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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

TRANSCRIPT IN CONFIDENCE

O/N H-1216092

INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING WITH NARRABRI SHIRE COUNCIL

RE: VICKERY EXTENSION PROJECT

PANEL: **JOHN HANN
CHRIS FELL
ZADA LIPMAN**

ASSISTING PANEL: **BRAD JAMES
STEPHEN BARRY**

COUNCIL: **CATHERINE REDDING
STEWART TODD
DANIEL BOYCE**

LOCATION: **VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

DATE: **10.14 AM, FRIDAY, 19 JUNE 2020**

MR HANN: Good morning. And before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners on the land on which we meet, and I'd also like to pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and to the elders from the other communities who may be here today. Welcome to the meeting today. Vickery Coal Proprietary
5 Limited, a subsidiary of Whitehaven Coal Proprietary Limited, the applicant, is seeking development consent to extend the Vickery Approved Project and develop a new CHPP and train load-out facility at the Vickery Coal Mine. The project also proposes to develop a rail spur across the Namoi River floodplain and includes a water supply borefield and associated infrastructure. The project's located in both
10 Narrabri and Gunnedah Local Government areas.

My name's John Hann. I'm the chair of this IPC panel, and joining me are my fellow commissioners Professor Zada Lipman and Professor Chris Fell. And, as I said, Chris is hopefully going to be on the line, dialled in, very shortly. And Steve
15 Barry and Brad James are from the office of the commission. In the interest of openness and transparency, to ensure the full capture of the information, today's meeting is being recorded, and a full transcript will be produced and made available on the commission's website.

20 The meeting is one part of the commission's decision-making process. It's taking place at the preliminary stage of this process 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 we consider it appropriate. If you're asked a question and you're not in a position to
25 answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing, which we will, of course, post on our website.

So, for the electronic meeting today, could I ask you if you could introduce yourselves each time you speak. Where we have face-to-face meetings, normally we
30 just need to do that once, but it's a little hard for our Auscript transcript people to be able to figure out who's saying what. So if you wouldn't mind just introducing yourself each time you speak, and if you could just avoid – obviously, we try to do this, but if you could take care not to speak over the top of each other, because that also makes it a little bit difficult to get the transcript in an accurate form. So having
35 said that, we're now ready to begin, but I'll just check in with Brad. Brad, how are we doing with Chris Fell?

MR JAMES: Chris hasn't yet reconnected, John.

40 MR HANN: All right. Okay. Well, just in advance, while we wait for Chris to join us, I thought perhaps the best thing, with your agreement, would be if you take us through your most recent submission. And I note that you wrote to the panel, I think dated the 2nd of March this year, and I thought that, look, that was a detailed, comprehensive submission, and we appreciate that, and so I think that would form a
45 good basis if you could take us through each of the key issues, if you're in agreement.

MR TODD: Yes. Thanks, John. Stewart Todd. We've just got some opening remark from the mayor, if that's okay, or would you like to wait?

5 MR HANN: We just have to wait. For good order's sake, we do have to wait till Chris Fell is - - -

MR JAMES: I believe this is Chris now.

10 MR HANN: Okay. Chris, are you with us?

PROF FELL: I can't come in via Zoom. I'm coming in by telephone.

15 MR HANN: That's perfectly all right. I think we can hear you. Can everyone hear Chris?

PROF LIPMAN: Yes.

MR TODD: Yes.

20 MR HANN: All right. Thanks very much. Chris, just to let you know, while we were waiting for you to connect, I've gone through our process this morning in terms of the applicant, the process for the transcript. So we're all completed in that, and we're ready to go, and what I've suggested is that if the council could take us through the details of their most recent submission, well, including other submissions
25 as well, but the most recent one being the 2nd of March. So it's over to you, and we appreciate that.

MS REDDING: Thank you.

