



## **TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING**

RE: POTTINGER WIND FARM (SSD-59235464)

### **HAY SHIRE COUNCIL MEETING**

PANEL:	RICHARD PEARSON (CHAIR) MICHAEL WRIGHT SARAH DINNING
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	JANE ANDERSON GEOFF KWOK
SPEAKERS:	CR CAROL OATAWAY (MAYOR) CR GEOFF CHAPMAN CR WILL MILLER DAVID WEBB JACK TERBLANCHE ALISON MCLEAN
LOCATION:	ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE
DATE:	11:00AM – 12:00PM WEDNESDAY, 28 MAY 2025

## <THE MEETING COMMENCED

**MR RICHARD PEARSON:** So good morning. Welcome to this meeting of the Pottinger Wind Farm. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge I'm speaking to you from Yuin land and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of all of the lands from which we virtually meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. Welcome to the meeting to discuss the Pottinger Wind Farm, SSD 59235464, currently before the Commission for determination.

The applicant, Pottinger Renewables, a joint venture between AGL Energy and Someva Renewable, proposes to develop a 1,300 megawatt wind farm located approximately 60 kilometres south of Hay, within the Hay Shire and Edward River local government areas in the South West Renewable Energy Zone. The project involves the development of up to 247 turbines with a maximum tip height of 280 metres, a 500 megawatt battery energy storage system, connection to the Project Energy Connect transmission line currently under construction, and other ancillary infrastructure.

My name is Richard Pearson. I'm the Chair of this Commission panel, and I'm joined by fellow Commissioners, Sarah Dinning and Michael Wright. We're also joined by Jane Anderson and Geoff Kwok from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.

In the interests 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 several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination. It is important for the Commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it is 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 all members here today introduce 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. And given that we have a number of Councillors in attendance, if there are any actual or potential personal interests you need to declare, I'd appreciate if you do that in introducing yourself.

So we'll now begin the meeting, and our agenda is opening statement from panel Chair, which I've done, and then for the Council to introduce who is here today and any declarations of interest, and then provide a brief overview of any issues you would like to bring before the Commission, either from a previous submission you've made or if things have moved on where you currently stand in relation to the project.

So with that, I'll hand over to Council for you to please introduce yourselves. OK.  
And some of you are on mute, but –

**MR DAVID WEBB:** Go, go, Carol.

**CR CAROL OATAWAY:** OK. So I'm Carol Oataway, Councillor Oataway. I'm the Mayor of Hay Shire Council. And will the others introduce themselves, David, or will I introduce everyone?

**MR WEBB:** No, I think everyone can introduce themselves, because Councillor Chapman might have to – whether he's going to declare anything or not, that's all.

**CR OATAWAY:** OK, yeah, I have nothing to declare.

**MR PEARSON:** Sure. Thank you. Thanks, Carol.

**CR GEOFF CHAPMAN:** Councillor Chapman, Geoff Chapman, more of a community interest than any personal interest, so probably more observing and that sort of thing. But yeah, keen to see how it all pans out.

**MR PEARSON:** OK, thanks, Councillor.

**MR WEBB:** David Webb, I'm the General Manager of Hay Shire Council, and I don't have any interest to declare, and my two colleagues, Jack and Alison, will do pretty much most of the speaking today.

**MR PEARSON:** OK, great. Thanks, David.

**MS ALISON MCLEAN:** Alison McLean, Executive Manager, Economic Development and Tourism. I have nothing to declare. Jack, hand to you.

**MR JACK TERBLANCHE:** Morning, all. Jack Terblanche, Executive Manager of Planning and Compliance from Hay Shire Council.

**MR PEARSON:** Great, thanks, Alison and Jack. So did somebody from Council want to run through where you're up to in relation to this project?

**MS MCLEAN:** Richard, Carol's going to give a bit of an opening statement, then we'll run through some of the general overview.

**MR PEARSON:** Terrific.

**MS MCLEAN:** And then Jack will address some of the granular detail in the conditions.

**MR PEARSON:** Great, thank you.

**CR OATAWAY:** OK, thanks. The Hay local government area sits at the centre of

the South West Renewable Energy Zone, placing it in a critical position within New South Wales' clean energy transition. Hay Shire Council recognises the transformative scale of this opportunity. It will be the most significant change to affect the region since settlement. This transition is expected to influence every aspect of community life; economically, environmentally and socially, and Hay Shire Council is committed to ensuring that it benefits local people while managing the known impacts. The planning process and this hearing will play an important part in supporting our community.

Hay Shire Council has made a deliberate effort to ensure that renewable energy development in the region is underpinned by local values, capacity building and social licence. Council has taken a leadership role engaging re-alliance to facilitate workshops that culminated in the development of a community-endorsed document; the Fundamental Principles of Successful Renewable Energy Development in Hay. This document now serves as a framework for how Hay Shire Council evaluates developments, negotiates with developers, and engages with state agencies.

The principles emphasise affordable energy, housing market legacy, waste management, water security, environmental protection, road safety and the protection of primary production within the context of major infrastructure development. Hay Shire Council insists that these considerations guide the planning approval, construction and operation of any REZ-related infrastructure in the Hay region.

