New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: RESTART OF REDBANK POWER STATION (SSD-56284960)

DEPARTMENT MEETING

PANEL:	NEAL MENZIES (CHAIR) ALEX O'MARA ELIZABETH TAYLOR
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	JANE ANDERSON CALLUM FIRTH
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE:	STEVE O'DONOGHUE JACK TURNER KIERA PLUMRIDGE
LOCATION:	ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE
DATE:	11:30AM – 13:00PM WEDNESDAY, 30th JULY 2025

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

MR NEAL MENZIES: Hello Stephen, hello Jack, and hello, Kiera.

MR JACK TURNER: Hello Neal, how are you?

MR MENZIES: I'm doing well.

MR TURNER: That's good.

MR MENZIES: This morning so far, we've had the Council and the Applicant, so you guys are number three on our hitlist.

MR STEVE O'DONOGHUE: Okay.

MR MENZIES: Guys, you've probably been through this a hundred times, but so you know where we're going. I'm going to read a formal statement out, and once we've got through that, we'll have a much more informal discussion. So, let me start with my formal statement.

And before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from the land of the Jagera and Turrbal peoples here in the Brisbane River Valley. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we're variously meeting virtually today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to the entire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the restart of Redbank Power Station currently before the Commission for determination. The Applicant, Verdant Earth Technologies Limited, proposes to restart the existing Redbank Power Station with the use of up to 700,000 dry tonnes of biomass per year as a fuel to generate electricity. The power station has a capacity of up to 151 megawatts and would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

My name's Neal Menzies, I'm the Chair of this Commission Panel, and I'm joined by my fellow commissioners, Alex O'Mara and Elizabeth Taylor. And we are also joined by Jane Anderson and Callum Firth 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. The meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information on which the Commission will base its decision/determination.

It's 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 are not in a position to provide an 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 here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time, and for all members to ensure we do not speak over the top of each other, to ensure the accuracy of the transcript.

Okay, we can now begin and perhaps begin by asking everyone to introduce themselves.

MR O'DONOGHUE: I'll start there, Chair. My name is Steve O'Donoghue, Director of Resource Assessments for the Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure.

MR MENZIES: Thanks, Steve.

MR TURNER: Great. Next, I'm Jack Turner, Team Leader in the Resource Assessments Team.

MS KIERA PLUMRIDGE: And I'll go as well. Hi everyone, my name is Kiera Plumridge, I am an Environmental Assessment Officer with the Department.

MR MENZIES: Okay. So, yes, I'm Neal Menzies, the Chair of the Panel.

MS ALEX O'MARA: Hi, I'm Alex O'Mara, I'm a Commissioner. Hello.

MS ELIZABETH TAYLOR: And Elizabeth Taylor, Commissioner.

MS JANE ANDERSON: And from the Office, Jane Anderson, Planner with the IPC.

MR CALLUM FIRTH: Callum Firth, I'm a Planner too.

MR MENZIES: Okay. Stephen, are you leading this?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, thanks Chair. Look, firstly I'd like to thank yourself, the Chair and the commissioners for the opportunity to speak today about the Department's assessment of the Redbank Power Station Project. We do have a slide pack, so is it okay for Kiera to sort of present that as we go along?

MR TURNER: Yes, I'll run that.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, sorry Jack, Jack will run that one.

MR TURNER: Yes.

MR MENZIES: Okay. And just so you know, we commissioners will jump in and ask questions as we go through.

MR O'DONOGHUE: That's fine, Chair. Look, anytime if you want a clarification or asking questions, that's fine. We'll follow –

MS TAYLOR: Sorry, can I just – we'll get a copy of this?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, we'll send that through, yes.

MS TAYLOR: Thank you.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, yes. We'll follow the agenda provided by the IPC, as outlined on the slide and that was provided to us, so we'll stick to that fairly closely. If there's questions outside that, that's fine, we'll address them where we can.

I'll start just with an overview of the project, including the project site, the description and the background, and provide a summary of the Department's assessment as the first agenda point.

The site's located in the Hunter Valley within an area zoned for primary production. Surrounding land uses include open cut mining to the south, and also there's mining further to the north. A transmission line easement, industrial premises to the east and bushland to the north and west, for context.

These land uses are generally representative of the wider regional setting within the Hunter Valley, which consists primarily of mining operations, agricultural properties, and native vegetation. The three nearest residential receivers are located approximately 1.5 kilometres to the east and 1.8 kilometres to the northeast of the project site.

Just to give some of the history of why we're at, at the moment. The development consent for the power station was granted by Singleton Council in 1994, a while back, and was subsequently amended by orders from the New South Wales Land and Environment Court following a merit appeal at that time.

As the Chair noted, it was approved to burn up to 700,000 tonnes of coal tailings, which is essentially a lower energy reject material from mining operations that wasn't suitable for the export market. And supplied by a pipeline from the adjacent mines, which were Warkworth and Lemington mines.

The station went into care and maintenance in October 2014, largely due to the unavailability of supply of coal tailings from the Warkworth mine which is where it was getting it at that point.

So, Verdant Earth, who's the Applicant for the project, acquired the power station in 2018 and proposed to restart operations with the use of biomass as a fuel rather than coal tailings from the mine. At that time in 2020, a mod application was submitted to Singleton Council to enable the use of biomass, however, this was refused largely over – it was not considered to be substantially the same development due to the use of a different fuel.

This went to the Land and Environment Court following appeal and the Land and Environment Court dismissed that. The modification at that time included biomass from native forestry residues, which was a significant issue for that. And just to be clear, that does not form part of the SSD application for this project in terms of native forestry residues.

I'll just go onto a brief summary of the site. We've mentioned the 700,000 dry tonnes of biomass, that equates to about 850,000 wet tonnes equivalent. Capacity of 151 megawatts and similarly to the previous submission was seeking to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide energy into the New South Wales grid.

Construction activities would be required to modify the power station to enable the use of biomass. This is largely conveying systems; there's a picture on the right, presents the sort of new additional information that would be required. However, there will be no disturbance as a result of what's part of the application outside the existing development footprint that was previously approved for these construction activities.

It has a capital investment value of around 70 million, with 330 construction jobs during the construction period and up to 60 operational jobs at the site.

Just a brief summary of the assessment before we go into the detailed agenda items. The Department considered that the key project issues related to compliance with the Energy from Waste framework of the New South Wales Government. And the potential impacts to human health and amenity from air emissions from the power station.

