



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: DUBBO FIRING POWER STATION (SSD-28088034)

COUNCIL MEETING

PANEL: KEN KANOFSKI (CHAIR)
ANDREW MILLS
MICHAEL CHILCOTT

OFFICE OF THE IPC: BRAD JAMES (PRINCIPAL CASE
MANAGER)
OLIVER COPE (PLANNING OFFICER)

**DUBBO REGIONAL
COUNCIL:** MUSARRAT KHAN (SENIOR
DEVELOPMENT ENGINEER)
TIM HOWLETT (ACTING MANAGER
GROWTH PLANNING)
DARRYLL QUIGLEY (MANAGER
BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES)

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

DATE: 3:30PM – 4:30PM
TUESDAY, 16TH APRIL 2024

MEETING COMMENCED

MR KANOFSKI: Hello and Welcome everyone. I think everyone's out I can't I actually don't have we don't have video of you, but I think you're all connected now.
5 Thanks, Tim. So welcome everyone. And I'd like to - there's a couple of formalities we need to go through at the start of the meeting.

10 But before that, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we're meeting on Wangal Country and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Also thank you to Darryll for attending the site visit yesterday. So thank you for that. So just a couple of formalities before we get started. Welcome to the meeting to discuss the Dubbo Firing Power Station case, state significant development, number 28088034, currently before the Commission for determination. The applicant Dubbo Firing Nominees Proprietary Limited proposes to construct
15 and operate a power station, hydrogen generation plant and ancillary infrastructure, including gas and fuel storage and connections to the electricity and gas networks.

20 My name is Ken Kanofski. I'm the chair of this Commission panel, and I'm joined by my fellow commissioners, Andrew Mills and Michael Chilcott. We're also joined by Oliver Cope and Brad James from the office of the Independent Planning Commission. In the interest of openness and transparency, and 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. This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter, and will form one of
25 several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination.

30 It's important for Commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it is considered appropriate. If you're asked a question and are 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 publish on our website. I request that all members here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time, and that all members ensure that they did not speak over the top of each other to help us with the accuracy of the transcript. So thank you and welcome.

35 In your hands a little bit. I'm not sure whether Council officers have a presentation they'd like to give of their issues. Or alternatively, it'd probably be good to hear in particular any concerns that the Council has with the development as it currently stands, we've got some things that we'd like to explore with you as well. But in your
40 hands as to how you'd like to proceed. Can you hear us Tim? Can you hear us? Yeah. Okay.

MR HOWLETT: So my name is Tim Howlett. I'm currently the Acting Manager of Growth Planning at Council. I - or this division looks after planning agreements, land
45 use strategies and long term development planning controls. So in terms of comments from Council, Darryll Quigley looks after the state significant development applications. So he would probably be best to give any comments if he

did have them. But I can talk later on the status of the planning agreement and our accommodation and workforce issues -

MR KANOFSKI: Okay.

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MR HOWLETT: When it comes to those.

MR KANOFSKI: Darryll, did you want to take us through any issues that you see with development? It's not on mute, but we can't hear him. So Darryll can't hear you or see you. Tim, did you want to maybe try and contact? I don't think we've got his contact details. Brad or Oli might.

10

MR HOWLETT: I've just sent him a message asking if he's having issues with Zoom. Yes, he is having issues. I'm just getting a call from him, so I may have to temporarily step out and re-join.

15

MR KANOFSKI: Yeah, no. That's fine.

MR COPE: If you need the link again or anything like that, Tim, just let us know.

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MR KANOFSKI: Okay. Hi, Darryll, can you hear us now?

MR HOWLETT: So Darryll was / is having issues with his technology. He was saying that Council doesn't really have any concerns given it's an industrial use in an industrial area.

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MR KANOFSKI: Okay.

MR HOWLETT: Which is positive, I guess.

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MR KANOFSKI: And that doesn't look like he can hear us still.

MR HOWLETT: So he can hear us. He just can't turn his webcam or audio or microphone on. So if needs be if Darryll can hear when Darryll can hear me, I'll get him to send me comments via teams and I can relay them on his behalf.

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MR KANOFSKI: Okay.

MR HOWLETT: If that's suitable for you.

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MR KANOFSKI: Yeah. Look, let's go with it. Yeah, it's probably we can probably get away with it because I suspect that's not, you know a huge amount for us to cover. So we might start then just by the two issues you raise, the accommodation workforce and the status of the VPA are two issues that we did want to get some clarification on. So do you want to give us some thoughts on those?