We welcome the opportunity for our community to be involved in the planning process through the IPC. Over the past three years, we have operated under the mandate that the community engages in discussion and not division. We encourage the IPC to continue that legacy by recognising the work of our community over that time.

It is worth noting that of 83 objections received for the Pottinger Wind Farm, just nine were from the local area. For context, a recent development application for an unmanned service station in Hay received 11 local objections. We recognise that wind development is not for every regional and rural area. For Hay, our topography, sparse population and commodity scale farming lends itself to the hosting of renewable development. And this is reflected in the community's support for developments such as Pottinger Wind Farm. Thank you.

**MR PEARSON:** Great. Thanks very much, Mayor. Is that Fundamental Principles document you mentioned, is that available on your website?

**CR OATAWAY:** Yes, it is.

**MR PEARSON:** OK. Thank you. Great. OK.

**MS MCLEAN:** Alison McLean, Hay Shire Council. Hay's economy is traditionally dominated by agriculture, with 33% of all employment and 40% of

GDP derived from primary production. However, climactic pressures and global market volatility underscore the need for diversification. Renewable energy, particularly when integrated with existing livestock and cropping systems, is seen as a pathway to economic resilience. Landholders who host energy infrastructure benefit from predictable incomes which support better land management and drought resilience.

Capital attracted through energy development also opens pathways for new industries, particularly energy-intensive ones such as data centres or ag tech processing. Transmission construction activity has already generated local economic benefits. For instance, since Transgrid Camp opened in late 2024, just to the south of Hay, there has been an increase in local economic spend of approximately 15%, with hospitality and accommodation sectors seeing substantial gains.

Yet these benefits are tempered by the risk of a boom-bust cycle. This was identified as one of the key areas of concern by the community. Temporary workforces estimated to grow between 250 to 550 workers, or the equivalent of an 8% to 16% increase in our population, could inflate housing and food costs and strain services. The management of the sugar hit of construction with developers and the state is of critical concern to Hay Shire Council and the community.

Council has reviewed five environmental impact statements for the projects in the REZ to date. A significant burden on a small rural Council with limited staffing. While Council provides formal comment, it has found its influence over the EIS outcomes minimal. Council has significant concerns regarding the monitoring and implementation of conditions of consent, particularly where the power to police is divested to state agencies.

In a small rural community, complaints regarding day-to-day impacts, particularly around issues such as traffic and road maintenance, will be received by Council. At present, the conditions negate the ability for Council to respond or act with any authority. This presents a reputational risk to Council.

Agriculturally, Hay's rangelands are well suited to livestock grazing, which aligns with renewable energy infrastructure, such as solar and wind. Land use coexistence is seen not only as feasible, but beneficial. Council supports the integration of solar arrays and wind farms with sheep grazing, noting that the reliable revenue from renewable infrastructure improves producers' ability to invest in land, workforce, and technology, further embedding economic resilience.

The REZ development scale is creating infrastructure demands far exceeding Council's normal remit. Roads, in particular, are under threat from the movement of heavy equipment. The Hay Bridge, for example, is not currently rated to carry wind turbine blades or transformers. Council insists that road upgrades, both state and local, must be state and developer funded, and scheduled to align with construction timelines.

A significant concern for Council is that increased congestion will disrupt primary producers and local logistics, requiring additional maintenance and renewal to our road network that is neither considered in the planning nor funded as part of the state government management of the REZ.

Waste management is another critical area. Council echoes local government New South Wales' position that all renewable energy projects must submit mandatory waste management plans, developed in partnership with Councils. Circular economy initiatives should be prioritised to ensure that waste from construction and decommissioned infrastructure is reused or recycled. The recycling of waste from construction presents a real opportunity to further diversify our local economy, by developing industry to support waste management in situ. Council also emphasises the need for clear decommissioning obligations for all infrastructure, to avoid future liabilities being passed on to the community.

Water security is a third infrastructure concern. During droughts, competition for water can escalate quickly. The use of the open water market to supply water to construction of the energy development will have an inflationary impact on water, particularly in low allocation years. This will place pressure on our primary production sector as they compete for resources. Council, as the utility responsible for Hayes Township water supply, is calling for developers to rely on alternative water sources, for example, bores or desal plants, and for cumulative water use across infrastructure and industry to be assessed and managed at the state level.

Although renewable energy projects generate long-term operational jobs, the majority of roles during construction will be filled by external contractors. This is partly due to a mismatch in skills and capacity. Regional businesses often struggle to meet pre-qualification standards for tenders. Council recognises this challenge and supports prioritised regional workforce development. A coordinated multi-LGA skills development strategy is required to enable local businesses and workers to participate in REZ projects.

Council is also advocating for clear communication around what local content actually means in procurement processes. Currently local is often defined nationally, Australia and New Zealand, which leaves communities like Hay largely excluded from benefits.