The Department, we consulted closely with the EPA regarding these issues in particular, and along with the other issues for noise amenity etc., and recommended conditions regarding this. And we also engaged independent expert, Arup, to provide additional advice on these key assessment issues, particularly about the waste regulatory framework and how the waste would be managed and sourced.

Based on this advice, the Department concluded that the project could comply with the existing regulatory framework for the management of standard fuels and eligible waste fuels. And we'll touch on that a bit more later.

In addition to the recommended consent conditions, the operation of the project would be strictly enforced by the EPA through the existing waste regulatory framework, including resource recovery exemptions and orders under the POEO Act, and conditions in the Environment Protection Licence for the site.

We also considered that emissions from the power station would meet the relevant air quality assessment criteria and discharge limits. And emissions would also be closely regulated by the EPA through the Environment Protection Licence, as was previously the case when the power station was operating.

As identified by the EPA and Arup, there are commercial risks related to the ability of Verdant to obtain the required quantities and quality of feedstock. These risks would

need to be closely managed by Verdant to achieve a financially viable project. The established regulatory framework and recommended conditions of consent would ensure the risk to the environment and human health remain low irrespective of these commercial factors.

Given the project involves the conversion of the fuel type for an existing power station, other environmental impacts are generally considered minor and/or manageable under the proposed mitigation measures and also the Department's recommended conditions of consent. In particular, requirements for an environmental management strategy to manage some of these issues.

I'll just touch on the next agenda item, which is really about the independent review undertaken by Arup, who we engaged through the process. Really, there were five key areas we asked them to look at: feedstock availability; processing capacity of the facility; compliance with the Energy from Waste Policy and Eligible Waste Fuel Guidelines; the suitability of the proposed technologies and handling capabilities of the feedstocks; and emission techniques and monitoring.

As shown on the slide, Arup prepared two linked independent reviews. The first review was provided to Verdant for response, and Arup prepared a final review based on this response. Arup concluded in its final review that Verdant demonstrated an understanding of and commitment to complying with the regulatory framework around both waste and air emissions.

Arup also noted that if the project is approved, the resource recovery and exemption framework regulated by the EPA provides a stringent process for assessing and managing the human health and environmental risks associated with the use and the burning of this material.

The final review did identify some residual risk but concluded that the information provided by Verdant was satisfactory for this stage of the project. Residual matters identified in the review have been addressed by the Department in its recommended conditions or largely addressed by the existing regulatory framework under the waste hierarchy and POEO Act.

Both EPA and Arup did identify the residual commercial risk in relation to sourcing of biomass, as discussed above, and we'll sort of step through that a bit more later as one of the topics of the agenda.

So, just before I move onto, I guess, the key issues, which is written in the agenda, which is about the energy from waste and the energy aspects, are there any questions on that component?

MR MENZIES: No, I think we're okay at this point.

MS TAYLOR: Could I just ask a question really in terms of the framing of this project. I think what we've – or certainly what I've been trying to work out is where you've seen the boundary of this project, because the feedstock of course is integral to

its being a project, and so therefore the whole policy environment of government around transition encompasses not just the reuse of a piece of infrastructure but also the broader feedstock.

The characterisation we've tended to see was more that was a commercial risk, and it's been very hard to work out how deep the analysis of being about its – how intrinsically it is also part of government policy around transition. So, I'm not asking for a question now, but I thought it's probably worth you knowing that, that in terms of how we consider a project in this sort of context, what your approach has been.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, look, we certainly – that's something that we grapple with as well. Certainly, from an SSD application point of view, what the company's put forward, the Proponent's put forward is essentially the boundary of the premise itself in terms of managing the feedstock on the site and emissions from the site.

Now, the company has provided information about how they would deal with the, I guess, suppliers of the material through – and we'll come into invasive native species a bit later is a key part of that – but also plantation in terms of like the framework of supplying that, which they will need to step through post approval in terms of demonstrating that the quality assurance and quality control aspects are handled.

But in terms of that broader, I guess, transition, this project feeds into providing energy security in providing continuous power source into the grid, using a biomass supply while we are transitioning through to renewable energy which has still got a long way to go. And this is similar to gas-fired power stations, this is providing security in that context.

So, happy to – if you've got any questions on that or you seek further advice, we're happy to provide more on that aspect.

MS TAYLOR: And look, I suppose where my question was perhaps going as well is particularly around the plantation. The concept of asking mines to move towards, say, a plantation for this makes sense on one level, but does it impact on, say, some other area of government that might be trying to work with mines and the Council, for example, on a higher use option, and what impact might that sort of difference in expectation of possibilities in the broader sense, how much should or should not that inform how we engage with this.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes. That's a good point, Commissioner, and certainly as the post-mining land use inquiry has looked at that and the New South Wales Government's response to that in terms of the recommendations on around timing of mine closure and what opportunities there are for a range of land uses.

Certainly, mining in the Hunter Valley covers a very large area, right, so as mines close, and Mount Arthur's probably the first example of a large mine that will be closing up in the Muswellbrook Shire. And we're certainly look at that, at what opportunities, including agriculture, industrial, pumped hydro is undergoing a feasibility study.

So, there's a range of options that could be looked at. I think with the area in the Hunter, there's quite a few opportunities, including for this sort of option to be looked at in that broader context.

MS TAYLOR: Thank you, that's enough for me.

MS O'MARA: I just wanted to raise one threshold issue, which is obviously something that's happened last week since you did your report.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

MS O'MARA: The impact of the Court of Appeal's decision on the IPC's assessment and requiring us to look at the causal connection between the project, and the impacts on the environment in the locality of the project. Some of my questions are really going to, you know, how has the impact on the environment in the broader locality been assessed?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Commissioner, is that just in relation to greenhouse or more broadly other issues?

MS O'MARA: Well, look, I mean, obviously, you know, we need to work through what are the implications of that decision. But there's certainly the way I'm sort of understanding it is it looks at environment, not just greenhouse.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, yes.

MS O'MARA: I've read it quickly, I mean, other people look at it more detail.

MR O'DONOGHUE: What I'd say to that is a lot of the assessments are looking at the localised impact when you look at the amenity in particular, right, so noise, air, visual, lighting, are all impacts on the locality in that sense.

MS O'MARA: Yes.