30 PROF FELL: Thanks for waiting.

MS REDDING: Yes. Thank you. Councillor Cathy Redding, Mayer of Narrabri Shire. Firstly, I would like to thank the members of the Independent Planning Commission for making time to hear from local stakeholders in the region. We
35 understand these are incredibly challenging times and appreciate the effort members of the IPC have made with respect to hearings during COVID-19. Whilst we acknowledge the significant economic and health issues currently facing New South Wales, Australia, and the world more broadly, we would like to stress the fact that any development which has the potential to have a significant impact on the Narrabri
40 Local Government area must be assessed on its merits. Each project must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and all intergenerational issues must be adequately addressed prior to the approval of any development consent. We have every confidence in the members of the IPC to undertake this task impartially and without fear or favour, and we look forward to working with you throughout the process.
45

In the earlier hearings, we stated on the record that there were a few key things that we wished to focus on at the time, including projections relating to employment. It is

our hope that the department would scrutinise some of the claims made by the
proponent in their EIS. Following a detailed review of the assessment report, we are
of the respectful opinion that the required level of scrutiny has not been applied to
these projections. This is despite the fact that the assessment report acknowledged
5 similar concerns raised by the EDAs social impact expert and that of an independent
economic expert effectively agreed that some of the projections appeared to be
overstated. See paragraph 636 of the assessment report.

10 We respectively ask commissioners to undertake a detailed review of these economic
projections prior to any further recommendations being made. In our opinion, the
review prior to development consent is even more prudent, given that many of the
assumptions underpinning these projections may require further revision and
investigation given the impacts of COVID-19 on New South Wales, Australia and
the globe.

15 Another issue that we discussed in our earlier meeting was the use of autonomous
vehicles. The assessment report indicates that the proponent has no plans to
introduce an automated mining fleet into the project, paragraph 595. With the
greatest respect, the framing of this statement does not inspire confidence about the
20 future of employment with respect to this project. Whilst such a statement has
satisfied the interests of some external stakeholders, it does not provide sufficient
assurance to local employers and employees that any jobs created from the initial
stages of the project will actually be maintained throughout the life of the project.
The fact that the proponent acknowledges that they are undertaking trials relating to
25 autonomous vehicles provides some basis of concerns around their earlier claims.

The social impacts of the project were also raised in the earlier hearing, with
particular reference to the cumulative impacts on the community of Boggabri.
Initially, we felt positive that the concerns of the Boggabri community were being
30 listened to by the IPC and that this feedback would flow on to both the department
and the proponent. The assessment report acknowledges that some communities will
be disproportionately impacted, paragraph 602. However, in our opinion, the
proponent has not adequately addressed the potential generational impacts that may
arise from this project.

35 We would like to highlight that the benefits of this project will largely accrue to the
proponent's shareholders, who, I understand, are based across various parts of the
world; however, we stress that the impacts of this project will be borne by the
residents of Boggabri and the ratepayers of surrounding Local Government areas
40 well into the future. We maintain that the assessment report did not adequately
consider the cumulative impacts of this project on the community of Boggabri;
therefore, we ask the IPC address these matters.

45 Another point that was raised during earlier hearings was in relation to the trust
deficit with the proponent, particularly amongst the agricultural stakeholders. Media
reports have described in great detail about the specific concerns they have with
respect to the project, particularly around water. I am referring to the recent 7.30

Report here. Based on the recent 7.30 Report, issues around compliance, resourcing that were raised in the earlier hearing are still of a concern for us. Furthermore, the impact that the proponent has on water markets may require further examination as outlined in these media reports. Given the considerable variability in climatic
5 conditions, there may be some scepticism in the community regarding water modelling.

We firmly believe that an ongoing evidence-based approach is the best way to manage potential issues relating to groundwater, with an annual review method. We
10 support the IESC recommendation that the results of monitoring should be compared with modelling predictions more frequently, paragraph 252, and the department's independent expert opinion, paragraph 255, that additional monitoring information would be useful. Based on our own interactions with the proponent to date, it appears that they could do more to engage in good faith with farmers and the local
15 community, who have struggled with the impacts of drought and now COVID-19. Our concerns of the use of Braymont Road, which were raised in earlier hearings, has largely been ignored.

