



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

RE: McPhillamys Gold Project (SSD-9505)
State-significant development of an open cut mine and water supply pipeline

BLAYNEY SHIRE COUNCIL MEETING

COMMISSION PANEL: PROFESSOR CHRIS FELL (CHAIR)
 MS CLARE SYKES
 DR PETER WILLIAMS

OFFICE OF THE IPC: JANE ANDERSON
 OLIVER COPE

BLAYNEY SHIRE SCOTT FERGUSON
COUNCIL: MARK DICKER
 BRUCE REYNOLDS
 CRAIG GOSEWISCH
 MICHELLE PRYSE JONES
 JOHN NEWSTEAD

LOCATION: VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

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PROFESSOR CHRIS FELL: So before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you Gadigal land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all of the country in which we virtually meet today and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. Welcome to the meeting today to discuss McPhillamys Gold Project, SSD-9505, currently before the Commission for determination. The applicant, LFB Resources, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Regis Resources Limited, proposes to develop McPhillamys Gold Project, an opencut gold mine to extract 60.8 million tonnes of ore and produce up to two million ounces of gold over 11 years and build an associated underground water supply pipeline in the Central West New South Wales.

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My name is Professor Chris Fell, I'm Chair of the Commission panel. I'm joined by my fellow Commissioners Dr Peter Williams and Ms Clare Sykes. We're also joined by Ms Jane Anderson and Mr Oliver Cope from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission. In the interests of openness and transparency, to ensure the full capture of information today's meeting is being recorded and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website. The meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and form one of the several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination.

20 It is important for the Commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it's considered appropriate. If you're asked a question and not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing which we will then put up on our website. I request that all members today introduced themselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure they do not speak over the top of each other to ensure accuracy of the transcript. We will now begin. And I just wonder if I could use first names in referring to people, if that's acceptable. Thank you. Can I - so over to you please and we're listening and we'll have questions. Thank you very much. Councillor Reynolds, are you with us? Would you like to kick off?

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MR BRUCE REYNOLDS: I'm not quite sure whether the General Manager and Mayor are listening in the other room. I think they've just taken their microphone off so I'll let them start, I will come in at a later stage, thank you.

PROF. FELL: Thank you. Please.

MR SCOTT FERGUSON: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, thank you, Chris. So my name is Scott Ferguson, I'm Mayor of Blayney Shire Council and I'd like to introduce to you my fellow Councillors in the room and my General Manager Mark Dicker who I think

you can only see the bottom half of. He's too tall, yeah. So this is Mark here and Mark, in his former position as Director of Planning, helped put together our original submission two and a half years ago. To my left here I have Councillor John Newstead. Across the table here I have Councillor Michelle Price-Jones and Councillor Craig Gosewisch is with us as well. So - and we're just missing really a couple of other Councillors and, of course, we have Bruce in his car online as well. So
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PROF. FELL: Thank you.

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MR FERGUSON: Thank you for the opportunity. Really looking forward to meeting you all in person on Thursday when you come to Blayney. It's been a massive issue in our community for quite a while now so we're all looking forward to the opportunity to move ahead and finally get a decision one way or another. So I notice you have a bit of an agenda there.

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MR MARK DICKER: Sorry, can I just jump in? So Mark Dicker, General Manager. I just need - Councillor David Somervaille specifically just to note or the Commissioners note he has declared two interests in the matter, one as a landholder who has frontage to the Belubula River downstream at the mine site and upstream of Carcoar Dam and the second is a consultant to the law firm Assos who advised Regis on some aspects of the Project and the voluntary planning agreement. So Councillor Somervaille just asked that that was acknowledged early on.

PROF. FELL: Thank you.

MR FERGUSON: Yeah, that's been a standing declaration of David's for a long time now. So, Chris, shall we work through your agenda or how would you like to - - -

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PROF. FELL: I think it would be most efficient if you give us your view of things rather than sticking necessarily to the agenda. The agenda was put together to indicate things that we thought were probably important. Put it in your hands but please give us time to ask some questions and we may interrupt for a moment if we have some question we'd like to ask.

MR FERGUSON: Yes. No, thank you, please do. I guess you have to appreciate it's all happened fairly quickly so we've all been quite busy with our heads down going

through the final report and the recommendations and the conditions and I guess we've still got a couple that we are considering. I'd just like to make note that certainly there has been a few things that have changed since our original submission which has been good. I think as the mine has reacted or the proponent has reacted to different issues that were raised things have moved a long a little bit.

10 I guess generally from our point of view with some more of our statutory requirements around the closing and selling of Dungeon Road, for example, we're still in negotiations with breaches around that. At this stage it's fair to say we're fairly happy with the way that is proceeding. We did have a small point about the first 500 metres of that road from the highway to be sealed with an all-weather sealer and we're still negotiating with them about that. It certain wasn't a condition, was it, Mark?

