normal practice for us to go out there and hold community meetings, or, what have you - - -

10 MR HANN: At this stage, you mean?

MR PAMPLIN: At an early stage.

MR HANN: Yeah, okay.

15 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah.

DR WILLIAMS: Oh, I'm just looking at whether - - -

20 MR PAMPLIN: No.

DR WILLIAMS: - - - council might have just indicated that it has received a planning - a - - -

25 MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. No.

DR WILLIAMS: A draft planning proposal, that's all?

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. Certainly when we do strategies and review the zones and other sorts of work at a strategic planners that we do, you know, we do do a lot of
30 that work, or we go out, ah, even before you've actually got something to talk to the community about, often you go and gather information earlier on. But not on the individual planned proposal applications - - -

35 MR HANN: Okay.

MR PAMPLIN: You know, we run through more of a set process, ah, with the processing of those.

40 MR HANN: Yeah. No, that's fine. Thank you. That's - okay.

DR WILLIAMS: I'm fine, thank you. Thanks, John.

45 MR HANN: I think, um - I think you've answered everything that I had on my - oh, one last thing, one last thing.

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

MR HANN: Just generally, I – and it – the site selection process, looking at the applicant's report - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

5

MR HANN: They talk about two other possible alternative sites, one to the south, ah, in what is flood-prone land, I think, which would need to be built up, but also suffers from the fact that it's not full interchange, so you've got access to – from the northbound traffic, but you can't – you couldn't access it.

10

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

MR HANN: The benefit of the alternatives are clearly that they're on the same side of the highway as Bulahdelah town - - -

15

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

MR HANN: - - - and so the theory would be easier and quicker access back into the town to divert those that stop who were interested in visiting Bulahdelah – it's a little easier - - -

20

MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

MR HANN: So the south seems problematic in the way they presented it - - -

25

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

MR HANN: And the northern site near the existing full interchange - - -

30

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

MR HANN: - - - the land parcels there are I think in their words, um – you know, they're a bit more challenging from a topographical point of view - - -

35

MR PAMPLIN: Mmhmm.

MR HANN: - - - but also closer in proximity to residences. I just wondered whether you've got any comment about this.

40

MR PAMPLIN: Um, look, it's certainly obvious we had an application for a specific site, you know, which we've done - - -

MR HANN: Yep.

45

MR PAMPLIN: - - - but it is interesting that, you know, that they did some consideration of that, ah, because you know, if we were doing strategic point of, you

know, work rather than assessing an application, we would normally do that sort of
- - -

MR HANN: Yeah. Yeah.

5

MR PAMPLIN: - - - like ourselves and have an understanding. Look, I would actually agree that the, um – if we were having a Highway Service Centre on the south, it is problematic, ah, with the flood plain - - -

10 MR HANN: Mmm.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - down there. It might be more convenient for people who were northbound, to actually have a Highway Service Centre there. The, um – the one may not be particularly visible to northbound traffic, you know, so now mined – that
15 the site that it is, is more suitable for southbound traffic. It – you know, you would see it coming south – would have an easier access off – you would be onto that side. Whether that encourages people to come into the town now, or what have you. Our hope by actually in the planning agreement, to have something, um, in there about the – you know, advantages of Bulahdelah in doing that.

20

It wouldn't mean necessarily for the people who stopped there at that time, but maybe another time that they would actually, ah, come into Bulahdelah. But certainly from a council perspective, you know, we dealt with the application we had, rather than go, "Is there a better site somewhere else?" But I would generally
25 agree with that, that just straight off the cuff, you know what I mean, that it's – south is very problematic. I don't see there'd be an easier site there at all - - -

MR HANN: Yeah. Okay.

30 MR PAMPLIN: - - - for, um, a Highway Service Centre.

MR HANN: Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: And, um, elsewhere from the north with the golf course and some
35 vegetation issues and other factors, yeah, I don't think there's much other option for a site selection in that area.

MR HANN: Okay.

40 DR WILLIAMS: That's fine.

MR HANN: That's it for me. Helen, did you have any questions?

MS MULCAHY: I do have a question. If you – you're preparing the consolidating
45 instrument, I presume?

MR PAMPLIN: Yes.

MS MULCAHY: And the LSPS?

MR PAMPLIN: Ah - - -

5 MS MULCAHY: A big task – well - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yes. We - - -

10 MS MULCAHY: - - - it – yeah. Yeah. You’ll get to it.

MR PAMPLIN: We will get to that.

MS MULCAHY: Yeah, I’m sure you will. Um, Bulahdelah’s future - - -

15 MR PAMPLIN: Mmm.

MS MULCAHY: - - - under the consolidating instrument. Are you looking at any wholesale changes to zonings and – and – you know, in light of what you know, obviously it won’t be in direct response to this proposal - - -

20

MR PAMPLIN: No.

MS MULCAHY: - - - but you know what I’m saying.

25 MR PAMPLIN: Ah, yeah. Certainly, um – no. There’s a simple answer there. We’ve looked at all our zones across our 10,000 square kilometres, with um our 198 settlements, and we’ve looked at trying to rationalise three LEPs that use the same zones as extremely differently, in what they prohibit, ah, what heights they have. There’s a whole range of things. Ah, it’s been a very difficult task to do that, so
30 we’ve been doing that for the last three years. Um, we are about to go out on an expedition on the 5th of February - - -

MS MULCAHY: Congratulations.