With respect to comments in the assessment report regarding annual – regarding
20 planning agreements, we would like to point out that Narrabri Shire Council has demonstrated its ability to work constructively with major project proponents in the region. At paragraph 618, there is a suggestion that the Vickery extension offered to provide financial support to local projects is somehow superior. We reject this notion, given that other proponents have made provision of up to \$120 million.
25 We reject the proposed 70:30 split as it does not adequately address the fact that the major community of interest that will be affected by the cumulative impacts of this project over the life cycle of this project is Boggabri.

We request that the IPC significantly increase the contributions payable to Narrabri
30 Shire. In contrast to the assessment report, we would like to highlight the fact that, in our opinion, the impacts of the Extension Project are significantly higher than that of the Approved Project. For this reason and others, we believe that the proponent has not made adequate provisions for the intergenerational impacts of the Extension Project on surrounding rural communities. This became apparent throughout
35 discussions around any potential voluntary planning agreement with the proponent. It is our understanding that many of the community feel that they can coexist with the Approved Project but not the Extension Project.

We respectfully question some of the recommendations featured throughout the
40 assessment report and ask that the Independent Planning Commission apply further scrutiny for some of these claims. We also wish to highlight the fact that the adequacy of a number of these recommendations are contingent on the outcome of future reports and investigations, and these are likely to be finalised well after any development consent is approved; therefore, these hearings and the final
45 recommendations from the IPC are vital to protect the legitimate interests of a wide range of local stakeholders, including current and future ratepayers. I wish to thank the commissioners again for making the time for these hearings, and I will now like

to pass over to Mr Boyce, who will touch on some more specific points of the assessment report.

MR HANN: John Hann. Thank you very much, Mayor. Daniel.

5

MR BOYCE: Thanks, Commissioner. Just before I start, are there any questions at this stage?

MR HANN: I don't have any. John Hann here. I don't have any at this stage.
Zada, Chris?

10

PROF LIPMAN: None from me.

PROF FELL: I'm okay, thanks, John.

15

MR HANN: All right. No, we're fine. Please proceed, Daniel.

MR BOYCE: Daniel Boyce here. Thanks, Commissioner. I'm just going to take you through some references in the assessment report and just provide some comments and observations from council. Just to start with, I'm referring here to page 16 of the assessment report, specifically dealing with administrative procedural requirements. In relation to the koala plan of management, there's a condition requiring the preparation of the management plan as a condition of consent. It is our view that this is not appropriate. The consent authority, in our view, doesn't have the power to grant consent until the koala plan of management has been approved. So we'd like that addressed by the commission, if possible.

20

25

Similarly, Commissioners, the bushfire assessment has also been conditional. It's our view, again, that this needs to be considered prior to the issuing of the development consent and that it's not appropriate to require further assessment as a condition of consent. So we'd ask the commission to look at that as well. I'm specifically referring to condition number B98 in respect of bushfire, Commissioners.

30

There's some reference in the assessment report to borefield pipeline and water supply pipelines. There's no detail provided specifically on what is being built where, and we've only got indicative site plans to work on. So we'd request further details on both the borefield and water supply pipelines. Draft condition A10 of the department's assessment permits a maximum processing of 13 million tonnes of coal per annum. It's not clear to us whether the impact assessments, particularly around noise and area quality, have considered the maximum - - -

35

40

PROF FELL:

MR BOYCE: - - - or 10 million tonnes per annum.

45

MR HANN: I'm sorry to interrupt for a second, Daniel. Just one moment. Chris. Hello, Chris.

MR JAMES: He's now on mute, John.

5

MR HANN: Okay. All right. Thank you. Sorry, Daniel.