MR DICKER: No, it's raised in the report, I think specifically about page 86 but it's not then reinforced with a condition. So - - -

MR FERGUSON: We're probably going to go back and discuss that with Regis. We're not sure why it wasn't conditioned but - - -

20 MR DICKER: There appears particularly, you know, condition 69, 70, 71 around access there is some conditions about site access and stuff like that but there's not a specific condition regarding the upgrade and seal of the first 550 metres. Even though it's touched on in the report that they've agreed to do it, it just doesn't appear to be reinforced anywhere in the consent.

PROF. FELL: Okay. Thank you.

30 MR FERGUSON: And again we're continuing negotiations with Regis on that. The - I guess while we're on requirements the VPA, we signed an MOU a while back, we're fairly reasonably still comfortable with that even though the final CapEx is not determined. The mine's certainly been, or Regis have been very open to ongoing negotiations with that as well. So I think we're fairly comfortable where we are with that at the moment.

Obviously that's a very important aspect of this for the community and the Council going forward into the next sort of 15 years if it was to proceed. A question that I had potentially, Chris, to the the panel was around - if you had any view or experience

around supplementary rating for the mine to have a regular reval, I guess, especially in the development phase if it was to go ahead as opposed to being reval'd once every four years. Have you any experience or view on potentially how that may play out from your experience?

PROF. FELL: Strictly speaking we're not supposed to be interrogated so we might stop that unless if my fellow Commissioners would like to offer comment.

10 MR FERGUSON: Yeah. I mean, it's probably outside your scope anyway but it's just something that we've been considering, we've discussed with the mine. It's quite a complicated dark art the rating system, there's no doubt about that so, I guess, just from our previous experiences with other mines we think there's a huge advantage to the community if we could do some more supplementary rating as the mine is growing but I do acknowledge that it's probably outside your scope but I just thought I'd ask if you had any experience in regards to that from your previous work.

MR DICKER: I guess we have so we've had that initial discussion with them so, yeah.

20 MR FERGUSON: So we'll keep working on that as an aside.

PROF. FELL: Let's say we'll take the comment you've made on board when we're examining things.

MR FERGUSON: Thank you. Let's see. Shall we chat about the social impact study and statement, I guess.

30 PROF. FELL: That will be very helpful. I'm conscious of the fact that the applicant said they wanted the workers to live within 45 minutes drive form the site. I don't know exactly what that means in terms of the Blayney Shire but perhaps you could enlighten us a bit on that.

MR FERGUSON: I think there's two parts of this. One is obviously the development of the mine if it was to go ahead and that sudden influx of construction workers. We are currently seeing that with the \$300 million wind farm development currently underway in our Shire and quite frankly, we're always under a bit of residential and

accommodation pressure anyway. So that is one aspect to look at. The second part being once the mine is potentially in operation I don't think as far as the - I think the operation of the mine will be able to - the workforce will be able to be handled a lot better than the initial construction.

10 Potentially there's a large workforce within half an hour from Orange, Bathurst surrounding so I think once the mine was operating the impact of that workforce would primarily be just down to the commute everyday and how that impacted our road network but certainly the development of the mine we will see potentially see hundreds of workers come into actually build the mine. We've encouraged from the experience we've had with Cadia who have had similar issues around development and a large amount of workers coming in for shorter periods of time, or leaving for periods of time. Is that - they've initiated a workforce or accommodation coordinator and we've picked that up in our submission as well and we encourage Regis to do the same thing. We've found that with Cadia it would be very, very beneficial to actually identify where those beds were and where the stresses and strains were in the accommodation and residential - - -

PROF. FELL: Now, Clare, I think, has a question or comment.

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MS CLARE SYKES: Thank you, Chris. Yeah, I think that's a great point that you raise and I picked that up in some of the materials. Could you explain a little bit more about how the accommodation coordinator actually works in practice when - in balancing the multiple projects across the region because you had mentioned Cadia and the Infigen Wind Farm and you've mentioned, you know, that you noted how it has been a successful model. Could you expand a little bit more on that, about how it works in practice?

30 MR FERGUSON: Yeah. Well, it's actually run through our tourism entity called Orange 360 which is a collaboration between Orange, Cabonne and Blayney Councils. So it's sort of a nice fit and there was actually - and it is actually paid for by Cadia. The aim was to identify those hidden beds and accommodation within the region that weren't necessarily obvious hotels, motels, a normal residence that were available for that sort of - so there's quite a bit of on-farm accommodation found from my understanding and I do have - and Michelle here is a Director on that Board and she may or may not have any other to add to that but so I'll ask Michelle maybe to comment more on that because it has helped a bit and still say we do have pressure but it was just valuable having someone who's - because you have to appreciate that contactors come into town and sometimes they get left on their own devices so if I
40 employ 20 electricians it's up to me to find 20 beds where just having a one-stop shop

to go to and say, I've got 20 guys coming next month, what are my options. So spreading that has been very, very useful. I might ask Michelle - might have a comment.

