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O/N H-1316655

**INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MEETING WITH COUNCIL**

**RE: WALLA WALLA SOLAR**

**PANEL:**                      **ANDREW HUTTON**  
   **ZADA LIPMAN**

**ASSISTING PANEL:**      **STEPHEN BARRY**

**COUNCIL:**                    **COLIN KANE**  
   **DOUG MEYER**

**LOCATION:**                    **IPC OFFICES**  
   **LEVEL 3, 201 ELIZABETH STREET**  
   **SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES**

**DATE:**                        **11.19 AM, TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2020**

MR HUTTON: So good afternoon and welcome and thank you for your time today. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to the elders past, present and emerging. Welcome to the meeting today. We'll be talking about the Walla Walla Solar Farm project. FRV Services Australia Proprietary Limited propose to develop a 300  
5 megawatt solar farm approximately five kilometres northeast of Walla Walla in the Riverina region of New South Wales. My name is Andrew Hutton. I am the chair of this Commission panel and I'm joined by my fellow commissioner, Professor Zada Lipman. We're also joined by Stephen Barry from the Office of the Independent  
10 Planning Commission. Stephen's online but off-camera so you know that he's there.

In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of all information today's meeting will be recorded and a full transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website. This meeting is just one part of  
15 the Commission's considerations of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination. It is important that the commissioners ask questions of attendees to clarify issues wherever they are considered appropriate and if you ask a question and you're not in a position to answer it, please feel free to take that question on notice and provide  
20 any additional information in writing which we'll also put up on our Commission website.

I'd just ask, although with a smaller group it's not too hard, but I do ask that we just introduce yourselves before you speak just to – for the first time just to enable the  
25 members and also Auscript to ensure that they know who's speaking and also just remind you not to speak over the top of each other as we do speak so that we can ensure accuracy of the transcript itself. So we will now begin. Thank you very much for your time today to come along and talk to the Commission about this particular proposal. I guess we were keen to hear from council, I guess, in terms of  
30 where your thoughts are around the department's assessment report and the recommendations made, noting that council did have some initial concerns around a number of issues and also noting that a number of those, as I understand it, were – were either you were satisfied around the amended project and that there were some changes and I guess we're just keen to enable you to talk to the panel about some –  
35 any residual concerns you may have or issues that you may like to raise with us. So I guess I'll through to you Colin and Councillor Meyer. If there was anything that you wanted to raise with the Commission, you're welcome to do that now.

MR C. KANE: Did you want me to go first, Doug?  
40

MR D. MEYER: You go, Colin.

MR KANE: All right. Well, thank you. I'm Colin Kane, the director of environment planning for Greater Hume Council. Well, just thank you for the  
45 opportunity to address you, Commissioners. Well, I have made just a few comments I'd like to make based on the dot points that were in the agenda items.

MR HUTTON: Sure.

MR KANE: Before starting, I think, you know, I'd like to say that the solar farm projects have been divisive in our community is how I'd describe it. They've –  
5 which hasn't been helped by the fact of the amount of time that it takes to make the assessment process. I think some of them have pretty well been going for two years now. So with a divisive issue, I think that's a long period of time. But anyway, coming – getting onto the actual project itself, I've read every bit of documentation associated with the project from the EIS to the response to submissions, the  
10 amendment report. I can't remember whether there was a amendment report with this one and I can see that the actual development proposal has improved, in my mind, throughout that process of going from the initial EIS through the response to submissions to the actual final development proposal.

15 I think it's a more acceptable development in my opinion as a planner. I think some – quite a lot of the issues have been addressed. But coming to the dot points, I think all the council would acknowledge that this is pretty good agricultural land and so the loss of the agricultural land, it does remain a concern to council. I think it's been somewhat downplayed as much as the department could about the quality of the land  
20 in the assessment report. You know, they've drawn on the fact that it's a small amount of land in Riverina. Can't dispute that. That it is mapped as category 4 land. I can't dispute that either. But what hasn't sort of come across there is that despite that it is category 4 land, it's very flat land with a high rainfall and there's a lot of factors that go for it in terms of its agricultural capability in my mind.