Council notes EnergyCo's limited presence and capacity in the region. As the REZ enters a more active construction phase, this gap is unsustainable. Council argues that EnergyCo must be resourced to provide a whole of government coordination, particularly to avoid stacking multiple infrastructure projects, for example, wind farms, PEC transmission, VNI West roadworks on top of each other, which would compound local disruption.

Council has also called for state compensation mechanisms to support Councils through the ongoing repair and maintenance of roads, the administration of long-term voluntary planning agreements, monitoring and responding to cumulative impacts, managing community communications and complaints, delivering

infrastructure projects using developer contributions. Despite not having a formal S7-12 contributions plan, Council has leveraged the New South Wales benefit sharing guidelines to secure letters of intent with the developer for community benefit funding.

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Now that access has been announced, the letters of intent will move to a formal VPA. While the quantum of funds has been mandated by DPI, there is no consideration for funding from BESS as part of existing developments. Council strongly advocates for the BESS as part of these original developments to be included in the VPA with Someva/AGL.

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Council warns that indexing VPAs to the consumer price index may erode their real value, especially when delivering capital infrastructure. Council proposes releasing a large portion of VPA funds at the project inception, to allow meaningful investment and to establish a future fund for long term planning.

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Hay's visitor economy is valued at \$30 million annually, and forms the third largest employment sector. With accommodation occupancy already exceeding 80%, the influx of construction workers has created pressure on short-stay accommodation, displacing tourists and weakening a critical economic pillar. In January 2025, 38% of all accommodation nights were booked by construction workers associated with the energy transition. The workers are often ancillary workforce, and therefore not captured in the workforce accommodation strategies. Council advocates for all workforce involved in the construction, not just those to be housed in work camps, to be addressed in the strategy.

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Over the past three years, developers at EnergyCo have engaged with local First Nation groups. While Council has not participated directly in these negotiation, it acknowledges the significance of cultural benefit sharing commitments made through the access tender process. Council supports these initiatives, and calls for ongoing transparency and alignment with broader community priorities.

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In summary, Council's core positions are: community first. Development must align with the community's principal values and priorities as articulated in the Principles document. Complement not displace. Renewable energy must complement agriculture and tourism rather than override or displace them. State coordination. State government must play an active role in coordinating, sequencing infrastructure upgrades and cumulative impact mitigation.

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Council capacity. Funding and staffing support is essential for Councils to manage the multifaceted impacts of large-scale development. Workforce and procurement. Local participation needs to be realistically defined and supported through regional workforce development. And a long-term view. Planning must look beyond the construction phase to ensure lasting legacy in housing, economic resilience and environmental management. Thank you.

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**MR PEARSON:** Thanks, Alison. Any questions from Commissioners at this point? I had one. When you say the BESS should be included in the VPA, you

mean the megawatt output of that should be included?

**MS MCLEAN:** Yes, so currently under the guidelines that DPI released in November last year, developments that have wind and solar that are already part of that access scheme and that planning process, if they have BESS, there is no mandated or recommended funding to be included for that BESS. So, for example, for wind developments, it's mandated at \$1,050 a megawatt. For solar, it's \$850 a megawatt.

For Pottinger, who have a BESS, a 4-megawatt, 4-megawatt, I think it is, BESS, there is no capacity for us to include that in the VPA, even though that kit is the same if it was developed just as a BESS. So if someone else came along and developed a battery energy storage system not coupled with a wind or solar, then there's \$150 per megawatt that would be part of a VPA with Council, but that is not included with existing projects as they stand.

**MR PEARSON:** So, yeah, I do understand your point. But I guess we're, like everyone, we'll be bound by the Department's guidelines on that, but it's an interesting point.

Other questions at this point? Michael?

**MR MICHAEL WRIGHT:** Just a question for Ali. I'm interested in your comments about the resourcing imposes – this development and other REZ developments might place on Council. You talked about things like road repairs, monitoring, implementing, administering VPAs, etc. Does Council have a sense of the quantum of impact?

**MS MCLEAN:** We can only judge on what is already impacting us. So, for example, having to review five EISs, we have a planning department of two, really. I think it's interesting to look at other regional areas. If you look at Dubbo, who's also hosting quite significant developments, they have, Dubbo Council has a staff of 600. We have a staff of 35. The impact remains the same. The size of the infrastructure remains the same. But the impost on smaller Councils like us is obviously very significant compared to those other Councils that probably have a little bit more fat in the system to be able to supply that.

Since the access scheme was announced in April, I would conservatively estimate that Jack, David, and myself have been spending about 50% of our time working on and responding to the developments. And we've been working on this for three years, unfunded, just have to consume that as part of our business as usual.

**MR WRIGHT:** Did you have any views in terms of what sort of arrangements maybe at the state government level or at the proponent level might assist your Council in particular in dealing with that workload?

**MS MCLEAN:** Yes, EnergyCo will be assisting us financially to be able to respond to this next phase of the process. In terms of that road maintenance



question, I'm going to hand over to David on that one, that is out of my area of expertise. David?

5 **MR WEBB:** Yes, sorry guys, I've lost my camera. I don't know what's going on. My internet dropped out as well, so I apologise for that.