10 MS MICHELLE PRICE-JONES: One thing I would add to that is the way that it's arranged through Orange 360 is that they also manage - like they look at the calendar for the region and so when we have wine week and food weekend, you know, school holidays and all of those things they actually make sure that they hold beds out or they have their shutdown at times to release the pressure on the accommodation for incoming tourists and families and things that are visiting. So that's quite a good thing to do and that's helped stop a lot of those big blockages where there just wasn't a bed to be found anywhere so - - -

MR FERGUSON: Very good point absolutely because that was key.

MR DICKER: To the point where a shutdown at Cadia has been moved to directly not coincide with food week. So to ensure that there was capacity in the network.

20 MS PRICE-JONES: So the wind farm didn't take up the offer to use Orange 360, they did their own thing apparently so - but there's certainly probably capacity there for another project.

MS SYKES: And so does the model work that it is a contribution by the major project proponents into the Orange 360 accommodation network or is it employees of the project proponent that are - or did they allocate resources to that initiative?

MR FERGUSON: Yeah, Cadia actually, if you like, paid for an employee of Orange 360.

30 MS SYKES: Right. Okay.

MR FERGUSON: Standalone person to do that role which is great. So it has been a bit of a win-win, not the perfect solution because at the end of the day there's only so many beds in the region and - but we have found it better than what it was. So years and years ago it was just ad hoc craziness, when certain things lined up you could not get a bed in the region. You couldn't have a function, you couldn't have a wedding,

you couldn't - so it was very difficult. I know Councillor Reynolds has his hand up, maybe you'd like to add something to that, Bruce?

10 MR REYNOLDS: And please let me know if I'm breaking up because you guys are breaking up so I don't know whether I am or not but I was just going to add on top of that Council has approved, and it's in construction, around about 100-plus bed accommodation. It's not pretty, it's in the middle of Blayney in the - I suppose you'd nearly call them dormers but it's motel accommodation but very basic in the middle of Blayney so that's not online yet so that would be an extra hundred beds that would be available to assist with the accommodation issues.

PROF. FELL: Thanks.

20 MR FERGUSON: Thank you, Bruce, yes. So we are very mindful, we've had experience with the pressures of accommodation for this type of development, I guess, and we are currently having some casual conversations with other accommodation providers as well. So that's yet to play out but obviously there's a lot of balls in the air around that but it could be useful if there was more accommodation, I think, certainly in the short to medium term.

PROF. FELL: Thank you. That's helpful in - what about the impact on schools and hospitals and community services generally?

30 MR FERGUSON: Well, I guess - I guess it will play out, we'll see how that plays out, I guess. I guess in my experience I've always seen our Shire as part of a region as far as a bigger precinct, I guess, with Orange and Bathurst being so close a lot of people who come into our Shire work within those townships and vice versa. The hospital here is about to undertake a major, 30 to \$40 million redevelopment next year as well. It's an MPS so there has been some concerns around the emergency services as far as accident and emergency but that is currently working to a degree with telehealth and nurse practitioners. So that has been a concern raised by the community but I think there has been a reasonable response from Western Area Health around that. We do have great emergency services here and obviously in Bathurst and Orange as well and two major hospitals in Orange and Bathurst, very complementary to what we do here.

The schools I'm sure would welcome a few more people, few more students, there's no doubt about that. As far as other impacts on facilities I guess it's just very hard to determine. Again, the development of these big projects people sleep, eat and work

and then go home to wherever home when the construction's finished. I guess it's just hard to determine what that 200-and-potentially-80 workforce might look like once it's embedded out there and I think probably the bigger issue or the biggest issue in this will be the traffic movements, I guess, through like increased traffic movements regular and that's what we saw with our other big mine here was those change of shifts, the extra traffic certain periods of the day, that needs to be managed with obviously improved roadworks. Mindful of bus routes and other things that are going on because those change of shifts do result in these sort of large traffic volumes for a certain period and then it pretty much goes back to normal. So just to considerations re the development versus the operation of a potential project this big and I'm not sure whether anyone else had anything to add around transport or accommodation or -
10 John.

MR JOHN NEWSTEAD: Councillor John Newstead here. I would've thought that during the construction phase there wouldn't have been that much pressure on the schools or anything like that because most of the workers probably come from outside the region and then I believe Regis have got a policy of trying to employ locals first. So a lot of those workers, not the 280, of course, would be locals but with their 45 minutes that takes in Cowra, Blayney, Orange, Bathurst and people that already live in
20 Bathurst who might come and work here aren't going to change the accommodation problems that we've got here in Blayney. The biggest one would be during the construction myself, I could be wrong, I'm not an expert but that's - and the schools, I don't think they'll be affected initially but who knows, if a few more people do want to move into Blayney because it's only 10 minutes away from the mine and they might bring their kids and everything then but apart from that I don't think it's going to be a major problem.

PROF. FELL: Thank you, that's a helpful comment.

