

MR S. O'CONNOR: Welcome to this stakeholder meeting proceeding in the Independent Planning Commission's electronic public hearing into the State Significant Development application for the Dendrobium Extension Project. I'm Steve O'Connor and I am the Chair of this Panel. Joining me is my fellow
5 Commissioner, John Hann. John, and I, are being assisted by Stephen Barry, and Julian Ardas. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we variously meet and pay my respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging, and to the elders from other communities who may be participating today.

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South 32 Limited, the applicant, owns and operates the Dendrobium Mine, an underground coalmine located approximately eight kilometres west of Wollongong in the Southern Coalfields of New South Wales. The mine produces metallurgical coal for steelmaking in Australia and overseas. The applicant is seeking development
15 consent to allow the extraction of an additional 78 million tonnes of run-of-mine coal from two mining areas, Areas 5 and 6, and to extend the life of the mine until 31 December 2048. The application has come to the Commission for determination because it received more than 50 unique public objections. I note the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has provided its assessment report and has
20 recommended approval of the application.

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has directed the Commission to hold a public hearing into the application. He has also asked the Commission to determine the application within 12 weeks of the date of referral from the Department. In line
25 with regulations introduced in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting will be conducted online. A full transcript of this meeting will be published in the new few days on the Commission's website. So with those introductory comments because it's being transcribed, I will just ask everyone on the call one by one to introduce yourselves, say who you are, and where you're from. Just so that
30 helps with the transcribing. I will ask John, first of all, to introduce himself.

MR J. HANN: John Hann, Commissioner, Independent Planning Commission.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you. Stephen Barry.
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MR S. BARRY: I'm Steve Barry, Planning Director at the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.

MR O'CONNOR: Julian Ardas.
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MR J. ARDAS: Julian Ardas, Planning Consultant for the IPC.

MR O'CONNOR: Thank you. And Barry, would you introduce yourself, please?

MR B. ARTHUR: Yes. Barry Arthur, I'm the Manager of Environment and Sustainability with the Wingecarribee Shire Council.
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MR O'CONNOR: Thank you. And thank you for making the time to talk to us, this afternoon. We understand from the Council's letter dated 11 September 2019, that Council has a policy which it adopted in 2010 of opposing longwall mining and any new coalmine in the Shire because of its concerns over the potential impacts on
5 groundwater, water catchments, agricultural land, and tourism. Can you just give us a bit of background for that policy? And if it, just advise if it's still relevant and if Council has any specific concerns about this particular project?

MR ARTHUR: Yes. Thank you for the opportunity to talk today. Yes. Council
10 made its submission in September, pretty much, in line with that Council Policy Statement. The policy was first put in place in 2010. But it has been reaffirmed a number of times, both with the previous Council and with the current elected Council, as well. So it has been reaffirmed by the current Council. The part of – there are a number of Council resolutions in line with coal mining. And one of those
15 is back in 2010, a resolution that all submissions stated clearly, up-front, that Wingecarribee Shire Council's Policy in Opposition to Longwall Mining and Coal Seam Gas Exploration and Production. And, obviously, we're not talking about Coal Seam Gas today. But, again, our submission is pretty much in line with that policy, that our submissions state clearly, up-front, Council's policy to oppose longwall
20 mining. Now, do you want me to go on - - -

MR O'CONNOR: And - - -

MR ARTHUR: - - - a little bit further? Or, at this point in time?
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MR O'CONNOR: Yes. Yes. If you don't mind.

MR ARTHUR: So Council, the background to that is that, obviously, there are a number of coal measures under the Shire, and there has been some existing mines,
30 which may have predated the 2010 resolution. Indeed, one of the oldest mines in the Shire is – and it's probably one of the older mines across the State, around Medway or Berrima, which has now closed down, and is in the process of being closed down. Council has made quite significant submissions for other proposed coal mining in the Shire. And, probably, most notably is Hume Coal, which is still being considered.
35 At that point in time, it was quite a significant submission, reflecting the community sentiment around that particular area.

In this submission here, in relation to Dendrobium Mine Extension, we've, obviously, referred, basically, to Council's policy in terms of opposing longwall
40 mining. It's, probably, a part of the Shire that I've never been to and most residents have never been to. It's part of the Shire where, you know, people can't enter, at all, or bushwalk or do anything in that particular area. But, you know, obviously, there's a proposal here for mining. In saying that, though, it is still of interest to Council and our community because of the drinking water catchment obligations on all of our
45 community. In our community, with most of the Shire is in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment. And so therefore, most of our activities, whether it's through DAs or other activities must meet a mutually beneficial effect.

So our residents know the costs and impact of those requirements in most of our daily needs and, of course, making sure that protection of that drinking water catchment is in our conscience all the time. So hence we have made our submission and, hence, the submission is basically – I know I can speak confidently on behalf of
5 Council because of these resolutions that have been made.

MR O'CONNOR: Okay. Thank you for that background information to the policy, and the fact that it has been reaffirmed on a number of occasions and would still be Council's position. Have you had a chance to look at the Department's Assessment
10 Report, at all?

MR ARTHUR: Yes. I have. I know, it's probably in excess of 200 pages. I can't say that I've read every page. But I've gone to select sections in there. And so I have reviewed it. I know that – I did read, in particular, some of the comments in
15 relation to koalas and, also, you know, the groundwater, of course. So I am aware of it.

MR O'CONNOR: And, likewise, the Department's Recommended Conditions of Consent. I just wondered whether you'd had a chance to look at those? And if
20 there's any comments you want to make in relation to the various conditions. So if the Commission did see fit to approve this project. You know, is there anything, you'd like to see like to see finetuned in terms of those Conditions?

MR ARTHUR: Look, I haven't identified anything for fine tuning. I guess, our
25 submission and what I'm saying today is based on principle, rather than looking at some of the details in the Draft Conditions.

MR O'CONNOR: That's fine. Thank you. John, do you have any questions of Barry? You would have to turn on your – off mute, thanks, John.
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MR HANN: Thanks, Steve. No. Well, look, I think, you've covered it. I mean, obviously, we appreciate the fact that Council has a policy and it has been, you know, endorsed with, you know, right through to the current Council. Just a question, has there been any level of consultation between the applicant and the
35 Council, given that you're part of the LGA, an LGA of the project area?

MR ARTHUR: Yes. There – look, we, there has been. And I know that they have sent through a number of, you know, "Information in relation to this". I have, obviously, looked at the application and all the documents as they've come through.
40 As I said, it's probably a submission which we didn't make a full detailed point by point response to it. Mainly because of the area that it's in, and it's an area which we, probably, don't know too much about, because it's not really managed by us, or that we don't hear too much about our community. But to go back to your point, John, yes, they have.
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MR HANN: All right. No. Thanks. Thanks very much, Barry. Steven, I don't have any other questions of Council.

MR O'CONNOR: So does Steve or Julian have anything they'd like to see?

MR BARRY: No further questions from me.

5 MR ARDAS: None from me, either.

MR O'CONNOR: Okay. That looks like that's fairly short and sweet then, Barry. If there's no questions from yourself about process or whatever, hopefully, we've answered those before we commenced this session, I will call it to an end. And
10 thank you very much for your time, this afternoon.

MR ARTHUR: Yes. Thank you. Thank you for the offer, and the time. Look, as I – I know it's pretty short and brief. But thanks, anyway.

15 MR O'CONNOR: Okay. Bye-bye.

MR HANN: Thank you, Barry.

MR ARTHUR: Okay. Thank you, bye-bye.
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MATTER ADJOURNED at 2.45 pm INDEFINITELY