**MR PEARSON:** That's OK. We can hear you well. That's the main thing.

10 **MR WEBB:** That's all right. A face for radio. So, yes, we're very concerned about the road maintenance or the impact on the roads. So when Jack speaks about some of the conditions, we'll talk about some that we'd like to potentially include, some extra wording around those. But in terms of our local roads, we see that you're transporting 100-metre-long blades that take up – that move very slowly, and we can see the moving of the agricultural produce that Ali was talking about  
15 potentially moving onto our local network off the highway, so they can keep moving at their desired pace that they need to get to market.

And so it's not just the transport route that I would think would get impacted. It's going to be a lot of our local roads, and under the conditions at the moment,  
20 there's not much consideration for the impacts on local roads. But we also like to see some strength around how we can get them to upgrade any structures that need to be structured on our local roads, to make sure they can withstand that loading, and therefore the roads can be at least at the same standard they are currently at, for the future post-construction and during the operational phase, and for years  
25 beyond that.

So we see a way forward that we can manage this. We just need a little bit of help from the Commission in their determination in terms of how those conditions are worded, and that's what Jack will go through, or I can help Jack with that. I hope  
30 that answers your question, Commissioner.

**MR PEARSON:** Yeah, it would be interesting to hear the specifics of what you're seeking in relation to road upgrades. So is that what you were going to talk about, Jack?

35 **MR TERBLANCHE:** Yeah. So, yeah, what I'm going to talk about is just basic, some general comments on the proposed conditions. But I'll probably need to introduce David Webb a bit better. So being a small Council, typical of small Council, David is a general manager and he's also the engineer. So, yeah, so  
40 David had a good look through the conditions, and we've got some issues with some of those transportation conditions. But, yeah, which we can go through whenever you guys want.

**MR PEARSON:** Yeah, look, mindful that if you're going to get into detail, it's  
45 probably best to put that in a – I'm mindful of Alison's comment about how this is consuming a lot of your time, but it's probably worthwhile putting that in one final submission to the Planning Commission, outlining particular things that you would like to see done differently in the conditions, if that's what you're doing. I

mean, happy to talk through it in a broad kind of sense today, but I think detailed comments are probably best put in writing, because that'll enable us to more carefully consider them. Something might get lost in the translation today.

5 And also bear in mind, Jack, that we'll be coming to town next week to conduct a public meeting, hear from locals. So we've not formed any position at this stage on whether we're going to approve this project or not. That needs to flow through the process at this stage.

10 But we are definitely interested in comments you have on the draft conditions. Did you want to just touch on what sort of local upgrades you think should occur? Or is it something that is more conditioned by reference to the traffic management plan, for example?

15 **MR TERBLANCHE:** OK. I'll leave that for David. But one thing that David and Ali alluded to is that – OK, no, I'll start, I'll make some broad comments on the transport. So Council has issues with using the Cobb Highway through the Hay township as an access route. There are potential issues with that, and David can probably allude more. But one thing we're concerned on that is probably a more  
20 general comment is a cumulative impact.

So for example, as David said, these highways can be blocked, and if it's used for the transportation, and then other traffic will be put on the rest of our road network. The roads here are relatively narrow, but I gather Transport for New  
25 South Wales would have looked at that. And the weather can be quite interesting, not only flooding, but also heat. It's, if you know the poem, *Hay and Hell and Booligal*, there's a reason we're called hell in summer.

So, but yeah, we've got some issues mainly with the car byway. And then also the  
30 – it's going to be a traffic impact just not only in the transport route. And that is what we would like included in the transport strategy, is that yes, we're going to – there can be waste delivered to our waste depot, there can be water taken from our water treatment plant, etc, etc. So it's not only the routes towards the development, there can be a significant impact on other routes around town for delivering  
35 supplies, or getting rid of stuff offsite. So does that answer your question on that?

**MR PEARSON:** Yeah. Well, no, I understand. I definitely understand the point. It's just, if you want something to be done about that, I guess we need some of the detail of that, as to which – it's hard to deal with just a general kind of statement  
40 that traffic will end up running through other roads. It's how do you want any planning approval to address that issue? It sounds like you've got some suggestions through the conditions of consent.

**MR TERBLANCHE:** Yes, we have. So yeah, what we will do, so we've got a  
45 table with all our suggested amendments. But we would recommend that those things get addressed through the transport strategy. That is what the conditions of approval is looking like as to and from the site.

**MR PEARSON:** Yeah, and that's probably an appropriate mechanism to look at. So, yeah, we would be very interested to see any comments that you have on the conditions of consent. And I think, Jane, there's a closing date of, is it the 10th of June for submissions, I think?

**MS JANE ANDERSON:** The 12th of June, Commissioner.

**MR PEARSON:** The what, sorry, Jane?

**MS ANDERSON:** The 12th of June.

**MR PEARSON:** 12th of June. So if you could give us any comments on conditions or other matters by the 12th of June, that would be appreciated. So still a couple of weeks away. then we can have a close look at what you're seeking. It's probably the best way of doing it, I think. But we're very clear that traffic and transport is a big issue for you.