30 MR FERGUSON: Bruce, do you have a comment?

MR REYNOLDS: Two points that I just wanted to make. One, Millthorpe Public School which is slightly longer distance than Blayney Public from the mine site. The state government is building 10 new classrooms plus a new library so that will be open sometime next year. So from a school point of view there's a lot of new facilities being built in the Shire. I've got two other points, one in Millthorpe again. Before Council at the moment there's a 52-lot subdivision that is expected to come before Council sometime next year. So there will be the potential for a lot more building blocks to be available in the Shire on top of some other subdivisions that are moving
40 close to opening up in Blayney town itself and the third one, just to follow on from

what the Mayor said a moment ago, and also Councillor Newstead, was the road network.

10 I actually came - I left Blayney Shire at 6 o'clock this morning to come to Sydney and Vittoria Road which is potentially one of the two routes, major route to get back to Bathurst - sorry, to Orange from the mine outside of going through Blayney but this is the alternate, is in a terrible condition at the moment, it is close to untrafficable. It's in Cabonne Shire, it's not Blayney Shire but Cabonne is also involved in this development and to have some funding, and I don't know whether the IPC can have any - put any conditions on that, but to actually provide some extra funding to at least bring that road back up to a reasonable standard, not for trucks, just for sedans and SUVs because at the moment it is in a terrible condition parts of that particular road.

So again whether there is any opportunities. I know that there's a highway in front of the mine, this is on the other side, so the northern side of the mine but there is a direct bitumen road that links to that that goes back to Millthorpe and then back into Orange. So just something to keep in mind there. Thank you.

PROF. FELL: Thank you.

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MR CRAIG GOSEWISCH: Craig Gosewisch, Councillor. I think with the pressure - I just had a look then on realestate.com rent-wise there's four houses for rent in the Blayney Shire. So I think that's one issue that a lot of people have sort of stated as well and the rent prices have gone up in the last two years and whether that's people, you know, expecting something's going to happen or not but it is also affecting like our people in the actual Shire itself who want to live here, not mine-related. Like currently there's four houses for rent and that's in every village in our Shire. So that's also a big concern.

30 PROF. FELL: So obviously we take that into account as a background situation affecting this particular proposal. Thank you. The issues that were raised by the department included air quality and noise. Do you have any specific comments on that?

MR FERGUSON: Well, Chris, I can just generally say, and I guess I'll reinforce it on Thursday, is that I think it's fair to say that any reasonable person has and will always have concerns around air quality, water quality, sound, environment, I think that's just a no-brainer. From a Council point of view we have certainly - we do not have the

resources and capacity to make any judgement on the peer reviewed studies and engineering that has been put forward by this mine and quite frankly, I think we will leave that to the department and yourselves to make those assessments but at a higher level I think it's fair to say that generally most people, if not all people in the community, are always concerned about air quality and we just had a recent quarry approved by a local or regional planning panel which is right beside the town and that's raised huge concerns for air quality and dust by the surrounding community.

10 Now, that currently is operating with a minimum impact on the community but it's certainly front of mind for most people air quality, dust noise, so I think that's just stating the obvious but we had no capacity to make a technical judgement on the - I guess of the information that's been put forward and considered by the Department of Planning but I think it's fair to say, and I believe some you've had a chance to actually go on site or not, I'm not sure, but there is no doubt that the little - the residents of Kings Plains one way or another are going to be affected by this development. Regardless of the mitigation that's put in place there will be some sort of impact and I think potentially that community's the one that's going to feel it as much as anybody, if not more than anybody and I think that's again at the risk of stating the obvious, that is what's going to happen.

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The - I think the good thing around all that is though that Regis have been very proactive in identifying what those issues potentially are and I know they've been working with the community out there for quite a bit of time identifying what those issues are. Some of them are very, very close to the operation and I'm not privy to the final negotiations but I believe some of the voluntary acquisition agreements have been discussed and some have been negotiated so I'm not sure what the status is there but I'd like to think that that would be a takeaway for the panel is to really understand and appreciate what the impact is on that local community because they are - some of them are very, very close to that mine. So if there is any impact on air, water, noise
30 it's certainly going to be those residents will get the direct impact of that. So I think it's important that those mitigation measures are reasonable, effective and enforceable if the mine was to go ahead. John.

MR NEWSTEAD: Yeah, just a quick comment on that as well. Councillor Newstead here again. I believe originally Regis gave the residents out there a five-year timeframe that, you know, if they wanted to sell their house within that five years that would be possible once the mine starts and now been pushed out to 10 years. So if, you know, after two years the residents that have been offered the chance to sell their properties if they don't like what's going on they can sell right up until 10 years. So I
40 think that's a pretty good thing that Regis have done, so especially doubling the time periods. Just something to note. Thank you.

PROF. FELL: Thank you for that.

MR FERGUSON: Bruce, you have a comment.

10 MR REYNOLDS: I'll leave the video off because I've got very narrow bandwidth showing up for me. I wanted to make two comments. Firstly, with regard to mitigation issues support as in no matter how - and this is from mining companies themselves - no matter how careful they are particularly with noise as in dumping rock on rock creates noise. You can have soft padded trucks to dump the rock in but when you go and dump it into a rock pile as in dumping rock on rock can be quite loud and go above the sound levels.