25 Council has engaged agronomists in the past to interact with the Department of Primary Industries over a recent important agricultural lands project and their comments – the agronomists that we've employed said that, you know, despite the fact that it is class 4 land, it's actually able to be ameliorated pretty easily and then  
30 the fact that it has got annual rainfall in his opinion did make it very good quality land. So, look, in my mind, the company's decision to locate on this land is really driven by the fact of its proximity to the infrastructure, the overhead powerlines. It's just purely a business decision. You know, the – it's relatively expensive land, but that's still offset by the fact that it's got the infrastructure there that they've chosen  
35 that land over other alternatives. It's just all about that proximity to the infrastructure so - - -

MR HUTTON: In your review, Mr Kane, did you note that there's been 94 hectares of land, I guess, preserved, as it – due to a modification of the array alignment? Are  
40 you aware of that?

MR KANE: Yes. And look, that's a betterment, Commissioner. There's no doubt about that. That's good and more of that land is being kept for viable agricultural activities. I think the companies can do that because the actual solar arrays are  
45 getting better and more efficient at the time so they can reduce the footprint and so maybe that's another advantage of the fact that it took two years for it to be assessed that that opportunity's come about and they're not disadvantaged and there's still

more agricultural land available than what would have been if it had have been two years earlier because it would have taken the whole site to produce the same amount of power so I think that's a good thing.

5 MR HUTTON: Yes. I note in some of the reading that the land hasn't been mapped as BSAL land, but I suspect that's because the mapping hasn't been done in that area. Am I right in that assumption or is it that there have been – DPI have been through and it's not mapped as BSAL? What's your understanding?

10 MR KANE: Well, my understanding of BSAL is it comes – well, none of our agricultural land that's of any note is mapped as BSAL land and we've got land on the outskirts of a regional centre of Albury that's floodplain, high agricultural land, you know, people are paying lots and lots of money for it still not mapped as BSAL. So some of the – what sort of land has to get over the line as BSAL I don't know, but  
15 it must have to be pretty special, I think, Commissioner, because – yes – we've got land, in my opinion, and I'm not an agronomist, that is very, very good land that's not mapped as BSAL. So we've got hardly any of our council mapped as BSAL. So I haven't got a lot of confidence in the BSAL mapping, to be honest, in our area.

20 MR HUTTON: Are you aware of the draft mapping – bear with me – the DPI ..... have completed some draft mapping - - -

MR KANE: Yes, yes.

25 MR HUTTON: - - - but it hasn't been finalised, exhibited or adopted by the government. Are you aware of that mapping and has council had any involvement if you are aware of it any council – any involvement with that work?

MR KANE: Yes. I am aware of it. So that project maybe started about three years  
30 ago and the DPI put out some preliminary mapping which left a lot of this land where the solar farms – the four solar farm developments – I know we're only talking about Walla – out of that land and council decided to put in a submission. They had an exhibition period and we did put in a submission, quote a  
35 comprehensive submission, where we made the case that this land should have been included as important agricultural land. All – the whole area where the full – right through from Culcairn to Jindera, basically. My understanding was it was left out because of the fact that it was this class 4 land and it was – the mapping was really driven around soil characteristics and council was able to make the case that, you know, that sort of was a bit limited to the department and they did release another  
40 draft map where they included the land as important agricultural land I think primarily because council made this submission which was driven by agronomists that council put in and he basically said that acidity problem with the land was relatively cheap to address and in his opinion the high agricultural – the high rainfall far offset the fact that, you know, the soil was a little bit poor because that could be  
45 easily ameliorated through the application of lime.

Councillor Meyer might want to say a little bit more about that because he's a farmer himself, but that's what came from that and so I think if they actually had proceeded with the important agricultural land mapping, they would have included this land. They certainly told me that that was their intention. Did you want to add anything to that, Doug?