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MR HOWLETT: Yeah, in terms of the VPA last Thursday, Council received an updated letter of offer from the developer. It's in relation to \$950,000 as an upfront payment upon commencement of construction. That offer is in accordance with Council's framework for planning agreements. So Council staff are happy with that offer. The next step for us is to present the general terms of that offer to a Council meeting to get the councillor endorsement, with a recommendation being that we enter into a planning agreement based on those terms, and then draft the formal planning agreement and put it out on public exhibition.

The funding offer would go towards Council's public art strategy, which we believe does have a public purpose. So from the planning agreement perspective, Council staff are happy with it and where it's at, and we will be moving forward to present it to a council meeting. The next available council meeting is the 23rd of May, so we won't be in a position before then to have a formal resolution per se.

MR KANOFSKI: Okay. No, that's okay, I think should we be of the mind to approve the project - I think we can deal with it in conditions even without that, council resolution is my understanding so.

MR MILLS: Tim, can I ask - it's Andrew Mills here. Can I ask, has Council ever not agreed with the recommendation of staff in relation to VPA, so in your view?

MR HOWLETT: No, they've never not agreed to us. They've sought some clarification around it. Early this year, we presented an updated renewable energy benefit framework to them, which set out the funding requirements for solar and wind and battery energy storage. And their offer is in accordance with that framework. So it's unlikely that they wouldn't support it. They may not just support what the funding would be used towards, but the quantum of money is in accordance with our framework.

MR KANOFSKI: So that's really good. And what the money is used for is really a matter for Council rather than the applicant essentially?

MR HOWLETT: Yep.

MR KANOFSKI: Okay. Anything further on that, Michael? Andrew? Okay. Yeah. Accommodation and workforce strategy. I'm guessing this is a pretty topical issue for Council given the quantum of renewable energy projects coming that way.

MR HOWLETT: Yeah. We've been asking through the SEARs comments that proponents provide accommodation and workforce strategies prior to approval being given. Because of the quantum of projects coming online. Our motel accommodation doesn't have huge capacity to take on extra workers. Our employment - sorry, our unemployment rate is very low. So there may not be a large pool of local workers to actually construct all the projects in the renewable energy zone, which is why we've been asking proponents to think more broadly about how they can provide accommodation for their workers, rather than just going straight to the motels and the

Airbnbs. We want proponents to think about what other options are out there. Is it build to rent? Is it accommodation within the existing urban areas?

5 We don't want a mining camp. Sorry, yeah, mining camp. Because well, that doesn't integrate with the urban area. We'd rather they think holistically about what can they actually do to house workers and what legacy, or lasting legacy would that have for the region. So we want them to think more broadly about how they can house their workers. But I do acknowledge that they may not be able to do that as part of the approval until they get a lot of their contracts sorted. But I know Squadron have been
10 proactive in their investigations for available workforce options and accommodation options. But today there's just nothing tangible that we can see them implementing.

MR KANOFSKI: Yeah. All right. Question -

15 **MR HOWLETT:** It's the same for every SSD application coming through -

MR MILLS: Yeah -

20 **MR HOWLETT:** We don't want them to just jump straight to the motel and tourist accommodation because then we can't have any tourists coming to the region.

MR KANOFSKI: Yeah, it's kind of an interesting conundrum, isn't it? Whether the planning process is necessarily the place to address it. But I guess it's an opportunity that you get to, to have some leverage, right?
25

MR HOWLETT: No, I think it's not the biggest project out there.

MR KANOFSKI: I was going to say, this is not the one that's killing you, right?

30 **MR HOWLETT:** No, there's other ones, but it's the cumulative impact that's having the issue.

MR KANOFSKI: Yeah.

35 **MR MILLS:** So Squadron alone, as I understand it, have this and another project in development plus another one under construction. But are they the only players in this space doing construction activities, whether it be part of the renewable zone or for other purposes in your district?

40 **MR HOWLETT:** The Squadron have Uungula, Spicers Creek, and this one late last year, there were two battery energy storage systems approved in Wellington or just north of Wellington. They're starting or sorry, hoping to start construction within the next few months. And from our conversations with a lot of developers, they're saying workers don't want to actually live in Wellington. They'd rather live in Dubbo and
45 travel to Wellington via bus. They're the main projects that we see coming online in the next, I'd say six months, really. We've got the Forest Glen solar farm as well,

west of Dubbo. That was recently approved as well. They're looking to start construction soon as well.

5 **MR KANOFSKI:** Anything more on that, Andrew?