MR O'DONOGHUE: I think the judgement brought in a global impact in trying to bring that consideration to a local level, from greenhouse gas emissions. So, that's something that we're – that's certainly, it is certainly an issue and caught up in that appeal court process.

I think for when you step through it for Redbank, for example, you need to see the context of the individual project, it's contribution to global emissions and whether it would have any influence on the locality. This one doesn't trigger, in that sense, it's a small project from a greenhouse gas emissions point of view, compared to others. It doesn't trigger the safeguard mechanism, largely because it's a power station which is encaptured. But it wouldn't trigger the 100,000-tonne threshold that facilities have or the large emitters guide at 25,000 tonnes for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions that the EPA has set.

Probably just one thing on that. Just on that, the EPA just released their draft guidelines yesterday on the climate change and mitigation plans that are required for licensees, and guidelines for coal mining, which isn't relevant for this one. But the CC maps are, and the threshold for that is again 25,000 tonnes for it, which this one doesn't trigger. So, in that context, it's a low greenhouse gas emitter and we'll touch on that a bit later too there, Commissioner.

MS O'MARA: Okay.

MR O'DONOGHUE: I'll just go onto – just while we're talking about the next issue, it's about the energy context in particular. Our assessment focused on whether the project can meet the Energy from Waste Policy criteria, which as we stated earlier, would be regulated by the EPA if the project is approved.

So, the assessment was structured around the, I guess, the key criteria which is that the proposed waste would consistently meet the definition of an EPA approved eligible waste fuel. There are no practical higher order reuse opportunities for the waste. Waste is fully characterised and/or proof of performance is undertaken, and emissions meet the relevant emissions standards as set out in the Protection of the Environment Operations Act (Clean Air) Regulation.

Verdant developed a detailed Quality Assurance and Quality Control Plan that would need to be followed to ensure source biomass meets the requirements from the Energy from Waste guidelines.

Arup in its review concluded in its final advice that Verdant had demonstrated a commitment to complying with the regulatory framework and certainly the EPA would require that through the resource recovery exemption order process in terms of demonstrating INS, for example, meets the criteria.

MS O'MARA: Can I just ask a question about the resource recovery order and exemption?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

MS O'MARA: You know how like sort of under integrated development, if we issue a consent, other agencies have to issue, for example, an EPL.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

MS O'MARA: Does the resource recovery order framework, does that operate in that way? So that if we issue a consent, they have to issue one of those orders?

MR O'DONOGHUE: It's not really an integrated development in that sense, because it's just a statutory requirement under the POEO Act. So, it would be required regardless, so in those ones, the framework is set up, you know, largely for non-licensed premises, right, to produce and accept waste where you don't need an Environment Protection Licence to do that. So, it sets a framework to manage those

sources of waste that have the potential for reuse. But it would otherwise need an Environmental Protection Licence, yes.

MS O'MARA: Yes. Say, for example, they wanted to use a waste source and the EPA had concerns and, you know, an order shouldn't be issued, they could refuse it, for example, for a waste.

MR O'DONOGHUE: They could. Yes, that's correct, yes. Because it would need to meet – they'd need to demonstrate … There are two sorts of orders, there's general orders and site-specific, right. In this case, it would be more likely be site-specific orders for a particular source from a property to do that.

I think there'd probably be potential for general orders in relation to INS, for example, for the use of that. But I think that's, from discussion with the EPA, probably be a local site-specific resource recovery order and exemption that would apply just to these facilities, rather than a broader one.

We'll step through the ash resource recovery exemption order a bit later. But that's one that is a general one that as long as you meet the requirements under it, then anyone can utilise that exemption and order.

MS O'MARA: Okay.

MR O'DONOGHUE: So, I talked about the resource recovery exemption framework for managing risk. EPA didn't raise any significant residual concerns regarding the assessment against the Energy from Waste framework. But did raise concerns about the proposed use of domestic biomass fuel, which is a bit different to – it's a woody waste that's manufactured from wood waste from construction and demolition and commercial industrial activities.

Now, that's currently not an eligible waste fuel because there's concerns over potential contamination, like, for example, from treatment of wood in that. So, while it was put forward as part of the application, it's not one that Verdant would be able to apply, because we're only restricting the use of eligible waste fuels, and currently that's not an eligible waste fuel. If some time in the future, it was drawn into that system that that may be available to the Proponent, but this currently would not be available as a source of fuel on that one.

So, in our recommended conditions, we're requiring a Quality Control and Quality Assurance Plan to ensure that all eligible waste fuels have resource recovery orders and exemptions prior to receipt on site. So, getting to your point, Commissioner, they would need to demonstrate that they've got that before it goes on site. So, they would need to step through with the EPA that the EPA is satisfied that that order, an exemption can be issued.

MS O'MARA: Thank you.

MR O'DONOGHUE: The QAQC condition that we've recommended also captures some of the residual issues identified by Arup, which is really about alignment with overseas standards for sampling biofuels, biomass in this instance, and requiring specific controls for each type of feedstock at each stage of processing, transport, delivery and storage prior to combustion, so that any risks are known through that process.

The management of standard fuels and eligible waste fuels will be primarily regulated by the existing framework enforced by the EPA. Overall, the Department considers that the project could comply with the Energy from Waste Policy framework, based on advice from Arup and EPA.

So, I'll just move to the next agenda item which is really about the biomass fuel, unless there are any questions on that Energy from Waste framework?

Okay. So, just with the biomass fuels. The fuel is proposed to be used at the power station, I mentioned them before, one is standard fuels, which is defined under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act (Clean Air) Reg. For example, and proposed to be used at the site, is purpose-grown energy plantations, perennial grasses and energy crops defined as wood or wood-derived.

The standard fuels aren't – just one point here – the standard fuels aren't covered under requiring resource recovery exemptions or orders. They can be used at any facility subject to, in this instance, a consent and complying with the consent conditions.

We've discussed the eligible waste fuels. This covers the source materials they're looking at is invasive native species, which we've flagged earlier. Waste from proved land clearing. Agricultural residues and uncontaminated wood waste, which is essentially wood waste that there's no treatment of the timber, so it's not treated timber at all.

Shown in the figure of the slide, what the Proponent is expecting or what they're moving towards is a high reliance on eligible waste fuels at the start of the project, and then move towards purpose-grown fuels as the project develops.