5  
MR MEYER: Yes. My name's Doug Meyer. I'm Deputy Mayor of Greater Hume Shire. Have been for eight years. I am a farmer by birth. I'm part of a group farmer family from Henty which is about 25, 30 kilometres north of the solar farm, therefore, I have no interest in terms of the solar farm, per se. I accept that I'm really here representing ratepayers. Most of those ratepayers around these farms have expressed a very serious objection on the basis of a number of things and we need to remember a lot of these farms that we're talking about were settled by families in the 1850s and people of those same families are the ones that are still farming those tracts of land in this day and age. So it's – you could say that they're really family farm areas.

20  
There's also a lot of religious inference in it because most of those settlers came from South Australia in that period of time on an overland trek with horse and drays, etcetera and so forth and all I'm trying to do is establish that these people are intrinsic to the area. They came out of Europe and they settled this particular area after coming through South Australia. I would backup what Colin is saying, that most of the data that was presented to council on the basis of the type of land that it was was based on assumptions that were made 20 years ago. Now, in that 20 years ago or from that 20 years ago to this present day and age the whole character of farming has changed where we use soil tests before you do anything. Those soil tests indicate that you might need to apply particular items such as lime fertiliser or whatever.

30  
I consider this land to be very highly productive. In fact, there's been some farms sold within my region and going into Culcairn in the last week where the prices are absolutely astronomical. People view the area as being a safe farming area. They view it as being a food producing area and the main – the main objection that people have regarding establishing solar farms on prime agricultural land is that we need to think further ahead than just establishing farmers or just establishing solar farms. We need to think at the point of feeding a nation in 20 or 30 years' time and every acre of land will become very valuable. Even more valuable than what it is today in terms of having to feed this growing nation.

40  
There are some people who think we'll important foodstuffs from other countries. That's a furphy, really. We're good at growing food. We're good at creating export industries based on food and while they're not big in terms of the total area of the shire, these solar farms are sitting on the prime pieces of land that are in that tract within Greater Hume Shire.

45  
MR HUTTON: Councillor Meyer, if I may just interject. The applicant has indicated through their documentation and in the meeting earlier that they propose to

continue using the land for an agricultural purpose, principally grazing, as I understand it, and their argument is that there'll be a continuation of agricultural production in – I guess, concurrent to the solar development. Do you have a comment on that?

5

MR MEYER: Yet to be proven.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

10 MR MEYER: There's been tours made of other solar farms and, certainly, I haven't been with them, but I listen to all of the people that come to me to talk about it and while it's good for a couple of years, eventually, weeds and everything else, particularly, the Bathurst Burrs and all of the other types of weeds that you don't need tend to take root, take off, so to speak. That in itself you can't run animals in  
15 that sort of a situation. You know, the real concern from my point of view, from the point of view of the people who lobby the councils who have opposed it is that we are losing prime agricultural land. It's very important that we don't overlook the fact that it's food producing land. It's not land to make money. Really, in the overall context, it's land that produces food and everything else that goes with it. There are  
20 other areas quite apart from Greater Hume where you can buy thousands of acres at a fraction of the price that it would cost in Greater Hume. That land will never produce food to the quality or quantity that we're able to produce here.

MR HUTTON: Okay. I think we certainly understand that issue clearly. I'm  
25 mindful of giving you guys an opportunity to talk to some of the other issues as well.

MR KANE: Yes.

MR HUTTON: But thank you for those comments, Councillor Meyer. They're  
30 appreciated.

MR MEYER: Thank you for listening.

MR HUTTON: Mr Kane, any other issues?  
35

MR KANE: Well, I think we've spoken enough, as you said, about the agricultural land. I've still got some residual concerns myself about the heat island effect and bust over the life of the development and, look, I have read what was available, again, like I said, from every – people that are more qualified than me. I just think  
40 the length of the development over the 30-year timeframe, no one knows exactly what that outcome's going to be over that period of time. We're still all guessing and I suspect, for example, that it – I've got this belief that I think it'll be very hard over 30 years to maintain vegetation cover under the middle of the panels. I – I'm not an agronomist. I just base that on what I see. Like, if people put up a piece of tin on a  
45 tin frame, eventually – out in a paddock eventually nothing grows under it.