It's also a big issue for Edward River Council as well. It's always a big issue for the local Council, and it's a very legitimate issue to have with these projects. So we're happy to look at whether we can give you some further assistance on that through the process.

What else would you like to put on the table for us today? Or do Commissioners have any questions for Jack or David in relation to roads?

**MS SARAH DINNING:** I'm not sure so much about roads as – well, it might be, but one of my favourite topics is concrete batching inquiries. So I imagine that forms part of the picture of use of roads, unless they're onsite. Batching plants.

**MR WEBB:** I think from the EIS's, Commissioner, they've said that they're onsite, but they've still got to get the raw materials there. So that's still the impact, and that's where they can sneak around other routes rather than just on the highways. So yeah, so onsite batching plants; great. Love them. Been involved in them myself personally. But you've still got to get all your materials there to batch the concrete.

**MS DINNING:** And would you anticipate that level of detail about where the material is coming from would be available at this point?

**MR WEBB:** Possibly, but again, I'm happy for the transport strategy to address all that. Our concern is making sure they have to do a transport strategy, and they consult with the Council and get agreements from the local road authorities, Hay, which Council's one, in terms of how that movement, that movement of materials, water, waste, wastewater, everything is in. And also the inputs like blades and transformers are all considered in that strategy.

**MS DINNING:** Excellent. So that's a very comprehensive strategy, which would really pick up everything that's moving in and out.

**MR WEBB:** Yes. We understand they might not know all the detail. They've probably got a larger idea now, but we understand that may change and things might happen. And if they need to change the strategy, great. No problem with that. But we'd like to be consulted and get that concurrence with us through that process. I guess that's what we're asking for.

**MR PEARSON:** Yeah, that's a very reasonable thing to ask for. So we'll certainly have a look at that. OK. Is there any more we want to talk about traffic and transport and roads?

**MR WEBB:** Probably just the other point is, in your draft conditions, you had them, as Ali mentioned, and Jack mentioned, coming down the Cobb. Since that EIS was done, there's been quite a bit of movement with Transport for New South Wales about where they see the preferred route to bring the materials in from port. And the preference at this point in time, and that may change, is coming out of Port of Adelaide, coming via Euston and Robinvale that way, so it's not coming down the Cobb.

So we will suggest, and when we make our submission, we'll suggest a slight rewording of those conditions to acknowledge that that route has not been finalised yet. And that that needs to have some concurrence with Transport and Council as well, is what our suggestion is. Because it seems – and we've been in quite a few meetings with Transport over the last probably six months or so, I would say. Ali's been in some of those meetings with me, and I've been in some more where that's still a work in progress through the Transport. And I just felt we have concerns coming down the Cobb, as we mentioned, but also the fact that they're going to have to rely on Transport doing up some of that route for them to be able to move these blades, as an example anyway. So we felt that maybe locking that in the conditions might not be the appropriate thing at this point in time.

**MR PEARSON:** OK, that's interesting. I don't think we've sort of picked up this comment previously. The applicant seems to have a pretty specific route that they're proposing. It goes through Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Ivanhoe, down to Hay. You're saying there's a different way they could get to, via, I think you said, Euston, Robindale?

**MR WEBB:** Robinvale, yes. So there's a few ways they can come. They could come out of the Port of Newcastle and then go across to Dubbo and down the Newell. This is the second preferred route from Transport at this point in time. So those discussions, like I said, have happened post the EIS going in, and they're very recent discussions. And I believe EnergyCo and Transport were going to have a chat to the proponents in the last couple of weeks, but we have not been advised of the outcome of those discussions. So, yes, it's quite possible that they may be required to go on an alternative route.

**MR PEARSON:** OK, well, that's an interesting point we'll follow up. What's the

issue with the Cobb Highway? Is it just – yeah, what is the issue with the Cobb Highway?

**MR WEBB:** There's many issues besides the fact they have to do a lot of work. The main one for us is it's an important transport route and connectivity point mechanism for our economy as well as tourism. It's a narrow highway. It's not very wide. It's going to be very difficult for them to build passing lanes and pull-off areas. But the other main issue is you've got two bridges in the LGA that wouldn't withstand the loads.

And then you've got the main street, which is Lachlan Street, which they'll have to go straight down the main street of our town, which is quite a busy – it's 5,000 vehicle movements in that street every day. And that means it would be difficult for them to get those – the disruptions to the town just by moving all the blades, you count up all the blades for 150 turbines. So 450 movements of blades just to go through the main street would be very disruptive. And it's just not a practical, very practical thing to be done. That's in our view. But Ali might have some other words on it.

**MS MCLEAN:** Yeah, just to put some context around the beginning of that conversation; I did catch up with EnergyCo this morning, and Transport have been talking to the four proponents who have been given access for South West REZ, and they're trying to encourage collaboration on a route. And I'm not sure what the outcome of that is now, but there is potential that that Cobb Highway route will not be the preferred route for Pottinger. So that's something obviously that we've already mentioned we wanted considered in those conditions.