Getting to the points, suppliers would be responsible for processing the biomass to required standards with support from Verdant. So, the discussion earlier, that activity doesn't form part of the project but from a QAQC point of view, we would require that that process is carefully managed by Verdant to make sure that the quality of the biomass coming in is of suitable quality for burning at the power station.

Verdant did provide a higher order use study as part of the Submissions Report. It's not on the website, following request from the EPA to provide information about that under the New South Wales Waste Regulatory framework. Verdant concluded that there is adequate supply of biomass for the project that has no higher order uses. And EPA and Arup reviewed that information in terms of their advice to us on that issue.

In the first five years of the project, the primary biomass source is from invasive native species, which are coming from the Mid-West and Far-Western regions of New South Wales. The clearing of INS is permitted and regulated under the Land Management and Native Vegetation Code 2018, and the Local Land Services Act 2013.

One point there, that is going through consultation and changes to that code at the moment to tighten up what is INS in terms of ensuring that it's – in terms of reviewing where that's coming from and requirements and the information provided that it is INS and it's not drawing in other vegetation that wouldn't constitute INS.

Probably the other point too from a sourcing point of view is that Verdant advised that the power plant can operate on a minimum fuel load of 350,000 tonnes per year, which would be capable of generating up to 110 megawatts on a two-boiler configuration at the site. So, while the intention is to operate at the 700,000 dry tonnes, there's still, if feedstock is lower in a particular year, they can still operate continuously on a lower production rate.

I'll just move to the next agenda item, which is the purpose-grown fuels, unless there's just any questions on that, particularly on that INS aspect there?

MS O'MARA: Oh, I just had a question about the purpose-grown fuel strategy. Is there anything in the conditions that, you know, given that they're saying, "Our intention is that 70% will come from purpose-grown fuel from year 5," do the conditions hold them to that?

MR O'DONOGHUE: In terms of …

MS O'MARA: In terms of the mix. Or is it more of an indication?

MR O'DONOGHUE: No, it's more of a – look, it's more of an indication. The conditions don't hold them to a particular mix over time. I guess from a commercial point of view, the closer they can source material is cost effective from that in not having to acquire it from further away. So, there is an incentive there to acquire that material from plantation materials closer to the site, so there's a financial incentive there to do that over time anyway.

But no, we don't have a – while we're requiring, I guess, the key document would be the Environment Management Strategy and how they're documenting this in the source of materials and the quality control aspects in managing it. But we don't have a specific – we haven't recommended a condition to restrict that.

MS TAYLOR: Could I ask a follow-on question with that? If that does end up that the plantations are part of the remediation of mine sites, when you're moving then to harvesting that remediation, of course the soils in those areas can have residual contaminants from the mining exercise that would not have been envisaged in the remediation effort.

I used to live up in Rockhampton near the old gold mines up there, so sort of the residual impacts of situations in the longer term are certainly top of mind up there. Was any analysis done of the harvesting aspect and what environmental impacts that might have because of disturbance?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Probably not. There was a high-level assessment, I guess, on the sourcing of the material as enabling infrastructure essentially. In terms of – probably a couple of things there. Whether it's on rehabilitated mine sites or buffer land, a lot of the mines have significant buffer areas that they've acquired to provide amenity around the site. So, it doesn't necessarily have to go on rehabilitated mine land, depending on the discussions with the mining companies, it could be in the buffer land there.

With rehabilitation areas, mines are required to carefully manage materials that may be acidic or from coal reject or that into tailings, so just the general course of rehab, there's probably a lower risk from contaminants from that in terms of rehabilitation. There's probably more risk associated with around the tailings dams or rejects going back into the pit on that.

But the rehabilitation of mine sites is fairly advanced these days in how they source the material that they put in close to the surface and ensuring that you can get good rehabilitation outcomes, whether you're putting pasture there for agriculture purpose. There's quite a few – there are mine sites in the Hunter that have rehabilitated back to pasture with cows grazing on the land as an example of that occurring as we speak.

MS TAYLOR: Thank you.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Now, I'm just going to step through the purpose-grown fuels aspect. So, I won't go into too much detail on this, but since we've talked a little bit around it.

They're looking at purpose-grown energy plantation, perennial fuels and energy crops that are defined as standard fuels under the Clean Air Reg. Verdant has indicated it would investigate options to establish bana grass which is a fast-growing perennial, sorghum, agave and woody biomass crops to cultivate purpose-grown fuels.

Getting to the point raised earlier, the ability for Verdant to secure land in proximity to site for purpose-grown crops in competition with other potential land uses and mine-owned land, was identified as a commercial risk for the project that needs to be managed by Verdant. And acknowledging that there is other potential uses of mine rehab and the buffer lands around the sites.

At the request of the Department, Verdant has had regard to the potential off-site impacts associated with purpose-grown fuel crops and potential development approval pathways. Environmental impacts are generally low when approval pathways are available through the approvals process for post-mining land uses for this sort of activities.

Standard fuels are not subject to the same requirements as eligible waste fuels. To ensure the fuels meet the relevant quality standards as they generally have a lower risk of contamination. However, getting to the point of potential contamination, they may be subject to agricultural chemicals and pesticides, for example.

Arup, in their review, recommended that standard fuels be included in the quality assurance process for the project, and we've adopted this recommendation in the recommendation conditions of consent. So, while it's not covered necessarily under the waste regulatory, you know, through resource recovery exemption and orders, we would still want that covered to demonstrate that the quality of that fuel is fit for purpose for burning in the power station as well.

I'm just going to move onto ash management as well and step through that. Ash will be generated as a byproduct of combustion at around 42,500 tonnes per annum. It will be dispatched off-site via heavy vehicles for reuse as a soil or fertiliser additive, in accordance with EPA's resource recovery order Ash from Burning Biomass Order 2014.

Now, there's a similar resource recovery exemption for people who want to use the ash. So, this is an example of one where it's a general order that covers if it meets the quality in the order, which is largely around heavy metal contamination, for example, or residue levels. If it's under those thresholds, then it's suitable for applying to land, subject to the landowner applying in accordance with the resource recovery order for the use on that property.

But we do note there is a low contamination risk associated with eligible waste fuels and standard fuels. Because there are strict requirements already to meet contamination levels before it's burnt as a fuel in the power station, so the risk of contamination in the ash or ability to meet that order should be low on that.