It could take 10 years or so, but eventually you get barer and barer. So I still think over that period of time it will be quite hard to maintain vegetation growth, but I have got no expertise to base that and, again, I'm a little bit concerned about the heat island effect as well. I've read what was available in the EIS, the Shepparton study,  
5 but what concerns me is that Shepparton study was not on the scale of what Greater Hume is proposing and, you know, particularly, with this Walla Walla Solar Farm with the adjacent Culcairn Solar Farm, it's a massive tract of area which is within a kilometre of each other. So I don't think there's ever been a study on that scale, you know, to see what that effect would be on the heat island effect.

10 I concede the point that, you know, studies have been done and I think – I don't know that it's a deal breaker in my mind, but I think it's a bit of an unknown still. So I just raise that point. I'm a little bit – I'm less concerned about the – I'm a little less concerned about the construction dust that's actually written there in the agenda  
15 items, but I'm more concerned about the operational dust.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: And I did notice in the EIS study, I wanted to – sorry, in the  
20 assessment report – I wanted to raise a concern about the accessing potable water that they want to bring to the site, the 25,000 megs.

MR HUTTON: That's – so they're intending to have a potable water storage  
25 facility. Is that what you - - -

MR KANE: No. So on page 28 - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

30 MR KANE: - - - of the assessment report - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: - - - it says there that they've got access to 25,000 megalitres of water  
35 primarily for dust suppression and that's coming from Riverina Waters County Council's pipeline in Walla Walla, the adjacent town. But I did some maths around this Commissioners and 25,000 megalitres is actually 25 million litres of water and – according to my maths, which even if they're carrying it in a tank, there's about  
40 30,000 litres to a tank, that's about 833 truck movements. Now, those truck movements to access that water would be over an unsealed road, back up Benambra Road, and I don't – I'm not aware of that being allowed for in the EIS and anywhere. This is almost the first time that I can, in my mind, place this in all the  
45 documentation and I am concerned about it because Benambra Road is, like I said, unsealed. It's going to go past some of the people that are concerned about the development and if you go and have a look in the traffic study, where it talks about traffic study in the assessment report here - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: - - - they talk about heavy vehicles going past the primary gate access and going up to the substation. They say there's only going to be two heavy vehicles  
5 that actually go that way. Well, I think that these water would go exactly over that same route because that's the shortest - - -

MR HUTTON: My understanding of - - -

10 MR KANE: - - - way into Walla Walla.

MR HUTTON: Yes. My understanding from the presentation we received is that the trucks or the vehicles will access the site is at 1.4 kilometres from the main highway they'll come along is it Bodambi Road? I'm sorry. I've mispronounced.  
15

MR KANE: Benambra.

MR HUTTON: Benambra Road. Sorry. They'll come in and they'll take a left-hand turn immediately adjacent to where they come onto the property and that all  
20 access for them will be internal including access to the western side was our understanding but - - -

MR KANE: Yes. And I think I agree with that. Sorry, Commissioner. I didn't mean to talk over you.  
25

MR HUTTON: No. You're fine. No.

MR KANE: But this – the route to get the water wouldn't be like that. It would continue down Benambra Road. Unless they're going to go a very long way around  
30 to get this water, the most – the quickest route to Walla Walla is down continue to the west - - -

MR HUTTON: Okay.

MR KANE: - - - down Benambra Road, past the gate about 5 ks into Walla Walla to get this water and – yes – the road past Weeamera Road deteriorates quite a lot. You know, our quality of – the actual road that we've got there because it's only servicing a few landowners further down that road - - -  
35

40 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: - - - and – yes – I'm just – I'm just not – I would like to see the access route for this water because to me it's quite a lot of truck movements and I'm not certain where they're going with it.  
45

MR HUTTON: Yes, yes.