One of the issues for the Cobb Highway route is that it goes, as David said, straight through the middle of town, but it also goes past a primary school. It's the main thoroughfare to the hospital. It is where our retail sector is located. It goes through a number of residential areas as well. So we have concerns about that number of OSOM movements happening over the course of, well, for Pottinger, three years, but potentially then that cumulative impact of those other developments using that highway as the pathway as well.

And that's something that we're actually really concerned about across the board, is that the cumulative impact studies that are being done by Planning at the moment need to be really addressed in those strategies and plans, transport, accommodation, workforce. Because we're not talking about one project in isolation. We're talking about four major infrastructure projects that are wind and energy development. We're talking about the Project EnergyConnect transmission line, and then in the future VNI West transmission line. So it's an enormous amount of construction that will have a significant cumulative impact, transport being just one example, where there needs to be that collaboration and a review of that cumulative impact.

So transport movements for Pottinger alone, perhaps manageable. But if there's four developments, I think the number was around 6,600 OSOM movements for

those developments over the next five years.

**MR PEARSON:** OK, that's good intelligence. Thank you. So if they were to come by Euston, Robinvale, what highway are we talking there?

**MS MCLEAN:** The Sturt.

**MR PEARSON:** Sturt. OK.

**MS MCLEAN:** Which is already more developed than the Cobb Highway in terms of being able to take heavy vehicle movements, and there is less disruption. It doesn't, for us, it wouldn't actually go through the township as such. It will go through, I'm not sure of that route through Balranald, but the impact is less on populous areas if they were to take the Sturt.

**MR WEBB:** Just on Balranald, just for Ali, they are talking about making a bypass around Balranald, because there's a very tight turn at the end of the main street. So they've got to get around that, they've got to deal with that turn anyway. So they're actually talking about they've got another road that they can use as a bypass to miss the main street of Balranald. So that's another reason why they're considering that route.

**MR PEARSON:** OK. Well, this is all good to know, because I know certainly they're seeking approval at this point for the Cobb Highway, Broken Hill option. So we'll – but we will follow up, do some further follow ups on that. I know there's a reference in the Department's assessment report to the potential for – I'm trying to find my wording on this. Not my wording, their wording. There's something in the Department of Planning's – yeah, paragraph 170 of their report, it says, "The New South Wales government may coordinate an approach for high risk OSOM for the South West REZ as a whole." So that's probably the thing that you were talking about, Ali, where you're having meetings with them on that issue. So they may be looking, it sounds like they are looking at what might be an alternative proposed route. We'll do some follow up on that. So thanks for raising it. And yeah, David, I see you've got your hand up.

**MR WEBB:** Thanks. I just wanted to say that so our suggestion is that we just change – and we'll give you those wordings in our submission – of just referring to the route to be determined on the highways, and in conjunction with Transport and local Councils to allow for that flexibility for everyone to be able to work their way through this at this point in time, given what we know now for when, compared to when the EIS was submitted.

**MR PEARSON:** Yeah, we'll be definitely interested to look at your alternative words on that. We will have to consider as part of the project approval, things like transport routes, I think, need to – this is where flexibility versus having properly assessed the impacts of what's proposed as part of the project, there can be some tension around that. But we'll be happy to review your proposed alternative words on that. So, yeah, please provide that to us by the 12th of June. OK, any questions

Commissioners, at this point?

5 **MS DINNING:** Yes, Richard, thank you. And there's so much information, it's been great, so I'm just looking through my notes. Can I just quickly check in about the VPA and the – I think that upper bound figure is based on the 247 turbines, the full megawatt amount. So they have been, the applicant has been granted access for a lower amount at this stage. Are you aware of that and the impact on, I suppose, the funding?

10 **MS MCLEAN:** Yes, we are, Commissioner. The letter of intent that we signed with Pottinger was based on them receiving full capacity. We are aware that they haven't, so I think they were in for 1.2 gig. They've got 831 megawatts, and it's a proportional decline in the amount of funds that would come through the VPA under the Community Benefits Fund.

15 **MS DINNING:** Yeah, thank you. And if you wouldn't mind, just, there was a comment you were making about – or maybe the Mayor was making the comment about it, which is the funding, the Council having more oversight of the funding, I suppose, for the First Nations aspect. I understand a percentage, we understand a percentage of the VPA will be fed through First Nations programs.

20 **MS MCLEAN:** Yeah, so we – that negotiation was with local First Nations groups and Pottinger, and we haven't been privy to those conversations. We took the position that it is best for First Nations to develop and understand how they would like to spend that quantum of funds that is coming towards them with the support of Pottinger.

25 And so, while we're not involved in those discussions, we will look for opportunities to be able to work together. But yeah, we haven't been party to the actual discussions around how that may be used. We know what the quantum is, but we aren't privy to how that may be used yet.

30 **MS DINNING:** Thank you. And are there any limitations to how you can use the VPA geographically or –?

35 **MS MCLEAN:** Not – there is, there are limitations to the access funds, which is a different bucket of money. The VPA is an agreement with Council and the community, obviously, as part of that. And we've been working for a couple of years now to develop plans about how that will be, how that will be delivered, how that will be governed, and how that will be used.