35 MR PAMPLIN: For our urban areas.

MS MULCAHY: Right.

40 MR PAMPLIN: The rural ones are lagging, unfortunately, behind.

MS MULCAHY: Yes.

MR PAMPLIN: We’ve just put the effort into the urban areas.

45 MR HANN: Yeah. Yeah.

MR PAMPLIN: And we are looking at all those settlements. Bulahdelah, we'll see virtually no change.

MR HANN: Right. Okay.

5

MR PAMPLIN: That's only around a couple of, um, the parks and zonings over those that will actually see that here. There's – when – part of doing the new LEP isn't about providing expansion areas - - -

10 MS MULCAHY: No.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - what have you, and - - -

MS MULCAHY: It's just regularising it - - -

15

MR PAMPLIN: - - - Bulahdelah – Bulahdelah already has that anyway - - -

MS MULCAHY: Yes.

20 MR PAMPLIN: - - - behind this site that we're talking about is actually zone - - - residential.

MR HANN: Yeah.

25 MR PAMPLIN: So there is an expansion area, but that isn't what the current work of council and strategic work is to be able to put one new LEP together. It will gain, ah – when we go and do the – ah, consultation, we're doing a bit of a ratio around the local government area, visiting 11 different centres, and um Bulahdelah - - -

30 MS MULCAHY: Not all of the 98?

MR PAMPLIN: Bulahdelah included. Yeah, then we will be coming here.

MS MULCAHY: Mmm.

35

MR PAMPLIN: There's virtually no change to the community but, um, you know, it's our job to inform the community of the work we've done to date, what we've, ah, analysed, how we've assessed that, and how we've drawn our conclusions on that, and to seek their opinion. That is not going to actually result immediately in an LEP
40 change.

MS MULCAHY: No.

45 MR PAMPLIN: There's some strategies and reviews that we've already worked with the Department of Planning with, to then inform the new LEP and DCP with as well.

MR HANN: Mmhmm.

MR PAMPLIN: As the local strategic planning settlements as well.

5 MS MORRIS: So, Richard, could I add though that they're already in our quite flexible zone, so - - -

MS MULCAHY: Yes.

10 MS MORRIS: - - - a number of development activities that – that – are available to - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. The - - -

15 MS MORRIS: For businesses and other opportunities - - -

MR HANN: Right.,

20 MS MORRIS: - - - to take - - -

MR PAMPLIN: Yeah. But being the, um, the village zone for most of it, except the urban - - -

25 MS MORRIS: Yep.

MR PAMPLIN: The – the residential expansion area was kept low residential, so it didn't have that other opportunities - - -

30 MS MORRIS: Right.

MR PAMPLIN: - - - in the past, like the previous council - - -

MS MORRIS: Yes.

35 MR PAMPLIN: But we did look at that, but we do have other businesses. Um, they're not all in the one area, where you might just go, "Oh, yeah, let's zone that commercial, and put the rest of it residential". It wasn't quite so clear-cut. There is a defined main street, you've got the service stations - - -

40 MR HANN: Yes.

45 MR PAMPLIN: - - - on the old highway section. You've got – you've still got some other businesses that are shown in the main area, ah, and it was felt that it was, ah, a better outcome to leave it as it was – it was working quite well for what we're doing. We're not having development issues, you know, in that regard, so we thought the best way to move forward was to, ah, keep to the same zones. There will

be some slight about the uses in those. They're trying to rationalise that across the new local government area.

MS MORRIS: Mmhmm.

5

MR PAMPLIN: - - - but there's no real change that we can see for Bulahdelah out of that.

MS MULCAHY: Okay. Thanks.

10

MR HANN: All right. Have you got anything else, Helen?

MS MULCAHY: No.

15

MR HANN: Brett?

MR B. JAMES: Nothing from me.

MR HANN: Okay.

20

MS MORRIS: Can I - - -

MR HANN: Yes, sure.

25

MS MORRIS: Do you mind if I just double-check the questions that I have - - -

MR HANN: Please, for us.

MS MORRIS: - - - that you might want more information on?

30

MR HANN: Okay. Yep.

MS MORRIS: I have. How many service stations are in the town prior to the bypass - - -

35

MR HANN: And how many are closed now?

MS MORRIS: And how many are closed now?

40

MR HANN: That's yep.

MS MORRIS: And the number of operators for the house boats - - -

MR HANN: Yes.

45

MS MORRIS: - - - and whether that's increased or decreased at all.

MR HANN: That's right. We – we're led to believe there were two - - -

MS MORRIS: Okay.

5 MR HANN: And there's now one, but that may not be the - - -

MS MORRIS: Okay.

MR HANN: It may not be the case.

10

MS MORRIS: And possibly Olivers, the date that that opened - - -

MR HANN: Yes. We – we – yeah.

15 MS MORRIS: Is that interest - - -

MR HANN: Yes, that's right. They were the three that I had, Louise.

MS MORRIS: Sure. Okay. Great.

20

MR HANN: No, thanks for checking. All right.

MR PAMPLIN: That's all right.

25 MR HANN: Well, I think we're done, Matthew, so meeting closed. All right.

MR PAMPLIN: Thanks very much.

30 **MATTER ADJOURNED at 2.54 PM INDEFINITELY**