MR KANE: But, again, it's not a dealbreaker. It's just - - -

MR HUTTON: No, no. I understand. Yes. And that's because it's not confined to what we understand to be the main route from the main highway into the site.

5 You're suggesting that there'll be an – there'll potentially be an alternate route for up to 833 trucks. That's your concern.

MR KANE: Yes. Both ways. So, you know, they got to go there and they got to come back.

10

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: So – so it's 1600 truck movements.

15 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: Yes. I think we need to account for that and heavy vehicles too, probably.

20 MR HUTTON: I do note too that council originally requested a section of Benambra Road to be sealed between Weeamera Road and Schneiders Road.

MR KANE: Yes.

25 MR HUTTON: Is that now – the department has advised that they didn't consider that that would be necessary. But that piece of road is from – as I understand it is from the – what would be the front gate through to the substation. That's the piece of road.

30 MR KANE: Not the entire length. It's actually quite a good road past the gate a little way, I think, to an intersection with another road called Weeamera Road - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

35 MR KANE: - - - and then from Weeamera on to Schneiders Road is just an unsealed rural road. Very – not very wide, That was the bit I think our engineers were trying to get sealed. But I don't think that – now they're offering to go through the farm – through the actual development site I think we're not - - -

40 MR HUTTON: Okay.

MR KANE: - - - we're not worried about it at – per se, except if these water trucks go up that way.

45 MR HUTTON: That's noted. Can I ask a question and it's potentially a cumulative impacts question and it's in the agenda just around, you know, 250 workers for 20 months potentially four developments with some overlap. Accommodation,

council's view about being able to service the project and the cluster of projects as a cumulative impact just on a simple accommodation perspective. It's something that's concerned other councils previously. Do you have a comment? Either yourself or Councillor Meyer?

5

MR MEYER: It's impossible. That's my opinion.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

10 MR KANE: Yes. I don't think we've got the accommodation within the shire to cater to the amount – that amount of workers even in caravan parks and motels. We just don't have that level of infrastructure. They'll have to go to – they'll have to come from Albury b

15 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: - - - to get that level of accommodation.

MR HUTTON: Which is how far by the road?

20

MR KANE: Sorry?

MR HUTTON: How far is that by the road?

25 MR KANE: 45 ks maybe. What do you think, Doug?

MR MEYER: Yes. 65 for me to Albury so it would be 45 - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

30

MR MEYER: - - - to this particular development and that compounds itself if we've got four going at the same time.

MR KANE: Yes, I know.

35

MR MEYER: I don't believe that they'll ever find that ..... that .....

PROF LIPMAN: Can I just clarify, Colin, that your concerns about water and the number of trucks would only be confined to the construction period; is that right? Because after that the water usage tapers off considerably.

40

MR KANE: Yes. I – that is correct.

MR HUTTON: We've just lost Mr Kane. He must have pulled the plug as he rolled back in his chair. Let's give him a couple of minutes to come back online.

45

MR MEYER: I'm also a director of Riverina Water who would be supplying this water and it hasn't across a board table yet in terms of a proposal to ship that much water.

5 MR HUTTON: Okay.

MR MEYER: It's only bore water. There's a bore ..... at Culcairn that this water is pumped from. I don't know that we'll have that much capacity ..... service the other two towns and, as I say, there has not been anything like this come across the actual  
10 Riverina Water Council board table yet so it's probably a presumption of the engineers that they can do this and they can't. Yes.

MR HUTTON: Steve, would you mind – sorry, Councillor Meyer, would you mind  
15 just seeing if you can contact Colin and see whether he's coming back in.

MR S. BARRY: Yes. I'll do that now and, Deputy Mayor, your audio is sort of fading a little bit. I'm not sure what the issue there.