40 It's different – and correct me if I'm wrong, everyone who's in Planning, I feel a bit out of my depth here – but it's not like a 7-12 where there are set projects that are designated, and that's where that money has to be spent. We're looking to be able to, because there are significant amounts of money that will be coming in from Pottinger, from the other developer in our region, BayWa, from the access funds. We're looking to pool that money to maximise the impact of those funds over the next 30-odd years.

**MS DINNING:** Great. Thank you.

**MR PEARSON:** Thanks, Sarah and Alison. Michael?

**MR WRIGHT:** Could I just ask, Richard, just going back to Ali's commentary about accommodation, and you referenced ancillary workers, that they weren't picked up in employment strategies generally. Can you describe for us, ancillary workers, what does that cover?

**MS MCLEAN:** Yeah, so I'll give you an example, a lived example with Elecnor, who are the EPC for Transgrid, delivering the Project EnergyConnect transmission line. They built a workers' accommodation camp that provided accommodation for the Elecnor workforce. But there is a workforce that supports that, that do environmental studies, heritage studies, hydrology reporting, the Transgrid staff as well. They're not part of that workforce plan, but all of that ancillary staff come and use the accommodation in Hay, but they're not actually captured as – so peak workforce, for example, Pottinger have 550 as their peak workforce. But that 550 will also be supported by this ancillary staff that we see happening in the community. The high-vis that are here and not at the camp.

And that's what we saw in January, where we had 38% of all accommodation was being taken up by that ancillary workforce. What we don't want to see is that when people are coming as tourists to the area, they can't get accommodation, so they go to the next town. It's very hard to get those people to come back again in future years if it's difficult for them to get accommodation.

One of the other things that we saw with Transgrid and Elecnor is because of moving timeframes, which happen in these large projects, they had early works contractors coming in, but the camp wasn't ready. So we had early works contractors staying in accommodation because they didn't have the workforce camps ready.

**MR WRIGHT:** I see.

**MS MCLEAN:** So, yeah, we want them, that whole – and it's that cumulative impact piece again. What is the actual cumulative impact of all of the workforce that's involved, not just your construction workforce?

**MR WRIGHT:** And so you would want to see that, I presume, Ali, ideally reflected in the employment and accommodation strategy the proponent would be prepared to develop?

**MS MCLEAN:** Yes.

**MR WRIGHT:** And just while we're on accommodation, I know that – my understanding is there's been some discussions between Pottinger and Hay Shire Council, and I think maybe a company called Passive Places about modular



accommodation, and the opportunity for repurposing that post-construction as a sort of a legacy accommodation benefit for the LGA. Anything you can say about that?

5 **MS MCLEAN:** Yes. We had a meeting last week, actually. We're working with both of the developers in our area, to look at how we can collaborate and deliver that project. We're probably moving away a little bit from an in-town workers' accommodation, just because of the variables that are involved, and it is out of our business as usual as Council. But we are looking at how we can deliver that  
10 legacy, and the developers are both engaged in that conversation and enthusiastic to be able to deliver that for us. So we're just working out what that actually looks like now, now that we know who actually has access.

15 **MR WRIGHT:** OK, thank you.

**MR PEARSON:** Thank you. The only thing that we haven't covered on our agenda is biodiversity. Was there anything Council wanted to raise on that point? It's something that's covered comprehensively in the Department's assessment report and in input from the state biodiversity agencies, but was there anything  
20 Council in particular has concerns or issues around in that regard?

**MR TERBLANCHE:** So –

25 **MS MCLEAN:** Probably only – oh, sorry Jack, I was just going to say, probably only from a community point of view, we would encourage that the biodiversity offsets be realised in the immediate area, which would be, again, another economic benefit for the region. Biodiversity offsets and the management of those offsets are particularly hard to manage in a rangelands environment, which is what we are here in Hay. So that will be an interesting task for the offsets as to how  
30 they're able to actually do them, and whether they can actually realise them, and whether there needs to be some changes in how those offsets are managed in primary production to be able to actually see that benefit come to the community.

35 **MR PEARSON:** Thank you. Jack, were you wanting to add anything?

**MR TERBLANCHE:** No, that's fine, that's fine.

40 **MR PEARSON:** Thank you. Well, we're coming close to our end point here. Was anything further that Council wanted to bring before us? We are in town next week. We've got a public meeting in Hay on Wednesday. We'll also be doing a site inspection on Tuesday, and I think we did invite Council to join that site inspection if they want. Like, not the whole Council, I might add, but representative of Council, and you're also obviously welcome to speak on the Wednesday. You may well have registered, some of you, to do that. Anything on  
45 that that you want to raise?

**MR TERBLANCHE:** Richard, I've got some general comments on the conditions, if I can raise that now?

**MR PEARSON:** Yeah, sure. Yeah, sure.

5 **MR TERBLANCHE:** OK. So what we'll do is we'll do a submission with all our comments and suggested wording. But just some general things. When I went through the comments, there's six general things that for me stand out. Number one is access, which we discussed now quite a bit.