MR BOYCE: That's quite all right, Commissioner. I'll just recap. Daniel Boyce again here. Condition A10 of the draft conditions permits a maximum processing of 13 million tonnes per annum of coal. It's not clear to us, having reviewed the assessment report, whether the air and noise assessments have been completed on the basis of the 10 million tonnes per annum which is proposed.

10

MR HANN: Understood. Thank you.

15

MR BOYCE: In relation to the traffic, we've obviously raised previous concerns regarding the transport assessment, specifically in relation to our view that Braymont Road will be used. So we maintain – we maintain our concerns there. We also question whether the code of conduct that's proposed is an adequate enforcement tool to ensure that Braymont Road is not used. We raise some concerns in relation to the use of Rangari Road 557 of the assessment report. We maintain our concerns regarding the single-lane bridge on that – on that road. We don't feel that the department has adequately addressed the safety concerns that we've raised there.

20

MR HANN: Sorry. John Hann here. Daniel, just for clarification, which road is this that you're referring to in regard to the bridge?

25

MR BOYCE: Rangari.

MR HANN: Thank you.

30

MR BOYCE: At page 108 of the assessment report, the department has dealt with traffic and transport impacts. There's no requirement, as far as we can tell, for the proponent to enter into a road maintenance agreement with Narrabri Shire Council. We'd like the commission to consider requiring this as a condition of consent, if indeed the project is recommended for approval. We'd also ask that the commission add a requirement for the proponent to liaise with council in relation to preparing a traffic management plan.

35

In respect of the water demand, page 32 of the assessment report, it's not clear to us whether the assessment has included the use of water from Vickery by other mines. Council has participated in some consultation processes in relation to modifications to Tarrawonga Mine. So we just want to ensure that the assessment has included, I guess, the cumulative impact of the proposed use of water from Vickery for those other mines.

45

In relation to the groundwater assessment, page 30, paragraph 150 of the assessment report states:

5 *The independent groundwater expert is not satisfied with the information provided by Whitehaven but acknowledges this could be carried out post-approval.*

10 Again, we maintain our position that it's not appropriate to require further assessment as a condition of consent, for the reasons that we've explained previously in relation to koala plan of management and bushfire risk.

15 In relation to groundwater monitoring – and I'm referring to paragraph 252 of the assessment report here – we request that a requirement be applied that local councils and relevant stakeholder groups be consulted during the monitoring of groundwater impacts and that the revision period recommended by the department on page 54, paragraph 252, be reduced to three years.

20 In reference to compensatory water and paragraph 269 to 272 of the department's assessment report, that these recommendations are insufficient. If a privately owned bore suffers from drawdown, then there will inevitably be a period of delay whilst investigations are carried out in order to comply with these provisions. This delay will be to the serious detriment of the farmer or private bore owner. Whilst we acknowledge that the onus lies with the applicant, we envisage the possibility of competing expert opinions that will not satisfy the other party. This process will result in further delays, expense and additional time possible for the farmer to be without water whilst a final decision is pending.

30 We submit that either the applicant should be required to make good any drawdown within the development zone regardless of cause – if this is not acceptable, then the applicant should be obligated to provide water to the farmer and/or private bore owner until such time as the planning secretary makes a final determination. Furthermore, we submit that the reasonable costs incurred by the farmer and/or private bore owner, such as expert fees, legal fees and the like, should be reimbursed by the applicant. I'm referring to condition B43 of the draft conditions there, Commissioners.

40 In relation to the surface water assessment, paragraphs 196 and 197 of the department's assessment report, we raise concerns that the limited data that was available during the drought may have an impact on this assessment, and we question whether further assessment can now be undertaken, given that we had some rain in the intervening In relation to water seepage, paragraph 209 of the assessment report, to 211, the EPA has recommended a number of things in the assessment report, requesting that the department should be allowed to overrule the EPA recommendation here, and we absolutely support the EPA recommendation.