MR MEYER: .....  
20

MR HUTTON: When you lean forward, Mr Meyer, it's good. It's when you lean back in your chair.

MR MEYER: Just ..... see if I can .....  
25

MR BARRY: Colin's on his way back in.

MR MEYER: ..... good afternoon, Councillor – Colin.

30 PROF LIPMAN: There's Colin.

MR KANE: I'm sorry about that.

MR HUTTON: That's all right. We saw you roll back in your chair and then you  
35 went black. We assume you got your foot caught on a plug or something.

MR KANE: IT problems.

MR HUTTON: We press on. We press on. So – yes – when that – we had that  
40 little IT issue there we were just talking about, I guess, the accommodation and the cumulative impacts and as I understand it there's – council, expressed by yourself and the deputy mayor, there's a concern about being able to service the sites with accommodation, principally – yes – without the need to travel to back to Albury or other regional centres.

45 MR KANE: Yes.. I don't think we'll be able to do it within the locality and then whether the – whether the affordable accommodation that temporary workforce is

probably going to want in Albury's there – well, they'll sort it out, I guess. There's more caravan parks and different options in Albury.

5 MR HUTTON: Yes, yes. One of the proposed conditions from the department is a accommodation and employment strategy for the project in consultation with council and the idea is that that would consideration to the cumulative impacts. Do you welcome that condition? Are you aware of that condition?

10 MR KANE: Yes. I am aware of it and I welcome it and I think that that's a good initiative so that we can try and get as much local input into this development as we can from our businesses potentially for our young – for young people in the community to get some employment, get some skills. I'd like – if it's coming, I'd definitely like to see some wins for the local community as much as we possibly can.

15 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: So I think that's a welcome condition.

20 MR HUTTON: Yes. Okay. The next question was just in relation to arrangements around the VPA. I note that the department has acknowledged have notified in their report that council have agreed to the terms of a VPA. Do you have any – can you acknowledge that and, secondly, do you have any other comments around the VPA that's been proposed that would be relevant to this discussion?

25 MR KANE: No. Well, yes, I can make some comments. Look, the VPA's been negotiated with staff and the proponent FRV and those negotiations are completed. Councillors have got some knowledge, a heads of agreement type arrangement around that VPA, the actual quantum of funds. They understand that the money's to be spent within proximity to the development. In my mind, the VPA's pretty well  
30 there. It's got to be exhibited. The department didn't want council to go through the exhibiting process until after the application was determined so it's just sitting on – it's sitting waiting for that to occur. Whatever the determination will be will determine the next step of the VPA. But the VPA itself has been pretty – is negotiated and it's suitable to the staff. I think it'll be suitable to the councillors. So  
35 that aspect I'm comfortable with.

MR HUTTON: Zada, I haven't probably provided you with an opportunity to ask any questions. If you wanted to ask any questions of Councillor Meyer or Mr Kane you're welcome to. You're on mute, Zada.

40

PROF LIPMAN: ..... I think you've covered everything fairly well, but - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

45 PROF LIPMAN: - - - I might just ask in relation to – have you, perhaps, Colin, any concerns about Orange Grove now that the 1.8 metre distance has been adopted?

MR KANE: Look, I'm fairly comfortable now about the setbacks of the development for the non-involved receptors. You know, there's been significant concessions made by the applicant which is only going to improve the situation for the setbacks and the amenity for non-involved residents. So from that aspect, as a  
5 planner, I'm quite comfortable that it's as good as it's going to get and - - -

PROF LIPMAN: Thank you.

MR HUTTON: We've spoken to the agenda items, but I welcome any other  
10 comments that either of you might have that you would like to present to the Commission. Feel free to take this opportunity.