EPA didn't raise any residual issue regarding the management of ash. Arup did raise a couple of issues about managing ash in the power station with accumulation of slag in the system. We've sort of dealt with that through the Quality Control and Quality Assurance Plan in terms of dealing with that issue.

MR MENZIES: Stephen, just before you move on.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

MR MENZIES: You made a comment earlier, and I think my question sort of relates to that. You said that it's sufficiently well enough developed for this stage of the project. When we were talking to the Applicant about ash, they expressed confidence that they'd find consumers for this, but they didn't have any.

So, my question is around, at the moment there is no fallback position. They either find people who want to spread the ash on agricultural land, but there's no option B. Was that a concern to the Department?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Look, it's, I guess, in the sense that the ash should meet the order. It is a concern if, because clearly if the ash can't be managed, operations would need to be curtailed to – because once the storage capacity's exceeded and there's no option, then you wouldn't be able to generate the material, right. So, it would impact on their operation of the site.

The only other option if either it didn't meet the specifications under the order, which we think is unlikely given that the providence of the material, but if it wasn't available for consumers or there was low consumer demand, the only other option then would be, to continue operations would be disposal at landfill, for example.

MR MENZIES: Yes, I agree that it's likely to meet specification. I guess, my concern was that establishing that there's a market, even if you're giving it away, you still have to have people who are willing to accept. And it seems untested to me. But okay, let's move on rather than bogging on that one.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Okay. So, I'll just touch on ecologically sustainable development. That was the next agenda item. I guess, there's the four principles under the ESD that need to be considered. It was discussed in the EIS in terms of statutory requirements there.

Regarding the precautionary principle, we consider that there's significant scientific certainty regarding the environmental impacts and residual risks in relation to the precautionary principle. This is also supported by the independent review from Arup. For example, the key risk of managing of waste has high regulation reporting and monitoring under the waste regulatory framework.

Also, emissions from the power station, the impacts on human health, for example, this was informed by air quality modelling which is quite – which is a very rigorous technical analysis done which was reviewed by EPA experts. And there'll also be strict controls on air discharge limits that would also be monitored. So, we think the risks around that are low, and the uncertainty around that is low in terms of impacts.

The EIS contains a number of specialist environmental impact assessments that covered off and looked at the – to mitigate and manage potential impacts. And the Department considers the recommended conditions provide an appropriate level of protection for environmental values in the region and the locality, coming back to the impacts on the locality.

Just on intergenerational equity. The project's consistent with the strategic policy framework. We touched on climate change in particular. It's only a small contribution to New South Wales emissions and in consideration of the emission targets over time, with commitments by the Proponent for offsetting as well in line with the New South Wales trajectory.

The commitments will be captured through the Department's environmental measurements strategy. Importantly, the power station does provide energy security

while the energy grid is transitioning from coal-fired power to renewable energy, and it's assisting in facilitating that process.

With the biological/ecological aspects. At the power station site itself, the biodiversity impacts are minor. It's a continued development, most of the works within the existing footprint, so the biodiversity impacts are small. We touched on earlier about the potential biodiversity impacts off-site – I think that's an agenda item later, so we can touch on that more.

And just with improved valuation, pricing and incentive. The recommended conditions allow the Applicant to achieve environmental outcomes and objectives in the most cost-effective way in achieving that.

I'll just move onto air quality impacts. I know we're running out of time. Is there any – there's still a lot of agenda items.

MS O'MARA: Just on the ESD part of it. Do you see this as a gas-fired power station?

MR O'DONOGHUE: What's that, sorry?

MS O'MARA: Do you see this as a gas-fired power station?

MR O'DONOGHUE: No, we don't, no. That was – sorry, that was an error in the appendix.

MS O'MARA: Okay.

MR O'DONOGHUE: So, we can provide a response to that.

MS O'MARA: Okay.

MR O'DONOGHUE: But the power station, yes, and sort of in terms of providing energy security for that transition, that still holds.

MS O'MARA: Yes. I am keen to talk about off-site biodiversity, but I'm happy to come back to it if … Yes.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Okay, right-io. Did you want … Are we scheduled just to half-past, or did you want – we're quite happy to go over if that's …

MR MENZIES: We have the latitude to go longer, Stephen, so I think this is valuable to us.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, okay. Just air quality, we'll touch on air quality. As sort of discussed earlier, the Energy from Waste Regulations are designed to ensure that fuels in the power station would have low risk to human health and the environment in

the fact that there's a reduced contaminants associated with the receipt of those materials.

The air quality impact assessment included dispersion modelling. For the expected operations scenario, which was emissions that they could achieve in a regulatory worst-case scenario, which was adopting the maximum limits in the Group 6 facilities in the Clean Air Reg that are required to be achieved under the – for emissions from a stack of this nature.

The particulate incremental, which is the project emissions only, ground level concentration for all pollutants were well below the impact assessment criteria for both of these scenarios. Just to give you – in terms of the criteria, we're talking about less than, from the furnace stack alone, less than 1% of towards the target, the emissions – the incremental ground level concentrations at receptors.

The predicted cumulative concentrations for all pollutants were well below the impact assessment criteria, with the exception of annual particular matter 10 and particular matter 2.5. And average 24-hour PM10 concentrations for the worst-case operations scenario.

However, just touching on that, the incremental contribution was very small. The year that was modelled, 2018, was a dry year with the area in drought, so the background levels were already high as a result, but the incremental was a very small percentage. I think, Jack, probably a couple per cent contribution to the maximum sort of level?

MR TURNER: Yes, between 1% for the first scenario and 1.6%.

MR O'DONOGHUE: So, in terms of its contribution in that sort of year that was modelled, there's a very small contribution.

The EPA did look very carefully at the modelling that was done in the air quality impact assessment and were satisfied with the results of the modelling. One thing to note is that when we consulted with the EPA on the recommended conditions, we had included a range of additional conditions that the EPA recommended we remove because they would be, to avoid regulatory duplication, they would be covering them in the Environment Protection Licence itself and under statutory requirements under the POEO Act.

As an example, they would, the EPA indicated that they would set limits lower for some pollutants than the Group 6 standards, because they demonstrated that they could meet those limits.

The recommended conditions have therefore been designed to complement requirements under the Environment Protection Licence. As well as to limit diesel operations for startup of the power station for 40 hours per year. The EPA through its EPL would be the primary regulatory tool to manage air quality emissions on that one.