45 In relation to the loss of agricultural water, paragraph 10 of the assessment report, the department has stated that it considers the project can be managed such that it would

comply with the relevant guidelines and policies and would not result in any significant impacts on water resources or on the agricultural enterprises that rely on these resources. We question how the department is able to make a statement with such confidence in the context of multiple alleged breaches of water licences which
5 have been the subject of media reports. We would like to know upon what factors and evidence the department rely upon in reaching the conclusion that the project extension will not result in any significant impact on water resources, with particular reference to agricultural enterprises in the region, given that many key

10 During periods of drought and water scarcity, we question how the relevant authorities will manage potential distortions in the water market as a result of the proponent's disproportionate financial resources relative to local enterprises, such that agricultural interests are not priced out of producing essential commodities, and we ask whether there's scope for any Local Government, community and agricultural
15 representatives in the region to be involved in consultations regarding the preparation and implementation of a water management plan for the project.

We hold concerns regarding the ability of the proponent to properly comply with water licensing storage which infer a failure to comply licensing
20 requirements. The assessment report fails to adequately address the community's concerns surrounding potential lost agricultural water that may be caused by the project. In our view, further evidence should be obtained before the department can form its view that the project will not have any significant impact. Further consultation should be undertaken with key stakeholders, including community
25 groups, farming groups and Local Government, in order to allay the well-held and significant concerns that exist about the project's potential impact on agricultural work.

In relation to the loss of agricultural lands, and specifically clauses – sorry –
30 paragraph 471 to 480 of the department's assessment report, it's our view that there's been no tangible assessment of the impacts of the lost agricultural land, specifically for biodiversity offsets. We reiterate our previous concerns regarding lost agricultural land for biodiversity offset. In relation to the social impacts, specifically the employment projections – I'm referencing paragraph 592 to 595 of the
35 department's assessment report here – the response from the proponent summarised in paragraph 594 of the department's assessment report does not adequately address the relevant points made in paragraphs 592 and 593 relating to employment projections. We'd ask that the proponent provide the IPC with figures pertaining to workforce employment numbers and other operations to verify their workforce
40 projections.

We'd also ask that the proponent explain what it means by the phrase, quote, “no plans to introduce automated mining fleets into the project”. There does appear to be a suggestion in this statement that the proponent is leaving enough room to allow this
45 to potentially occur in the future. Without any categorical denials about the use of automation obtained employment projections may not necessarily materialise.

In respect of the economic evaluation in paragraph 636 of the department's second report, given the changes in the global economy over the last six months in particular, we request that the economic assessment be reviewed to ensure that it's still fit for purpose. In relation to the social impacts, paragraph 602 of the
5 assessment report – and I'm quoting here:

*While there are benefits to the regional community and to New South Wales, the benefits' impact to the project would not necessarily be distributed equitably, and some groups within the community may be disproportionately
10 impacted.*

This statement accurately conveys the situation facing Boggabri. It summarises some of the reasoning behind council's position to date. For this reason, we request that the IPC apply a fair and reasonable developer levy, significantly greater than
15 \$3.2 million currently recommended by the department.

In relation to the social impact management plan, paragraph 628 of the department's assessment report, given the acknowledged impacts on the community of Boggabri, we request that a unique social impact management plan be prepared for Boggabri
20 and its surrounding agricultural community.

With respect to the voluntary planning agreement and the comments in the report at paragraph 609 to 622, I reiterate the mayor's comments. Narrabri Shire Council has demonstrated its ability to work constructively with major project proponents in the
25 region. At paragraph 618, there is a suggestion that the Vickery Extension offer to provide financial support to local projects is somehow superior. We reject this notion, given that the other proponents have made provision for a community benefit fund in the magnitude of \$120 million. We reject the proposed 70:30 split put forward by the department and we request the IPC significantly increase the
30 contributions payable to the Narrabri Shire communities.

In relation to road upgrades – and I'm referencing draft condition B81 here – we've maintained our position that road infrastructure is likely to deteriorate over the course of this project, with commensurate damages charged to local ratepayers and
35 the benefits to the proponent. We request that the Independent Planning Commission require the upgrade of Braymont Road or a contribution of 7.4 contribution of \$67,600 subject to CPI. Thank you, Commissioner.