MR MEYER: Everybody – with due respect of everybody, one of the big things that keeps coming back to me and my group of councillors concerning the  
15 development is at the conclusion of 30 years there doesn't appear to be a set aside fund to restore the particular grounds and ..... other countries and I've seen the remnants of solar farms just left where companies have walked away from them and there's a great fear that this might be ..... here ..... about the environment about the ..... farms, etcetera and so forth and we've got to appreciate that ..... solar farm isn't  
20 very attractive in terms of aesthetics ..... that's one of the big things that's starting to come out from people who ..... starting to accept that maybe they haven't got any further say in ..... in stopping it from happening and now they're starting to think about what happens 30 years down track and I won't be here nor will Colin and I think we need to give some due consideration to what actually happens.

25 MR HUTTON: Thank you, Councillor Meyer. That's noted.

MR KANE: I would like to take the opportunity to make a couple of comments if it's available to me, Commissioners.

30 MR HUTTON: Please do.

MR KANE: I'd like to see some – the ability for all of these developments to have some sort of initial firefighting capacity beyond being reliant on brigades to attend.  
35 So they've all got a workforce. I think – in my mind, I'd like to see them have access to, say, a firefighting tender. It wouldn't need to be much, perhaps a trailer equipped with tanks and hoses and have their staff trained to use it as in the first instance because a quick response is better than a bigger response later on and, you know, I think for a relatively low cost I think that's a reasonable thing to have so I'm  
40 not suggesting - - -

MR HUTTON: That's in addition to the proposal which I understand to be a static water supply of 40,000 litres will be established and maintained for fire protection, but what you're talking to there is an ability to use the water to interact with the fire  
45 before - - -

MR KANE: Absolutely.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR KANE: Absolutely. So some sort of firefighting capacity themselves. Most farmers have that. Councillor Meyer might back me up on that, but a lot of them will  
5 have a firefighting cart when they're harvesting here in this time of year they'll go and get it from the RFS shed and they'll have it on standby so they can grab it and put it out quickly. I think that that's definitely something that should be in the fire plan. I'd like to see that. I'd just like to make the comment, it's less of a concern for this one, but I was horrified to discover that council would be the ARA for – under  
10 the Protection of the Environment Operations Act for these developments at the scale that they're at.

Now, this one doesn't have a battery storage, but the other ones certainly do and I read the EIS on those and they can melt down like a nuclear reactor if they get too  
15 hot and to expect a small rural council to have the capacity to be the ARA in an emergency for developments that are \$700 million, it's just ridiculous. The EPA should be the ARA for these developments, particularly where they have battery storage and – we just don't have that expertise to know what to do as the ARA. So we would default back to the EPA for their assistance if there was an emergency, a  
20 fire at the substation, something like that. To expect council staff who are doing lots and lots of different things to have those expertise is just ridiculous of the EPA, I think. So I think these state significant developments, definitely the EPA should be the ARA for these things under the Protection of Environment Operations Act. See – and I notice that they didn't even comment in the EIS, the EPA. They've just said,  
25 "We're not the ARA so we're not providing comment." Well, I just – that just – that I just find unacceptable so - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes. Noted. Thank you.

MR MEYER: I would like to support Colin on that. Most of our fire brigades are  
30 volunteer fire brigades ..... town fire brigades ..... bushfire brigades. They have all got other jobs ..... training in the face ..... but they are not equipped with the equipment that's needed to confront one of these fires that Colin's talking ..... any mention been made ..... proponents ..... they would assist in this regard. In fact, they  
35 walked away ..... yes.

MR HUTTON: All right. Well, if there's no further comments and no further from Zada I think we'll probably conclude the meeting and thank you for your time today. As you're probably aware, we are coming down this week to undertake a site  
40 inspection so we may have the opportunity to meet in person and then the process is that we'll be holding a public meeting online due to COVID in the future where people will have the opportunity to present to the commissioners around their concerns and thoughts on the development. So thank you for your time today. Thank you for your input and your preparation and we – if we catch up, we look  
45 forward to meeting you a bit later in the week.

PROF LIPMAN: Thank you.

MR KANE: No worries.

MR HUTTON: Thanks for that.

5 MR KANE: Thank you.

**RECORDING CONCLUDED**

**[12.00 pm]**