I'll take a glass of water because I'm beginning to choke up a little bit, if there's any questions there?

MS TAYLOR: Can I just ask, it's probably more a general question.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

MS TAYLOR: There's a very heavy reliance on the Quality Control and QA plan and EPA sort of control of the situation. Are they resourced to do this effectively to maintain community trust? And how will they be, I mean, is there some mechanism by which we can ensure that they do have the resources to undertake the work that we're giving them with this?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Look, you'd probably have to ask the EPA as to whether they're resourceful enough; they'd probably say no, more resources would be handy. Look, I think given there's a couple of things here, that there's continuous monitoring – the EPA does require continuous monitoring of pollutants as well as representative sampling to demonstrate they're meeting emission limits. So, from an emissions point of view, that is well regulated, reports are required to be submitted to the EPA on compliance and any non-compliances reported.

So, I think that from an emissions point of view, yes, that there'd be sufficient resources there to look at the operations in that sense, you know, from a point source discharge point of view.

MS O'MARA: I have a similar kind of question, more in relation to the waste side of things. I mean, does the land also require – like, I understand it has that sort of due diligence part at the site where you're sort of looking at what fuel is coming in, but in terms of the actual operation and the sort of representative sampling or the reports or the, you know, putting it on a website, would it also cover that, for the waste sources?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Probably from a QAQC, I mean, they demonstrate that they're complying with the resource recovery exemption and orders, right, in receiving that waste. So, the reporting would need to – the compliance reporting would need to – it would be public, and they would need to provide that information that they're meeting the specifications.

MS O'MARA: But that's not covered under the plan or the conditions? Is that right – that's happening under a separate regulatory framework?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Well, it's a couple of things there. There is an annual, I know the EPA is requiring an annual report under their Environment Protection Licence. I'll just check our conditions. We …

MR TURNER: We still ask for quality assurance and quality control procedures for each type of feedstock in our conditions as well.

MS O'MARA: Yes, I suppose that's my question. So, we ask for the procedures, but is there anything that then asks them to report on their compliance with the procedures?

MR O'DONOGHUE: There's sort of three – our conditions include, I guess there's three areas. There's compliance reporting, every year they have to do a compliance report back to the Department about how they've complied with the conditions, including the commitments. And this includes any commitments made in the QAQC Plan and plans required under the consent.

There's audits required every, in accordance with our audit requirements as well, which is usually through construction, operations and usually a three-yearly audit. And then there's also non-compliance notification. So, if there is a non-compliance, that they're required to report that.

All that information is public on our website, and the Proponent also has to put that – publish that information on their website as well.

MS O'MARA: Oh, great, okay, thanks.

MS TAYLOR: Sorry. After publication, what happens then?

MR O'DONOGHUE: If it's a compliance issue or if the report picks up there's an issue, then our Compliance Team will get involved. So, that could either be through a notification of a non-compliance, that would go to our Compliance Team. If it's picked up in an annual compliance report as an issue, it would be considered by our Compliance Team as well and investigated on that.

MS TAYLOR: Thank you.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Just on greenhouse gas, climate change and offsets. The total scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions would be around 17–18,000 tonnes CO_2 equivalent per year, mainly as a result of combustion of biomass for electricity generation accounting for 90%, 6% of direct emissions.

Scope 1 emissions calculations include an emission factor of zero for carbon dioxide emissions in line with accounting practices both globally, internationally and Australian account, how to account for these sorts of emissions from biogenic sources.

The main contribution is really the conversion when you're burning the material, of some of the material to nitrogen dioxides and methane which will get formed as a result of the combustion process, which would account for the scope 1 emissions in particular.

The emissions are a small contribution to New South Wales overall emissions, and negligible contribution to global emissions of – when you compare it to the global emissions through time, it's getting back to the point mentioned earlier about the Mount Pleasant decision in terms of considering impacts on the locality in particular.

I guess in terms of the scope 1 emissions, the net change in the amount of biomass stock as used as part of the carbon cycle is considered in carbon accounting under the Land Use Change and Forestry category that's accounted for both under national and state targets on that, which the approach is consistent with the Commonwealth Government's *National Greenhouse Gas Factor Workbook,* and both Arup and EPA accepted the methodology used and did not raise residual concerns with that approach.

The scope 3 emissions would largely be related to off-site processing and transporting of biomass that would provide the site. So, similar sort of emissions about, in this case, about 20,000 tonnes of CO_2e per year associated with that.

Verdant committed to offsetting in line with the New South Wales emissions reduction trajectory. While it's not strictly required under the Commonwealth or State requirements, because it's not a safeguard facility, for example, that with the commitment, we've sort of embedded that in the requirement in the EMS to show how they would achieve that commitment over time through offsetting in line with the targets.

Now, as mentioned earlier, given that this wouldn't necessarily trigger climate change mitigation adaptation plan requirements for the EPA, because it's below the 20,000 threshold the commitments that they've made are covered in the consent in this instance in terms of offsets as the power station operates.

MS O'MARA: Can I ask a question just about minimising emissions. So, their lifecycle assessment flags that they could, for example, look at biofuels or look at reducing transportation distances. A lot of their modelling is based on 70% plantation, I think, within quite a short – it's only 50 kilometres.

So, if they're not able to do that and are looking for fuel further afield, I know you have a condition in there that says, I think you have a condition that requires them to minimise, but I just wondered whether there'd been some interrogation of that through the assessment process?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Look, a couple of things there. I guess, their figures are based on, I think, Jack, you've got the distance there that the transport in terms of informing …

MR TURNER: I think it's a 300 kilometres radius.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, 300 kilometres on average over the life of the project. So, any reduction of that distance, yes, Commissioner, would certainly reduce that. With the, I guess in terms of the use of minimising scope 3 emissions is something that the Proponent would need to discuss with suppliers on that, you know, potential use of biodiesel or biofuels.

Now, New South Wales Government is looking at renewable diesel strategies to try and increase the supply of biofuels and biodiesels in the transition. So, there's things

being done at the New South Wales Government level to reduce emissions from that transport sector over time as well.

MS O'MARA: Okay.

MR O'DONOGHUE: I'll just move onto off-site biodiversity impacts, is next on the agenda. This is one where it was raised in community submissions, primarily relating to the clearing of invasive native species or INS, as mentioned earlier.