MR HANN: Thank you very much, Daniel. John Hann here. Was there anything
40 further that you wish to present to us before we go to some questions, Daniel or Stewart or Mayor?

MR BOYCE: Daniel Boyce here. No. We're fine. Thank you, Commissioner. We're happy to take any questions.
45

MR HANN: Well, first of all – John Hann – thank you very much. We very much appreciate the detailed comprehensive response. That's particularly helpful to us.

And for me, you've answered a lot of the questions that I had in mind. One that I'd appreciate just some clarification – it relates to the VPA, and, first of all, I guess, could you just confirm what the status of negotiations, if I could call it that, are now, between the applicant and yourselves.

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MR BOYCE: Daniel Boyce here. So council has not agreed a VPA with the applicant. Council went through discussions with the applicant over a number of months in relation to trying to agree a VPA. We wrote to the department and requested independent assessment of a VPA offer. That's obviously been undertaken by the department as part of their assessment report, although we're not satisfied that that's sufficiently independent. The recommended conditions obviously are under council's plan. The department's recommended an amount of 3.2 million which equates to the offer or the final offer that council received from the proponent as part of its VPA discussions.

15

MR HANN: John Hann here. Thank you, Daniel. So would you be able to just explain, perhaps in a little bit more detail, the 70:30 split, which I think largely equates to perhaps a spatial split between what's in the LGA in terms of the proposed development and what's in the Narrabri Shire Council area and then what's in the Gunnedah Shire Council area. Now, I understand there is – the approved mine – there is an agreed VPA with the current applicant for the approved mine based on that split, but you've just confirmed that you're not agreeable to that split. So, clearly, there are obviously significant changes in terms of what's proposed in the extension versus the approved mine, but I just wondered if you could help us understand your concern with the split now in regard to the extension application.

25

MR BOYCE: I think the first point to make is that we don't – we don't think that the geographic criteria is an appropriate criteria with which to apportion contributions, whether they be via a VPA or under a fixed developer plan. It's our view that the community that would be most impacted will be Boggabri, but, in addition to that, it's our view that the majority of the benefits, in terms of employment and attracting new residents as a result of this project, are likely to accrue to Gunnedah Shire. So it's our view that there needs to be a significant contribution to the Boggabri community, and council's in the Boggabri locality to ensure that Boggabri infrastructure and its liveability is improved to the point that it's more of an attractive proposition for people looking to – to relocate potentially for employment in relation to this project and other projects.

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I would note as well that the council is on the record and it's written to the department expressing its dissatisfaction with the previous VPA negotiation for the Approved Project. So while council may have resolved to accept that VPA, it has not formally entered into that VPA with the proponent, and it did, at the time, express its dissatisfaction with the process and with the amount that was agreed.

40

MR HANN: Daniel, thank you very much. That answers my key question there. I'd like just to ask Zada and Chris if you've got particular comments of the council, or questions.

45

PROF LIPMAN: Not - - -

MR HANN: John Hann speaking.

5 PROF LIPMAN: Sorry. Zada Lipman. I've made a note of all the queries, but I don't have any special comments. I just wondered what your concerns were in relation to the koala plan of management, because, as I understand it, there is a plan online and that is going to be finalised, and construction. Are there any specific concerns you had in relation to that?

10 MR BOYCE: Look, I guess our concern specifically relates to what seems to be a common theme throughout the assessment, that a number of things, including the koala plan of management, the bushfire risk assessments and additional groundwater assessment appear to be conditions of consent, and it's our view that the practice and case law state that these should be dealt with as part of the assessment.

PROF LIPMAN: Thank you.

MR HANN: Any other question, Zada?

20

PROF LIPMAN: None from me.

MR HANN: Thank you. Chris?

25 PROF FELL: Is it on?

MR HANN: Yes. We can hear you loud and clear.