Following up from Councillor Newstead's comments, the community has the opportunity, some I believe have taken the opportunity to either look at mitigation works on their properties or on the other side a potential buy-out. The company has put restrictions on it that the buyer has to be undertaken before the Board makes a - a signing of the agreement for the buyer has to be undertaken before the Board makes a final determination if you were to progress with this mine to give approval.

20 The other issue that I'd just like to highlight is I also sit on a working group with Cadia. As you may be aware, you may not be aware, there are issues with regard to dust from the Cadia mine since the failure of the tailings dam wall back in, I think it was 2018. They're ongoing issues and have been exacerbated by extractions fans in recent times in the last year or an extraction fan that has been put in place that drives at about a hundred kilometres an hour. So no matter how good you are, dust is still going to be a challenge even if you have - keep your tailings dam very damp and Regis assures the community that they can, but dust on roads, dust in the crushing plant, et cetera, there is always a high risk that you will - particularly on windy days create dust which will leave site.

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So how you can have enough conditions to protect the community from dust it's really up to you as an Independent Planning Commission to come up with solutions or to - if you were to approve but going on my experience with Cadia even when they were in operations before the tailings dam failure there were certain times when they were still emitting dust off that site from the tailings dams or other facilities within the site. So just you may want to do a little bit of research on what's happened at Cadia if you haven't already done that and have a look at the current issues. There's a lot of media coverage, the ABC and the local newspapers have done a lot of coverage in recent times about dust issues emanating from the Cadia Valley operations.

PROF. FELL: Thank you for that guidance. We'll certainly check on that. Now, I'm conscious we have covered quite a few of the issues that we listed on the agenda. There's one that hasn't come up yet and that is the question of bees, apiary and the likely impact on that. Does Council have a particular view on that question?

10 MR FERGUSON: I certainly love honey, I know that. Look, I think - if I can speak for Council, Chris, I don't think we have, we haven't the technical capacity to make any judgement on the impact of the industry out there except to acknowledge that it is a very large and important business out there that employs a lot of people and big investment so we do understand the business but as far as the impact, I guess it's very hard for us to - I'm not sure what the conditions say but - - -

MR DICKER: There is a condition in there about the apiary impact.

20 MR FERGUSON: Yeah. So I'm really - yeah, I can't think on behalf of Council offer up too much expertise on the potential impact of the bees. I guess that's for more specialist consideration but I guess just picking up on that a little bit and maybe just quickly going back to the, I guess, the big issue around water, dust, et cetera. The opportunity, I think, which would give a lot of people generally in the community some comfort especially around the Belubula River which obviously flows from the potential site through Blayney and into Carcoar Dam is if there was some monitoring obviously of that waterway that could at some stage, monthly or whatever, be updated to become public - on the public record.

30 I think that would be a really good consideration that that information, that people could access that information, whatever that information was, whether it's waterflow at a particular time of year or any other sort of information that the general public would be interested in to have some, I guess, confidence the fact that there wasn't anything going on to disturb that waterway. I guess that's been a concern of the landholders, particularly downstream and, I guess, just to have that information available and not turn up in a yearly report and maybe have it available a bit more regularly - - -

MR DICKER: Like an updated dashboard kind of live website that contained key information.

MR FERGUSON: Something like that potentially. You know, every month or two months or whatever the Commission thought or the regions thought, I think it would be valuable information for the mine as well as the community and whether it could - and potentially put at ease some of the concerns that people have rightly or wrongly

about the waterway and the potential effect - impact on that. So I'd be really keen if there would be some consideration around that. I'm sure there's downstream monitoring anyway on the site as far as the mine's concerned, as far as their operation and understanding what's going on day to day but if that information - that monitoring could be further downstream and some sort of public access to it albeit regular I think there would be some comfort in that to the community because it does run right beside - it's just out the back door here really the river, like it's pretty much through the centre of town or through the edge of town anyway and I think that access to that sort of information freely and regularly would be of great comfort to the community generally.

PROF. FELL: My understanding is that under certain agency requirements they do have to report on a regular basis and that is also taken through the community consultation groups. Is it your experience that they work effectively in other developments in your Shire? I mean, it would appear every sensible to keep the information out to the public about what's happening and triple Cs are supposed to do that. Is your experience does that work effectively?

MR FERGUSON: Very good question, Chris. What I might do is ask Councillor Reynolds or Bruce Reynolds who's again involved in another mine. You might have a comment on that, Bruce?

MR REYNOLDS: I'll try and turn my camera on. I hope I'm stable but I do want to come back to agriculture in a minute. So I sit on the triple C as a community representative but as an alternate, so this is the Regis triple C. Currently I've only been on for a few months. I try and take information back out to the community from the triple C, I also try and bring in questions from the community but I have observed with the Cadia triple C. so again the other mine, that some residents have expressed concerns about its communication, about how long people have sat on it. I don't know whether you're able to have rules, conditions but some people seem to be there for life on that triple C, a couple of the Cadia people and - - -

PROF. FELL: I best say, this is a public transcript so we have to be careful about what we say but you're saying in principle there are some problems, you feel, about the information transfer with Triple Cs?