One thing to note is that, and mentioned earlier, that the proposed modification did propose to use native forestry residues. There was a lot of submissions against that on the original modification and still some on this project. But they've been very clear that that's excluded from this project, so it's more from an impact, it's probably more to do with the impacts on INS rather than broader forestry related residues.

INS by definition are species that have reached unnatural densities and dominate an area. They're often present on land initially cleared for agricultural activities, but activities have ceased, and one species comes back and dominates an area. So, it's a current problem and there's exemptions to clear that, like I said, out in western New South Wales, INS is usually removed by burning, to remove the material.

Clearing of INS is permitted under the, as mentioned earlier, under the Land Management Native Vegetation Code 2018 and regulated under the Local Land Services Act. So, there is a regulatory oversight over how this is undertaken.

While biomass from improved land clearing may comprise some native vegetation, this clearing must be approved based on the merits of separate projects or activities (for example, large infrastructure projects). And this vegetation would be cleared irrespective of the Redbank Power Station, so I guess the comment there is that there is statutory regulation and oversight over INS. And any clearing of other woody material would be undertaken under the approvals of separate project, would include looking at higher use opportunities under the waste hierarchy as well for those materials.

As mentioned earlier, the LLS Act was originally reviewed is being – is undertaking review and consultation and changed the Native Vegetation Code to further manage the environmental risk and reduce the cleared area for INS. So, that's currently underway at the moment and expected that'll tighten up the regulation by the LLS of the take of LLS to ensure it is suitable material, it is INS and it's not bringing in other materials, other vegetation into that through loopholes, for example, so it's lawfully removed.

So, are there any questions on that aspect?

MS O'MARA: I have one, just because it's raised in many of the submissions, and also the EPA in their response to submissions sort of comments, they sort of said, my understanding in what they're saying was, "We don't have any residual concerns, but we shouldn't incentivise clearing that wouldn't otherwise have occurred."

So, I suppose my question is more of a cumulative impact one, where this clearing doesn't require an approval because it's cleared under the code. So, they're really – there is no, like, assessment of particular clearing activity. Is that correct? Am I correct in understanding that? So …

MR O'DONOGHUE: There's no – that's my understanding, if they follow the code …

MS O'MARA: There's no approval required or there's no assessment of like that particular clearing on that site, is my understanding.

MR O'DONOGHUE: I can probably get back to you and confirm that. I think there's certainly requirements in the code they need to follow.

MS O'MARA: Yes.

MR O'DONOGHUE: I'm not 100% certain whether they need a permit from LLS, for example, to do that. Jack, do you know offhand, but we can …

MR TURNER: There is some sort of permitting process, but we can confirm.

MS O'MARA: Yes.

MR O'DONOGHUE: We'll provide more details on that, yes.

MS O'MARA: Yes. In the Applicant's material, they say, "Well, we haven't looked at the cumulative impact of this clearing because that's assessed under another framework." So, my question is, would any framework be looking at the cumulative impact of these decisions to clear, and did you consider whether there's an incentive for increased clearing as a result of the market for this product? Just only because that's raised in quite a few of the submissions.

MR O'DONOGHUE: I think, Commissioner, it comes back to … Look, it may be an incentive in that there's currently – this project, there would be compensation or financial transaction to take the material, as opposed to burning it or leaving it on site, for example, and just pushing it up.

So, yes, whether it, I think though that the tightening of the code, and it still needs to be lawful clearing in that sense, it has to meet the threshold of being INS for a farmer to do it. So, I think if the regulatory framework is there to manage that, then it shouldn't be an issue. And I think part of the recommendations to tighten the LLS in particular around that code, you know, are being followed through at the moment.

MS O'MARA: Yes. Can I just ask one related question for you to consider. So, the assumption seems to be that this clearing would happen anyway. Is that correct? So, this is a waste product because this clearing would happen and we're taking it as a waste product and it's becoming an input to the power station.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

MS O'MARA: Did you consider, you know, if this is a permissive code, so it enables you to clear it, but it doesn't mean that it would happen necessarily, was that considered in the cumulative impact?

MR O'DONOGHUE: It wasn't in the fact that the company did look at the availability of the material and the potential availability of the material in the information that they provided us and was reviewed by Arup. So, they did look at the potential, what's available and what could be available in the future in their analysis of it.

But certainly, they want to reduce their reliance on this over time as well, because of the – certainly, if the code's getting tightened, we'd need to see the implications of that as well, which are not clear.

MS O'MARA: Yes, okay. Thank you.

MR O'DONOGHUE: I'll just move onto – look, I won't, unless there's anything particular you want to talk about these impacts. All I was going to say really was that, you know, we did consider these, that from the perspective that they were lower risk issues that we stepped through for the site, given it's an existing site, it's an existing disturbed site already, it's not a greenfield site.

So, unless there's anything particular there you want to talk about, I was just going to step through the other matters that you mentioned.

MS TAYLOR: Yes, not that one, but – and actually maybe it's better under other matters, but perhaps the water licensing and the cumulative impact of water needs across, say, both the site itself and any crop. Was that considered? I mean, it was considered, I know it was – my apologies, that wording was very loose.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Look, it certainly was considered. It was minor, I guess, in terms of take of water and use of water, Jack, my understanding is they've got the water licences already that would cover their take of water. So, from the regulatory point of view, it's available now, so they've got approval for the take of water that they need to run the plant.

In terms of managing potential discharge from the site, it's already – it's a site that's already been covered by an Environment Protection Licence. Discharges, you know, any discharge from the site would need to be covered from the environment discharge limits in the Environment Protection Licence, which has already previously been managed at the site already.

So, there's a regulatory framework around management of water on the site, both through water take, which they have the licensing, and the potential for contamination and water discharges from the site, through the Environment Protection Licence.

MS TAYLOR: So, that's a carryover from the past.

MR O'DONOGHUE: It's a carryover in the fact that, yes, they've got – the site already had water management infrastructure on site. And certainly, with any new approval, the EPA would need to vary any existing Environment Protection Licence to be fit for purpose for the ongoing operations as well.

MS TAYLOR: So, that hasn't happened yet or that will happen or …?

MR O'DONOGHUE: It would only happen after a decision's made. If the project were approved and prior to commencing any new operations, they would need to, under the consent, acknowledging they've already got an existing approval from Council, that they can still – they need to manage the site at the moment, even though it's in care and maintenance, it's still covered by an EPL. They'd need to manage any discharge from the site already. They'd need to modify that approval or vary that approval to cater for the changes on site.