30 PROF FELL: Thank you very much. I'm just wondering to what extent Narrabri Council feels that the removal of trucks from the roads, after the new CHPP is commissioned, is a very positive thing. Are trucks a major problem in your shire?

35 MR BOYCE: I think in the absence of appropriate contributions to road maintenance, they're certainly a problem in the shire. So we support, as a general principle, rail over road.

PROF FELL: Thank you.

40 MR HANN: Do you have any other - - -

PROF LIPMAN: Can I - - -

MR HANN: Sorry. Zada.

45 PROF LIPMAN: Can I just ask, following up on your question, Chris – the proposal is to take the trucks off the road altogether, virtually, once the rail is complete in two to three years after construction. Surely that would be an

improvement. And, secondly, are you concerned about automated trucks? Although the applicant has suggested at this stage that there's no intention of introducing those trucks, there will be very, very limited usage of trucks after the initial period after construction. Does that address your concerns in any way?

5

MR BOYCE: No. Our concern specifically related to the – to the mining fleet, and so I guess, whilst we would support the use of rail, subject to appropriate air and noise criteria, our concern in relation to automation of the mining fleet within the – within the mine relates specifically to the jobs forecast and how reliable those forecasts are over the 25-year life of the mine.

10

PROF LIPMAN: Thank you.

MR HANN: John Hann here. For clarification, we do appreciate that the bulk of the road traffic on the public road that will be removed as a result of proposed rail transport – and therefore what's proposed to be removed would, in fact, largely be in the Gunnedah Shire LGA. We do understand that the Tarrawonga Mine, which currently uses some public road as well as private haul road, that will continue as proposed to be supplying the proposed new CHPP. And that, primarily, I think, is in the Gunnedah LGA, if I'm correct on that. So we do understand that, that the bulk of the benefit in terms of trucks off public roads is primarily in the Gunnedah Shire, but you might like to comment on that, Daniel.

15

20

MR BOYCE: I don't think I've got anything more to say on that. Thank you, Commissioner.

25

MR HANN: Okay. Therefore – Zada and Chris, do you have any other particular questions?

30

PROF LIPMAN: No, not at this stage. Thank you.

PROF FELL: John, I did. It was to do – the farming community is quite concerned about water and – however, the proponent plans to have the correct licences and buy them on the market to supply their water needs. And certainly the suggestion is that they will turn the mine down if the water's not available. So they'll only match what is available in terms of water. I just wonder if you could help us get a feeling for what your constituents feel about the situation.

35

MR BOYCE: Daniel Boyce here. I think our main concerns in relation to purchasing of additional water licences is the additional resources that the proponent has at their disposal to enter the water market to secure additional licensing in periods of drought as compared with small-scale often family-operated farming businesses.

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MR HANN: John Hann here. Thank you, Daniel. Chris, anything further?

PROF FELL: Thank you. No. That's fine. Thanks, John.

MR HANN: Zada?

PROF LIPMAN: No. Thank you.

5 MR HANN: All right. Well, look, Mayor and Daniel and Stewart, thank you very much. A very comprehensive presentation of your issues, and we greatly appreciate it. And if there's nothing further, if you have no questions for us, then we'll close the meeting.

10 PROF LIPMAN: I have no further questions. Thank you.

MR BOYCE: Daniel Boyce here. We are fine. Thank you, Commissioner.

15 MR HANN: All right. Well, again, thank you very much. We appreciate your time this morning.

PROF LIPMAN: Thank you.

20 MR TODD: Thank you, Commissioners.

MS REDDING: Yes, yes.

PROF FELL: Yes. Thank you.

25 MS REDDING: Thank you very much, Commissioners, for – for allowing us this time to hear the concerns that we have.

MR HANN: Well, it's important to us, and we appreciate your contribution.

30 MS REDDING: Thank you.

MR HANN: Thank you. Good morning.

35 MS REDDING: Good morning.

PROF FELL: Thank you.

MR BOYCE: Thank you very much.

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RECORDING CONCLUDED

[11.02 am]