MR REYNOLDS: There potentially are. So we've got three triple Cs as far as I'm aware in our Shire at the moment and there are - if you're talking to the right people as in, you know, you might get the right information but some people have been on for a

long time and don't communicate with many people. So you've got to have a good communication channel and some triple Cs do have, you know, a public communication channel, a web page that they put up their minutes, et cetera, so that would probably be mandatory, you know, to try and communicate but also a way that people can ask questions back in the general public and communicate, that's the idea of triple C membership from what I understand is that you're a conduit between the company and the community but - and some cases a lot of people just don't know how or where they can communicate to us their questions or raise their concerns.

10 PROF. FELL: Thank you. That's very useful input. I've been doing a lot of questioning, I just wonder if my fellow Commissioners have specific things they'd like to raise. Clare, your hand was up, I think.

MS SYKES: Yes. Thanks, Chris. I actually just have one question related to a couple of points raised around the broader - I guess it's a broader economic opportunity for Blayney Shire and also some points raised that you raised around post-mining use and opportunities for new industries especially with the significant infrastructure of the pipeline. You raised in some of your submissions the opportunity for intensive agriculture and other post-mining uses beyond, you know, traditional sort of rehab
20 strategies and suggested a multi-stakeholder group for post-productive mine use. I was wondering if you could expand a bit on that concept and, you know, where you see opportunities for the Shire beyond what is a reasonably short mine life.

MR FERGUSON: This is a good question. Maybe our General Manager Mark might comment on that.

MR DICKER: Yeah, thanks, Clare. We see it as an opportunity and we have met previously with Regis and highlighted on a number of different ways particularly in regional strategic planning documents and LSPSs and stuff like that that there is an
30 opportunity here rather than just having, you know - if it is approved the miner coming and taking the mine out, we're done, lock the gate, throw the keys back, we're done, put it back to grazing that there's significant opportunities for a pipeline, electrical upgrades, access upgrades and onsite infrastructure that there could be future opportunity for intensified agriculture based on there will be a pipeline and it is already on the agenda that no one really knows what's going to happen to that pipeline at the end of this Project, that there needs to be a multi-stakeholder group to try and facilitate and investigate other opportunities.

So - and I saw it from the state government is investing significantly into SAPs or Special Activations Precincts where they are basically investing to create
40 infrastructure and to facilitate outcomes where this will have it and if that can be

investigated there could be further transition on this site given I believe they own highway to highway at the moment so from the mid-west to the Mitchell, they own a significant amount of land and, therefore, you know, any future re-use it's not - it's a rare occasion that that happens and it really needs strategic work involving the New South Wales Government and other stakeholders to see what could happen on this site after 15 years or after the gold is extracted rather than just the keys thrown back and say we're done, that's it.

10 MR FERGUSON: So I guess if I can just add, the important consideration right now, and regardless of what the opportunities are in 15 or so years time, Clare, is that the conditions allow the Council of the day and the community at the time as the mine starts heading towards closure and rehabilitation that we're actually in the room when some of those decisions are made. I'm not sure whether you can condition that or not but it would be nice - and you can't guarantee what the relationships are like in 15 years from now so I think the opportunity to actually condition that Council of the day and the community will be able to work with the mine to identify whatever potential technologies or new technologies or opportunities are available as opposed to the mine just closing, rehabilitating the land and going away. That was the main point about just having the opportunity in the future, insurance that that door is open in 15 years
20 time as much as anything.

MS SYKES: Thank you. No, that's very helpful.

PROF. FELL: Again wish to ask for any questions about heritage.

MR FERGUSON: Heritage per se or - - -

30 PROF. FELL: Both original heritage and also the state-significant heritage or do the Council wish to make any comments about that? Are you happy with the way it's been handled in the assessment report and by the proponent?

MR FERGUSON: The - I mean, we're one of the oldest communities over the mountains really so we are certainly aware of all the heritage in our Shire. We've got two of the oldest villages in New South Wales just about here and our LEP is full of how we manage our heritage. I think that the - it's probably more of a social impact consideration this particular development. We don't see any direct impact on our - certainly our built heritage, our colonial heritage. I'm - my expectation is that our Indigenous heritage has been addressed and that will not be impacted, that's - as we're

finding out in the last few years we - as a community are finding or realising that our indigenous heritage is just as important as our colonial heritage and I've been very happy to be part of - been on that journey the last few years but as far as our built heritage it's potentially in our two villages, our two listed villages and, of course, really our agriculture, our wonderful agriculture heritage here too which has been, like I said, some of the original farming country in New South Wales started off here around Bathurst and here, of course, so - but, yeah, just not - we're not assuming there will be direct impact on that sort of built heritage in those villages away from the potential mine site. I think that's fair to say, isn't it?