10 Secondly is waste. A lot of the renewables that's in the area that's being built in already, some of them are finished. They've handled their waste, probably to some mystery landfill in some cases. But obviously, if Council is involved, we like them to enter into a waste management agreement. That's something we request from the start, due to the potential amount of waste is enormous. And we've already built a facility that can handle almost anything.

15 **MR PEARSON:** Are you talking, Jack, construction waste there?

20 **MR TERBLANCHE:** Everything. So, we've got a material recycling facility that can handle almost everything. Everything that that solar farm I think can produce, we can handle. I'm talking about, we can do plastics, wood, paper, concrete, we can crush, etc. So a lot of it we can handle.

25 The second, yeah, like I said, waste, access. My third comment is that – and you probably have all worked or had involvement with local government, especially rural local government. We are the most accessible public body in Hay. So, I've got some general concerns with some of the last clauses, or from memory, clauses C4 to C6, where the Secretary can just change a lot of the plans, the staging and the management and incidents, not necessarily notifying Council. Now, from practical experience, we know we're going to field most of the queries and issues. So it will be good if notifying Council on any changes is embedded in the conditions of approval. So that's point number three.

35 Compliance and complaints. Yes, how will that be handled? Who's the responsible compliance body? Now, I gather most of it will not be Council. And then also complaints, I can see there's a complaints procedure in the end, but that is going to be obviously an issue that we want resolved.

40 As Ali alluded to, cumulative impacts, but it needs to be addressed almost in all strategies and plans that's proposed in the recommended conditions of approval. So if you look at either transport or the accommodation camp or the employment, you need to address cumulative impacts. I see one of the conditions stated that cumulative impacts of state significant developments, but state significant developments is only one part of the puzzle here.

45 We've also got the federal developments that goes past our area that has an impact. We've got regional significant developments, and then obviously local developments that needs to be taken into account. And our recommendation is if it's Commonwealth, state or regional significant developments, it needs to be

taken into account with assessing the impacts. I don't think you can really, if it's local development, take all those impacts into account, because, I mean, then you start needing to take into account the shed the farmer builds next door, which is not what this is aimed at.

The last thing, the sixth point, Council needs to be acknowledged in all matters air related, or air transport related. As we are the aerodrome operator, and I see there's quite a few places where we're acknowledged, but we need to consult it. And also, we can be the ones that disseminate the information from that to the local users on the ground. Our aerodrome is heavily used, and used more. So any aerodrome related matters, Council needs to be acknowledged or notified at least for any actions on that. And some of those have been done in some of the conditions, but some conditions we're not.

**MR PEARSON:** We can certainly look at that.

**MR TERBLANCHE:** And that is my six overarching points.

**MR PEARSON:** OK.

**MR WRIGHT:** Can I just ask a quick supplementary question in relation to waste? Interesting that you've got that capacity, Jack, to deal with circular economy type issues. We've just had a discussion with Edward River Council, where they've raised concern about waste. Has there been any discussion between that Council and yours about a sort of a coordinated approach to dealing with waste from some of these developments, including Pottinger?

**MR TERBLANCHE:** David, it would probably be better to ask that our engineer, David.

**MR WEBB:** Thanks, Jack. Only when we've had discussions through EnergyCo meetings that Ali's convened, we've had a brief discussion on waste. And I'm not too sure what Edward River said to you yesterday. My understanding was that they were very hesitant to take any waste because they've got no landfill space or has limited landfill space. Whereas we've got, we see this as an opportunity to work with the renewable energy sector to develop our site more. We've got the space. And as Jack just mentioned, we've just built a new materials recovery, so it's in its first 12 months operations now. And we see we'd like to partner with the renewable sector to develop how we can reprocess and repurpose the waste materials into the circular economy.

And so we haven't had direct discussions with Edward River per se on a joint approach. Certainly happy to consider that. But we'd like to just flag that we do see it as an opportunity to work together, and that's why we'd like to have a waste management agreement. If they want to use our facility, which we think they will, because it's close and we can take pretty much anything, we'd just like to have in the conditions that we must enter into a waste management agreement. And so that just allows us the details to be finalised down the track. I hope that answers your

question, Commissioner.

**MR WRIGHT:** Yeah, thank you, David.

5      **MR PEARSON:** OK, well, look, thanks very much. We have come to the end of  
our time. So I just would like to thank Council very much for that very  
constructive input today. We are going to be in town next week. So we might see  
some of you in person, which would be great, either onsite and/or at the public  
meeting. We would encourage your submission by the 12th of June, particularly  
10      around any condition issues, building on your six points, Jack, that we've made a  
note of.

And just thank you very much for constructively engaging with us today. And  
we'll see you down the line. So thanks, everybody.

15      **MR WEBB:** Thanks to the Commission for their time to listen to us today. I know  
we've put a lot of time into this, and we just definitely see this as an opportunity  
and we support the developments. And we just wish for some support through you  
through this, and we do appreciate your time. Thank you.

20      **MR PEARSON:** Yeah, pleasure. Thanks, David. And thanks all. Thanks, Matt.

**MR TERBLANCHE:** Thanks all.

25      **MR PEARSON:** Thank you all. See you.

**MR WEBB:** Thank you. Bye.

30      **>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**