MR MILLS: No, it's something to reflect on, I think Ken as to whether it is appropriate or not, it's difficult.

10 **MR HOWLETT:** You did mention that the transcript of this would be made available online. So I don't know how much I can say that would then be made publicly available. Because Squadron have been talking to us about options for their workers. I just don't know how much I can say in the public domain just yet. Because growth planning look after planning proposals as well. I guess I can just leave it at that.

15 **MR KANOFSKI:** Okay.

MR CHILCOTT: So it's Michael Chilcott here. Tim, have you had an opportunity to review the proposed conditions of consent from the department?

20 **MR HOWLETT:** Yes I have.

MR CHILCOTT: You've seen condition B44.

25 **MR HOWLETT:** I don't recall -

MR CHILCOTT: The construction workforce accommodation strategy.

30 **MR HOWLETT:** I don't recall the exact wording off the top of my head, but I can look at it now.

MR JAMES: Sorry, Tim. Oliver, if you've got it up, you might be able to screen share.

35 **MR COPE:** Yeah sure thing.

MR CHILCOTT: And I'm just wondering whether, in the context of your comments, whether you had any comments in relation to the condition as proposed by the department, Tim.

40 **MR HOWLETT:** He said it was condition B45.

MR CHILCOTT: 44?

45 **MR COPE:** 45

MR CHILCOTT: 45, my apologies 45.

MR COPE: Sorry. I'm just bringing it up.

5 **MR HOWLETT:** It seems to be very similar to conditions in other state significant
development applications. One issue that we're having with the condition itself is
around the approval of the strategy. Just because it's being prepared in consultation
with Council, there's no real formal sign off from both Council or the state
10 government about the strategy itself. That's probably a bigger issue than just this
development application, though. Because I don't want it to be seen as a tick and
flick type exercise for the strategy. I do want to make sure that it is robust and is
actually implemented, and that there is some formal sign off from multiple parties.

MR CHILCOTT: So if you're being specific, what would be your submission to us
in relation to that?

15 **MR HOWLETT:** Can I take that on note?

MR CHILCOTT: Yes.

20 **MR HOWLETT:** Yeah.

MR KANOFSKI: Okay. Other Commissioners, other issues that we want to raise
with Council?

25 **MR MILLS:** I am interested in Council's - what Council has heard from the
community in relation to this, if anything? And if you're not in a position to comment
on that, someone else-

30 **MR HOWLETT:** I personally haven't heard anything from it. I'll message Darryll
and see if he's heard anything from it, but it's - I haven't seen anything mentioned in
council business papers, but I can take that on note and confirm it after this as well.

MR KANOFSKI: Maybe that's the best way of dealing with it rather than trying to
do it. If you can take it on notice and come back to us.

35 **MR HOWLETT:** Yep.

MR KANOFSKI: Michael? Andrew? Other issues?

40 **MR CHILCOTT:** No, I have no other questions.

MR KANOFSKI: We had the benefit of a site visit yesterday, which Darryll
attended. So we've had that opportunity. If there's nothing else. Anything else from
you, Tim? Nope. Yeah. Look, if there's nothing else, my suggestion is we leave it
45 there, and then if you could get back to us on those couple of issues, that'd be handy.

MR HOWLETT: So Darryll just emailed saying he hasn't heard anything from the community about the project, but I will take it up further with our CEO and see if he's heard anything as well.

5 **MR KANOFSKI:** Yeah. Okay.

MR HOWLETT: So just confirming I'll get back to you on the condition or the wording of the condition in the accommodation strategy and -

10 **MR KANOFSKI:** What the Council -

MR HOWLETT: Yep -

MR KANOFSKI: If anything.

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MR HOWLETT: Yep. And community interaction.

MR JAMES: Yep. And Ken, if I can just jump in there. Sorry. Brad James here. Tim, we've got submissions open till Friday, this Friday the 19th at 5pm. So if you're able just to get your comments on those two matters through to us before Friday 5pm, that'd be great. Then we can close everything off and people can move forward with their process. That'd be great.

25 **MR HOWLETT:** Yep. I can definitely do that.

MR CHILCOTT: Thank you.

MR KANOFSKI: Thank you. That'll be fantastic. Well, thank you everyone. Darryll, if you can hear us. Thank you again. Musarrat, thank you.

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MR KHAN: Thank you.

MR KANOFSKI: And that's been very helpful. So thank you.

35 **MR KHAN:** Thank you very much.

MR HOWLETT: Thank you for your time.

MEETING CONCLUDED