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MR DICKER: Might be one or two impacted specific items that are not overly concerning to the fact that I think this - - -

MR FERGUSON: Yeah, that hasn't been identified, I guess, by the study. Yeah, there is - yeah, there so many couple of homes, my Councillor is just reminding me, there's a couple of very historical homes at Kings Plains, if we're talking about colonial heritage and the built heritage, two beautiful homes, one in particular goes back to original settlers and still in the family. I know they are very, very concerned about potential impact on that house and I know Regis have been working closely with them but, yeah, that would be a built heritage item that would have potential direct impact by the mine. Absolutely.

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PROF. FELL: Peter.

DR PETER WILLIAMS: Thanks, Chris. Could I just go back, Scott, to some of the comments you made right at the very beginning of your presentation, also Mark made a few comments as well. It sounds like some of the negotiations with Regis and presumably also with the department in that sense too are still to be - are still ongoing. I specifically refer to the - you know, the Dungeon Road closure and that - you've mentioned, I think, Mark, it doesn't appear to be - while it's considered in page 86 of the assessment report doesn't appear to have been picked up in any relevant condition of consent and also related to that you've mentioned there's sort of still negotiations about the planning agreement with Regis as well.

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I mean, if any consent was to be given, I mean, these are the sorts of issues that have to be finalised and while the planning agreement is clearly a matter between the Council and Regis it still has to be conditioned in any consent that we might be forthwith. How close is finalisation in the details of a proposed planning agreement and the issue of road closure as well?

MR DICKER: Thanks for the question. So I guess given that it has taken so long to progress through the system this application we met with Regis and highlighted to them a couple of key issues and one was that, for example, we had previously indicated and agreed - agreement for the sale done in writing. Now, that has moved a little bit because we got mandated basically to revalue our assets, so that increased. So we highlighted to them we can't close and sell a public road for less than book value. I guess the meeting was very positive in that they took on the issues and understood that, okay, we haven't finalised that and it can be - you know, we got positive reaction but we still need to have those discussions with the mine in terms of we put that on the table if the value has changed on that, specifically on the part to be closed.

The comment this morning around Dungeon Road was that first 500 metres that would remain a public road. It's in the report that Regis have agreed to upgrade and seal it, it's just not carried through in a condition and I raised that with DPE on Friday that it probably should be. The next question was the VPA and again we've got an agreement, we've got a VPA in place signed by both parties and executed, it's on our website. We simply highlighted to Regis that the capital expenditure would have changed from the figure two years ago that we agreed to and there's no ability to keep that up and whether they be open to reviewing and amending that capital expenditure based on what it actually is and the VPA does allow for both parties to alter and renegotiate that VPA in the terms of it.

So that again was taken - a positive response was provided, we're just highlighting to the Commission that, you know, two, three years down the track the capital expenditure is likely to change and Council negotiated that in good faith based on one per cent of capital expenditure.

DR WILLIAMS: Right. Right. No, thank you for that. In the assessment report, I mean, one of the major economic benefits is actually - is identified as being the VPA itself. So obviously it's quite substantial in terms of its contribution to the local economic benefits. The assessment report talks a lot about regional economic benefits. Has Council got a feel for the more local benefits at all if the Project was to proceed?

MR FERGUSON: The local benefits in our Shire? I guess that's a little bit - I mean, we certainly haven't done any specific studies on that, it's a little bit intangible, I guess. As I said earlier, we - and from our experience with Newcrest that this is a regional development and I certainly know my contacts in Orange and Bathurst would be very happy to see it go ahead because as we've seen with Newcrest it is a regional economic stimulus right across the region, not specifically for the - yes, we pick up a

few extra rates but quite frankly, that will quickly get spent on continued road upgrades and et cetera.

10 So in my mind it is definitely a regional development and if it were to go ahead it will be economic stimulus for the region. Blayney itself, I would be optimistic, we would pick up eventually maybe some more residents, so we certainly have a lot of residential land to come in on the market or on the market and so maybe there will be some - see some rise in our population from it but not necessarily, we're not actually sort of hanging our hats on that. I see the economic stimulus really, as I said, is probably more regional. Apart from supporting a few extra businesses and bit of extra employment on the ground here in the Shire it is certainly a regional economic advantage if it were to go ahead, I'd suggest.

DR WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thank you.

20 PROF. FELL: We're getting close to the end of our time. We actually have got a good feeling from your comments about general overview that the region has for this development. You have a chance, of course, at the public hearing to say a bit more but I'm just wondering before we close off, are there any - we take on board your comments about the various areas in the assessment but are there any things you'd like to leave us with as we confer on this particular development?

MR FERGUSON: Yep, absolutely. Quickly I might ask if anyone here in the room, Craig or Michelle or John, any closing comments to Chris and the panel?

30 MS PRICE-JONES: Councillor Price-Jones. I guess my - I own a business locally here in town and our experience around employment has been that the Cadia mine or Newcrest mine has actually crippled employment in this town and I see that this development would actually do the same and make it worse possibly for local business.

MR FERGUSON: Okay. There's a closing comment. John.

MR NEWSTEAD: Yeah, just quickly. People have asked me how I feel about this proposal. I think it would be good for Blayney but, of course, having been a user of Carcoar Dam for a long time as a water skier and that I do have fears about the contamination of the river if something was to go wrong. I know at other meetings and that people have asked Regis to give them a hundred per cent guarantee that nothing will go wrong. Well, that's just silly, you can't give a hundred per cent

guarantee on anything and it would be like me going getting in a car with somebody and saying, can you guarantee that we're not going to crash? That's not - that can't happen.

So I just think that, yeah, and to say that nothing can go wrong is silly too because we can look at Cadia and have a look at what happened with the dam wall but above all I think it would be good for Blayney but there are fears that I do have as far as the water but that's just my comment.

10 MR FERGUSON: Thanks, John. Craig, you got - - -

MR GOSEWISCH: I don't - Bruce.

MR FERGUSON: No? I'd just - okay, Bruce would like to - final comment, Bruce?

MR REYNOLDS: There are three areas that we can get to today and I'm happy if there is an opportunity to discuss further. I'm not registered to talk to the Panel. One is with regard to water and particularly the amount of water that they're holding on site or potentially holding on site and its impact on Carcoar Dam. In the DPE's
20 submission they said 233 megalitres was the maximum. From reports I've had and the company itself, so Regis itself I think is indicating about 1750, so there's - I don't know if it's an omission or an error in the executive summary of the report from the DPE.

Secondly with regard to soil and particular basal soils, biophysical soils, if you read page 30 of the soils report or you look at the diagram on page 30 you will see that there is a fair proportion that will be put under tailings; however, it's not highlighted in the - in any of the analysis that these are high value agricultural soils, it will have the capacity to be high value agricultural soil. So happy to more than - to talk offline or at
30 another occasion with the Commission about that and concerns there.

Again, impact below Carcoar Dam on allocation because the water allocation is like the icing on a cake, there's only a very small amount of water that's actually allocated. We have irrigators in Blayney Shire downstream of Carcoar Dam and also in Cabonne Shire, particularly around Canowindra, and the figures that are given may not be - may not give a true indication. The amount of water going into Carcoar Dam or less, that's pretty well all your general security allocation. So if you cut that off it's that little bit

of icing on the cake in regard to that one. Sorry, Commissioner. And the third area is agriculture itself.

I was fairly disappointed in the report that outside of bees agriculture got a mention, I think, 114,000, if my memory serves me correct, I could be wrong, on the loss of value as in that's a four year old figures but also I think that agriculture as a whole wasn't - outside of the bees that the owners were concerned about, but the true impact of agriculture and following up from Councillor Price-Jones's comments with regard to the amount of - you know, potential impact back on businesses.

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When you remove all of those farmers rural businesses, for example, do suffer, they do have - there is a financial impact. So - but there's also a loss of production so you go through - right through to Carcoar and the CTLX, there are less cattle and sheep that go through that. The stock and station agents lose out, et cetera. So there are other impacts that I think some of the studies have potentially missed. Thank you.

PROF. FELL: Thank you. That's very helpful advice for us to look at.

MR FERGUSON: I can sum up, Chris, and thank you, obviously that's Bruce's observations and personal opinions which is much appreciated and acknowledged. I'd just like to thank the opportunity for the panel to chat with us this morning, really appreciate it and hopefully we'll get a - or we'll see - meet you all on Thursday when you come to Blayney.

PROF. FELL: Indeed. Thank you. No, I think I'll just ask finally my fellow Commissioners if they wish to make any comment. Peter, I thought I saw your hand up.

DR WILLIAMS: Look, if I might just very quickly and it just flows on from what Bruce was saying in relation to water quantity. Just any comment in relation to aspects relating to ground water, uptake - well, you know, impact on aquifers, spring water, bores both upstream and downstream of the site, has Council got any opinion on that?

MR FERGUSON: In our submission our expectation is that the reviews that the department had done, my understanding is, I think, they're looking at a four per cent reduction of waterflow which is what's going to be captured actually on the site itself

is probably going to be the biggest impact on the river and whether that's a big impact or a minor impact I guess that's for others to judge, it's certainly an important waterway as Bruce has highlighted but I'm just - again right at the start we're just expecting that the professional peer review of these studies are justifiable and that the mitigation that's put in place to minimise will work and will be enforced. So that's our expectation on behalf of the wider community who aren't experts in waterflow or irrigation or any of the other complicated issues that mining brings.

DR WILLIAMS: Thanks, Scott. Thank you.

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PROF. FELL: Clare?

MS SYKES: There's no further comment from me.

PROF. FELL: It's up to me to thank you very much for your full-on detail. We'll come to Blayney to listen to the community at large but thank you, all of you for what you've given us today and have a pleasant rest of day.

MR FERGUSON: Thank you.

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PROF. FELL: Bring the meeting to a close.

MEETING CONCLUDED

[11.33am]