MS TAYLOR: Thank you.

MR TURNER: Steve, would you like me to run through the next bits, give your voice a break?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, I think so, I think, if you can take it through.

MR TURNER: I'm a little bit raspy myself, but I'll run us through. So, the next item we have on the agenda is traffic. So, the project site is accessed via Long Point Road and the Golden Highway. All roads that access the site are approved B-double or over-size, over-mass routes.

The site will maintain its existing access points on Long Point Road. The operation of the project would generate up to 56 vehicle deliveries, or 112 total movements each day, and up to 15 heavy vehicle trips each hour. There'd be 70 light vehicle trips per day and 65 light vehicle movements in an hour, primarily associated with the workforce on the site.

As it's a continuous power station, it'll operate 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, but Verdant have indicated it would generally prioritise deliveries in the 16-hour shifts on Monday through Sunday between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Traffic modelling was completed at the Golden Highway – Long Point Road intersection, which concluded that the project wouldn't significantly impact the operation of the intersection in the a.m. or p.m. peak hours.

The project would continue to operate, well, the intersection would continue to operate at a Level of Service B in the p.m. peak but would result in a minor decrease to a Level of Service B from a Level of Service A in the morning, increasing the intersection delay by around 7 seconds.

So, in consultation with Transport for NSW, it was determined that an auxiliary left-turn treatment would be needed for the western lane of the Golden Highway at the Long Point Road intersection, which is on the screen. That upgrade would be completed under an alternate approval pathway likely part 5. Further, it provided consideration of the potential environmental impacts associated with that upgrade, which are generally minor, would be limited to some short term amenity impacts and minor vegetation clearing primarily within the disturbed road corridor there.

Construction traffic movements would be less than for operation, so wouldn't exceed that impact threshold. And those impacts would be managed in accordance with the EMS in the recommended conditions.

That's all for traffic. I can move onto noise, if there's …

MR MENZIES: Jack, just before you do move on. I'm surprised that there's no provision for the right-hand turns that are going to occur across the line of traffic. It would seem that's more disruptive than the left-hand turns.

MR TURNER: Yes, it would have come down to Transport's assessment of the safety of the intersection. I assume that left-hand turn lane didn't – it's often about decelerating, I can't speak to the specifics, but they didn't raise that as their concern in their advice.

MR MENZIES: Okay.

MR TURNER: I assume it's about the turning, potentially about the turning circle.

MR MENZIES: Yes, the Applicant indicated both right-hand and left turns entering and exiting, so …

MR TURNER: Okay. As in the intersection need an upgrading for both those?

MR MENZIES: Well, that's not what they were saying. I think the Council would take the view that this is probably more needed here. There's a, on the left-hand lane, deceleration, but then there's an acceleration problem. But there's also the right, you know, if you're going to turn right into the site, you've got to decelerate and then block the traffic until you can cross. I'm just surprised there wasn't perceived a need to do something about this. What is it, every 4 minutes there's going to be a heavy vehicle enter that site, so.

MR TURNER: We'll have a look at what the main direction is that their vehicles are coming from as well, that might have played into the advice from Transport.

MR MENZIES: Yes. I don't think they'll be able to specify, given that they don't know where their materials are coming from.

MR TURNER: Yes, that's right.

MR MENZIES: Okay.

MS TAYLOR: Is it worth just asking them if they considered that (Transport), or we don't do that?

MR TURNER: For the Department to ask, is that something that we do, Steve?

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, we can go back to them and discuss it with them, yes.

MR MENZIES: Look, I think that's worth doing given that it was raised with us by Council and I can see their logic in raising it.

MS TAYLOR: And they also mentioned that road's also going to be used by the REZ, which will maybe mean it can have a cumulative effect. So …

MR O'DONOGHUE: Yes, we can take that as an action, yes.

MR MENZIES: Thanks. Yes.

MR TURNER: So, I'll move to noise and vibration. So, the nearest residential receivers are on the screen, R1 and R2, and they're about 1.5 kilometres east of the site. And there's another receiver, R3 – or R4, which is 1.8 kilometres to the northeast of the site.

Construction works aren't predicted to exceed the noise management levels at the nearest three receivers, given the distance and the maximum noise levels from construction. Noise modelling predicted that with installation of a noise barrier, the project would be compliant will all project noise trigger levels at all receivers, and road traffic noise would be below the 2-decibel increase threshold permitted by the Road Noise Policy.

Noise impacts can be managed in accordance with the EMS recommended conditions and implementing the project noise limits and requirements for noise monitoring. This is another aspect that would also be regulated by the EPA under the EPL.

The last agenda item is community consultation. So, you've probably seen already, but the project was placed on exhibition in March 2024. It received 416 submissions, 377 of those we determined were unique – 215 submissions objected and 162 were in support.

Submitters were generally from outside the Hunter Valley. There were 13 submitters within 15 kilometres, 29 within the Hunter Valley itself, and 316 submitters outside the Hunter Valley.

The key reasons for objection, we've covered it here, were about greenhouse gas emissions, off-site biodiversity impacts, the source of fuel, and air quality and human health impacts from the operation of the station. And we, of course as we've

mentioned, consulted with all government agencies as part of the whole-of-government assessment as well as Singleton Council.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Thanks Jack, for giving my voice a break.

MR TURNER: No worries.

MR MENZIES: Okay, that was a fairly comprehensive coverage and did use up a lot of time, but that's okay. Commissioners – Alex?

MS O'MARA: I just have one which is, is there a CCC as part of the conditions?

MR O'DONOGHUE: No CCC, no as the conditions.

MS O'MARA: Okay.

MR MENZIES: Elizabeth, additional ones from you?

MS TAYLOR: No, I'm right, for the moment, thank you.

MR MENZIES: Okay. Excellent.

MS O'MARA: Thanks for giving us the extra time.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Thanks commissioners and thanks Chair for having us, and then we'll take up that action that you requested. But if there's any follow-up questions, I'm sure you'll get back to us anyway.

MR MENZIES: Yes. We're doing a site visit on Monday and that may well generate additional thoughts for us.

MR O'DONOGHUE: Okay. Thanks, Chair.

MR MENZIES: Okay. Thank you very much.

[All say thank you]

MS ANDERSON: Panel, we'll just stay on the line.

MR MENZIES: Mm-hm.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED