



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: TALLAWANG SOLAR FARM (SSD-23700028)

APPLICANT MEETING

PANEL:	TERRY BAILEY (CHAIR) SHELLEY PENN ALISON MCCABE
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	BRAD JAMES GEOFF KWOK
APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:	MANFRED FAHR (Potentia Energy) GIULIA SCATAGLINI (Potentia Energy) DAVID KEOHANE (Potentia Energy) MARION O'NEIL (Umwelt) MALINDA FACEY (Umwelt) DARREN CHESTERFIELD (RES Group) BRADLEIGH GRAY (RES Group) TIM LAM (RES Group) ANDREW DOUGLAS (RES Group)
LOCATION:	ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE
DATE:	1:45PM – 2:45PM FRIDAY, 8 th AUGUST 2025

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

[START OF PART 1]

5 **MR TERRY BAILEY:** So, good afternoon and welcome, everybody. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking with you today from Gadigal land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the lands from which we're virtually meeting today and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

10 Welcome to the meeting today to discuss Tallawang Solar Farm (SSD-23700028) currently before the Commission for determination. The Applicant, Tallawang Solar Hybrid Pty Ltd as trustee for Tallawang Solar Hybrid Trust, proposes to develop a 500 megawatt solar farm and a 500 to 1,000 megawatt per hour battery, approximately 8 kilometres northwest of Gulgong in the Mid-Western Region local government area
15 within the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone.

My name is Terry Bailey, I'm the Chair of the Commission Panel, and I'm joined by my fellow commissioners, Shelley Penn and Alison McCabe. We're also joined by Brad James and Geoff Kwok from the Office of the Independent Planning
20 Commission.

And 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.
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And 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.

30 And it's important for commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it's considered appropriate. If you're asked a question and not in a position to answer the question, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing, which will then be put up on our website. And I will mention at the end of the session, any questions will also be put in writing from the
35 Commission.

We'll now begin. But just as we do, I just request that members introduce themselves before speaking for the first time, and for all members to ensure that we don't speak over the top, to allow an accurate transcript to be recorded.
40

I'd just like to hand over to the Applicant to make some introductory remarks. I think that might be Andrew.

[START OF PART 2]

45 **MR BAILEY:** Thanks everybody, for your understanding there. I think we're still – we'll see a couple more people join in the next little while. But just as a reminder, having read the transcript, I wanted to remind on a couple of aspects, but most

importantly, as you go to speak, if you could please introduce yourself so that we get clarity on the transcript of who. And also, that we don't talk over the top of each other so that we get clarity in the recording of the transcript as well.

5 So, with that, Andrew, I'll pass it across for any introductory comments that you might like to make.

MR DOUGLAS: Yes, hi there. So, my name's Andrew Douglas from RES. I might pass you onto Manfred to make some introductions, assuming he's with us.

10

MR KEOHANE: If I may jump in here. In the new invite that we have just received, it appears there's an error in Manfred's email address. So, I don't think Manfred can join us. So ...

15

MR BRADLEIGH GRAY: Could I just add also, David, on that, one of our speakers, Darren, is not on this one for some reason.

20

MR JAMES: Andrew, I'll just – Manfred's emailed me directly, I'll send a revised link to Manfred, and you, Andrew. I don't have Darren's email, so can I just trust you'll send that onto Darren.

MR DOUGLAS: Yes, I'll forward that on.

25

MR JAMES: It's sent and should be with you in a moment.

MR KWOK: So, I've got Manfred now, we'll just log him in.

MR KEOHANE: And I believe we are waiting on one other, which is Darren.

30

MR GRAY: I've just forward it onto him and I'm letting him know that it should be in his inbox shortly.

MR DOUGLAS: Thanks, Brad.

35

MR BAILEY: I think we're all eagerly watching 13 turn to 14 at this point.

MR JAMES: Andrew, can we start without Darren, and he can join as we go, what are your thoughts?

40

MR DOUGLAS: Yes, see, look, I think we can, I think we can.

MR GRAY: He's received it.

MR JAMES: Great.

45

MR KWOK: He's just joining now.

MR DOUGLAS: Okay, great.

5 **MR BAILEY:** Thanks, all, and particularly for Manfred. Terry Bailey, the Chair, joined by Shelley Penn and Alison McCabe as the other commissioners. We just asked as you do speak that you introduce yourself. And our formal recording will commence from about this point on, for the transcription. Thank you.

MR MANFRED FAHR: Thank you, Terry and everyone. My name is Manfred Fahr, I'm leading the Tallawang Solar Farm on behalf of Potentia Energy.

10 **MR DOUGLAS:** Thanks, Manfred. We were planning on presenting a PowerPoint presentation. Shall I share my screen?

15 **MR BAILEY:** Yes, happy for that, Andrew, to go ahead, and we'll hand over to you for that part of the presentation and I'll keep an eye on commissioners in terms of questions and queries as we go. And just to confirm we've got – we have got through until 3 o'clock. We have set back our further meeting so that we're not cutting into your time.

20 **MR DOUGLAS:** Okay, great. Okay, I'll hand over to Manfred.

MR FAHR: Thank you, Andrew. I would like to begin by recognising the Wiradjuri people as traditional custodians of the land on which Tallawang Solar Farm is situated. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

25 In July 2024, Potentia Energy acquired the Tallawang Solar Farm from Renewable Energy Systems (RES), and Potentia Energy is now the lead developer for the project. While going forward, we're still working closely with RES to ensure a smooth handover and clear communication and continuity in the community during this development phase.

30 Potentia will then go onto construct and operate the solar farm, while RES will retain the option to be part of the construction and the asset management period. At Potentia, we do have a strong track record in Australia in constructing and delivering projects while maintaining the relationship and a social licence in communities throughout.

I will hand over to Andrew now to go give the overview of the project development to date.

40 **MR DOUGLAS:** Thanks, Manfred. I'll start with a brief overview of the project. Tallawang Solar Farm is located approximately 8 kilometres northwest of Gulgong within the Mid-Western Region Council.

45 The proposal includes 500 megawatts of solar generation, 500 megawatt/1,000 megawatt battery storage facility, dispersed through the site, a 400-bed temporary workers camp. Access to the site is off Castlereagh Highway, which will be subject to an intersection upgrade.

5 TSH was awarded grid access rights in May 2025 as part of the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. EnergyCo is leading the delivery of the grid network to connect Tallawang Solar Farm to the Merotherie Hub. The project boundary is approximately 1,300 hectares, with a development footprint of just over a thousand hectares, across land mainly used for sheep grazing.

10 We expect up to 420 full-time jobs at the construction period, and around 7 operational roles, with construction forecast to begin in Q1 2027 and run for 36 months. The project has an operational life of 35 years.

15 In terms of project design changes and commitments, the project design has evolved through four clearly defined phases of the development process. These changes reflect not just technical inputs but ongoing consultation with community members, Council and key government agencies. And they show our willingness to listen, respond and improve the project at every stage. Some of the key changes are listed on the slide for reference, but I'll step through each in more detail in some of the proceeding slides.

20 In Phase 1, even before we lodged the Scoping Report, several proactive steps were taken. We made a series of important design decisions. We have retained most of the woodland on site to support biodiversity and reduce visual impacts. We located the development footprint predominantly on Category 1 Exempt Land. We've avoided third order and higher order creek lines.

25 We've set panels back 500 metres from the Castlereagh Highway to minimise visibility, particularly from properties to the southwest where there is a cluster of properties, that we've made a number of changes to reduce the visual impact from that area. Including relocating the temporary laydown areas away from the highway access, we proposed a landscaping plan to reduce visual impact from adjoining properties, and that effectively runs along – if you can see my mouse – the security fencing from the southern boundary up to the ONM building.

35 We undertook early engagement with neighbouring landowners, including commitments to deliver a shared benefits scheme. And we also relocated the main access point away from Puggoon Road, which is a local road, to the Castlereagh Highway.

40 So, these are meaningful changes that have shaped the project from the outset, and by making the right decisions early, we avoided issues that could have emerged with a less considered layout.

45 In Phase 2 during preparation of EIS studies, there were further design refinements and additional planning and engagement activities. This included the avoidance of pads identified through heritage studies. We located the site access 200 metres south, further separating it from Jenkins Lane. We explored biodiversity stewardship agreements with local landowners for offset opportunities. And we started negotiating a neighbourhood deed with a key landowner to allow visual screening on their property.

5 In Phase 3, in response to community and agency feedback after the exhibition of the EIS, we've removed the northern substation in favour of a central substation, to reduce visibilities, particularly properties to the northeast. We re-aligned the security fence to create a 3-kilometre wildlife corridor. And if you can see this green squiggly line through here, that shows the wildlife corridor, it's approximately 450 metres in width, and we effectively redesigned the security fencing, and it would have been a lot easier for us to have the security fencing along the perimeter of the project area, but it's quite a considerable amendment from a construction perspective. And it demonstrates our commitment towards ecological improvements.

10 We also removed barbed wire from the fence, designed to protect native fauna. We've relocated the laydown area to provide additional visual separation from the Castlereagh Highway. And again, that benefits properties in the southwest. So, if you can see where my mouse is, this effectively provides an additional 100-metre separation from these properties in the southwest.

15 We included a temporary on-site workers camp, including common areas, on-site nurse and first-aid facilities, and we'll discuss the accommodation camp in a little bit more detail. We avoided all impacts on native woodland along the road which was unnamed along the southern boundary by not using it for the accommodation access. And that road comprised of roughly 6 hectares and threatened ecological communities. And instead, designed a longer internal access track to the accommodation camp that minimises impacts by avoiding large areas of native woodland within the site.

20 And in Phase 4, or what we call Phase 4, we responded to the Department and agency RFIs by increasing fire fighting water storage on site from 40,000 to 100,000 litres. And we expanded the heritage buffer around an historic hut from 20 to 30 metres, in line with Heritage NSW recommendations.

25 So, these four phases demonstrate a series of changes and commitments informed by community and agency feedback, that enhance project outcomes and demonstrate a willingness to go beyond statutory requirements.

30 Oops sorry, just skipped a slide there. So, we'll run through each of these key issues, and it's consistent with the agenda that was provided.

35 **MR BAILEY:** And I'll just ask as we go, Andrew, that you pause at the end of each of those and we'll just give the commissioners an opportunity to ask any queries as we work through the agenda.

40 **MR DOUGLAS:** Sure, sure.

MS SHELLEY PENN: Nothing yet.

45 **MR DOUGLAS:** Biodiversity – sorry.

MS PENN: I was just saying nothing yet. Sorry, Andrew.

5 **MR DOUGLAS:** Okay, no problems. In relation to biodiversity, project infrastructure is located on highly modified Category 1 land, cleared for farming with limited remnant vegetation or low-quality grassland. The design avoids threatened species areas of listed Threatened Ecological Communities and their associated habitat. And we've retained 107 hectares of native vegetation; that equates to over 93% of the total native vegetation within the development area.

10 Buffer zones of up to 40 metres are maintained along third-order creeks with recognised ecological value. In relation to design measures that minimises biodiversity, we've included that east-west movement corridor already mentioned. We've also amended the security fencing in a number of locations to ensure that remnant vegetation remains outside of the security fencing, and that was specifically requested by BCS in our discussions post EIS submission.

15 To offset the impacts, the project will require 403 ecosystem credits and 90 species credits, with a stewardship site being the preferred approach, and nearby sites have already been identified as potential options through an initial desktop analysis.

20 I'll just stop there if there are any questions.

MR BAILEY: I'll just check with fellow commissioners. Shelley or Alison?

25 **MS PENN:** Just a quick one. Would you show me with your cursor where the security fencing occurs, just so I understand a bit more clearly? If that's possible in a summary way.

MR DOUGLAS: I'll just go back to this slide here.

30 **MS PENN:** Oh yes, there it is.

MR DOUGLAS: So, we can see it in brown, the ...

MS PENN: Yes, thank you, yes.

35 **MS DOUGLAS:** ... dotted line. Yes.

MS PENN: Great.

40 **MR BAILEY:** Thanks, Andrew. Alison?

MS ALISON MCCABE: No, I'm right.

45 **MR BAILEY:** Just one quick query from me, Andrew. The buffers of up to 40 metres that are maintained around the third-order creeks. What's the intended management of the vegetation within that, and is there restoration potential in those areas?

MR DOUGLAS: I might just hand you over to Marion to answer that question, if that's okay, Terry.

MR BAILEY: Yes, that's fine. Thanks, Andrew.

MR DOUGLAS: Marion?

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MS MARION O'NEIL: Hi everyone, I'm Marion O'Neil from Umwelt. I am the Project Manager on the Tallawang Solar Farm. So yes, in terms of those areas, they will be retained, and they will be rehabilitated to improve that condition. And they will be essentially kept as they are.

10

MR BAILEY: Thanks, Marion, it'll be good to potentially see some examples of what that could look like on the site inspection too, thanks, just as a heads up.

MS O'NEIL: Yes.

15

MR BAILEY: Let's keep moving. Andrew?

20

MR DOUGLAS: Okay, thanks Terry. Traffic. All project vehicles will access the site via Castlereagh Highway. The access point will be upgraded with turning lanes and widened pavement to support heavy and OS/OM vehicles, maintain flow, and minimise congestion. Puggoon Road will be reserved for emergency access only.

25

EnergyCo is coordinating shared upgrades along the Port to REZ to manage access and reduce cumulative impacts across REZ projects. Traffic modelling, including nearby developments, concludes the network has sufficient capacity and will operate at acceptable levels. There's no expected impact on the rail network road safety. And the on-site accommodation camp has the added bonus of reducing daily light vehicle trips.

30

Any questions on this slide?

35

And the other thing to point out on the right-hand side here, is the proposed upgrade for the intersection, and we worked very closely with Transport for NSW to finalise this plan. And you can see the right and left-hand turning lanes that are quite extensive really, particularly that right-hand turning lane.

MR BAILEY: Thanks, Andrew. We'll keep moving. Andrew?

40

MR DOUGLAS: So, visual sensitivity was a core focus in the site's layout. Infrastructure was placed on low-lying ground using topography, central vegetation for natural screening and buffering. A 500-metre setback from Castlereagh Highway was implemented, as we've already discussed.

45

We've developed a Landscape Plan, as previously mentioned. But the important detail is that we've included native species, multi-tiered screening and a planting guide for long-term management. And this was on the back of objections that we received in the EIS, and they specifically referenced Beryl Solar Farm where the landscaping hadn't established itself, and one of the reasons was that the species were incorrect, so hence

the detailed management plan and maintenance plan. There also appeared to be issues in relation to watering and maintaining it.

5 So, we're very much aware of that issue and hence the detailed Landscape Plan. And obviously, the establishment of that landscaping is critical to reducing the visual impact, particularly for those properties in the southwestern corner.

10 So, in addition, we provided Bare Earth Render assessments which show low visual impact at key viewpoints, and you can see that in the table. And you can also see the distance from the development, which is reasonably extensive.

15 We've also provided photo montages in relation to Gulgong heritage conservation area. It was in response to a comment from Mid-Western Regional Council. And the assessment concludes that the conservation area is largely unaffected due to distance and intervening terrain.

Any questions?

20 **MR BAILEY:** I'll just check with – yes, Shelley?

MS PENN: Thank you. Just on the Landscape Plan, has that detailed Landscape Plan, is that submitted with the documentation? Apologies, there's a lot of reading, I'm not across every inch of it yet. But because I think the assessment by the Department flags their requirement of a detailed Landscape Plan, I'm just wanting to make sure I'm across what's the one you're referring to.

MR DOUGLAS: Yes, yes, correct, it's in the visual impact assessment, the addendum, as part of the Amendment Report.

30 **MS PENN:** Okay. The addendum. Great, thank you.

MS O'NEIL: If I can just add there, Shelley, the Landscape Plan in the Assessment Report at the moment is a concept. So, there is a commitment that a detailed plan will be developed.

35 **MS PENN:** Thank you. That was the distinction I was wanting to test. Thanks, Marion.

40 **MS O'NEIL:** Yes. Sure.

MR BAILEY: Thanks, Marion. Thanks, Andrew. And could I just check – one last question before we do move, I just wanted to get an understanding from a landscaping perspective, particularly along the eastern edge, and what retained vegetation exists along the eastern edge in terms of the project.

45 **MR DOUGLAS:** So, there is some existing vegetation along Puggoon Road, and that will remain. There is a small section of proposed landscaping along the northern section of the site. But Marion, did you want to sort of add to that in that, I guess, if

you look at those properties on the eastern side, they've got existing screening. So, the visual sensitivity was low from those areas, and we didn't feel that we necessarily needed any additional visual screening along that eastern edge, or our, I guess, visual consultant, who was the expert, that was the advice we were receiving.

5

Marion, anything further to add to that?

MS O'NEIL: No, I think you've pretty much nailed it, Andrew. The additional landscaping that is proposed is along the fence line on the western side, as Andrew pointed out when he went through the layout slide.

10

There is also another area right to the northeast of the site along Puggoon Road, where there's a short section of additional landscaping, that's also committed to. And that's just to reduce or screen some of the views from the project as you drive along Puggoon Road. That's all shown clearly on the Landscape Plan.

15

But yes, there is already quite a lot of vegetation on site, existing vegetation that provides quite sufficient screening.

20

MR DOUGLAS: Yes, that's right. So, along Puggoon Road, there's some screening. And around the receivers on that eastern side, there is screening around their properties.

25

MR BAILEY: And is that screening, just to check, is that screening in the road reserve or on your property – the property?

MR DOUGLAS: A bit of both.

30

MR BAILEY: Okay. We'll look further on site inspection as well. Thank you. Let's – I'll just check in with Alison. I can't see Alison on screen, sorry, just to check ...

MS MCCABE: Yes, I've got a question.

35

MR BAILEY: Yes.

MS MCCABE: Just on that, I'm just looking, and again, I'm same as Shelley, maybe I missed it, because I've got the amended addendum to the landscape and visual impact assessment. Is that where you said the Landscape Plan was? Was it an addendum to that, or included in that?

40

MS O'NEIL: That's right, Alison. So, if you look at figure 5.1 in that addendum LVIA, that is the amended concept Landscape Plan. And so that's the main recent version, and it supersedes the one in the EIS.

45

MS MCCABE: Yes, and it's all right, I was looking for an attachment to it.

MS O'NEIL: Yes, yes.

5 **MS MCCABE:** We might – it’s all right, I found it. So, just in relation to that, I was also wanting to understand and looking for a plan just on that – the Puggoon Road discussion. How close does the array come to your boundary? Where do I find a plan that says on setback 2 metres, 1 metre, variable metres, is there a plan anywhere that tells me what the space is between where the road reserve is, what’s on the road reserve, where your boundary is, and then where the array is, in relation to those boundaries? And I would just go to every boundary. I’m just looking for numbers.

10 **MR DOUGLAS:** We have a plan, but it probably wouldn’t show that detail, given the scale of the plan.

MS MCCABE: Because I’m trying to understand ...

15 **MR BAILEY:** That’s okay, Andrew.

MS MCCABE: If there’s landscaping on the property and landscaping on the road, then where’s it going and where are the arrays in relation to your boundaries?

20 **MR DOUGLAS:** Yes, so we have an asset protection zone around the perimeter of the solar farm. So, it’ll be at least 10 metres from the boundary, and in most cases it’s a lot more, and that’s because the panels – just in terms of the design and the configuration and the fact that they’re sort of aligned east-west and that doesn’t completely sort of match up with the orientation of Puggoon Road.

25 **MS MCCABE:** Yes.

MR DOUGLAS: We could –

30 **MR BAILEY:** Can I ask, Andrew, would it be feasible for a copy of that to be forwarded through to us please?

MR DOUGLAS: Yes.

35 **MR BAILEY:** To get a level of resolution that Alison’s talking to.

40 **MS MCCABE:** Yes, I think just the basic factual information, because none of the plans at the moment, like yes, you’ll have a 10-metre asset protection zone, that doesn’t usually get vegetated, is the array on that, is it being set back? There’s a lot of broad documentation, but I don’t see anything with numbers on it.

MR BAILEY: What we might do is if we could take that on notice, Andrew, and we’ll follow up in writing.

45 **MR DOUGLAS:** Yes, yes, okay.

MR BAILEY: Thank you. We might move to TWA.

5 **MR DOUGLAS:** As mentioned above, in response to EIS submissions and direct discussions with Mid-Western Regional Council, we proposed a temporary workers accommodation camp. As part of the consultation process, Council made their preferences clear, both in terms of the camp's location and its bed numbers to cater for the peak construction workforce.

10 On location, Council indicated a strong preference for sites outside the main town centres. Several options were assessed consistent with their preference, and the selected site in the southeastern corner of the project was chosen for its lowest environmental and amenity impacts.

15 So, as shown in the table, this was confirmed by traffic light-style assessment. With site at option A, which has the most green squares against these environmental constraints.

20 Regarding capacity, Council emphasised that local hotels and rental housing were not appropriate for regular construction workers. We therefore agreed on a camp size of 400 beds. This figure was based on a projected peak workforce of 420, with 5% of workers being local. It's also worth noting that the workforce numbers are only expected to exceed 400 for 11 months of the 36-month construction period.

Any questions?

25 **MR BAILEY:** No, I think there'll be a piece that will certainly overlap with waste management when we get to that. But I'll just point to other commissioners, to check with Alison and Shelley as well.

MS MCCABE: None at this stage, I'll wait till the end.

30 **MR BAILEY:** Thanks, Andrew. Let's look a bit at, yes, go a bit further into this and waste management and we'll have questions across both, I think, in combination.

35 **MR DOUGLAS:** Sure, sure. So, this slide shows the accommodation camp layout. It will include prefabricated demountable units. The layout is designed to be largely self-sufficient, helping to reduce the need to travel to nearby towns like Gulgong and Mudgee, which is consistent with feedback from both Mid-Western Regional Council and Warrumbungle Council. To help reduce pressure on town facilities and avoid disrupting the local tourism atmosphere they're working to preserve.

40 So, it includes kitchen and dining facilities in this central area. You've got the cabins to the left and right, if you can see my mouse. It also includes administration and security offices, recreational spaces such as a gym and barbecue facilities, as well as laundry and maintenance buildings.

45 Any questions? No?

So, in relation to wastewater. TSH's preferred option is to transport wastewater to a licensed facility in Dubbo, with discussions ongoing. If this is not feasible at the time

of construction, an on-site wastewater treatment plant will be constructed as required by the conditions of consent. Treated water would be reused on site, and sludge transported to Mudgee, subject to facility capacity and upgrades.

5 In relation to general waste, we will not use Mid-Western Regional Council's facilities for general waste. Instead, Dubbo's facility will be used for green and general waste during construction and operation. We are also committed to recycling materials throughout the project.

10 In relation to water supply, we will not use Council's town water directly or via third parties. Water supply may be sourced from Newland Water or Lake Windamere, and the Department has confirmed that we've demonstrated the site can be effectively serviced with adequate water supply and appropriate arrangements for wastewater and general waste.

15 Final waste solutions will be confirmed through secondary approvals, in consultation with Mid-Western Regional Council.

Any questions?

20 **MR BAILEY:** I'm just checking across Alison or Shelley.

MS PENN: No, all fine, thanks.

25 **MR DOUGLAS:** In relation to cultural heritage, TSH engaged registered Aboriginal parties as part of the site surveys. We've avoided all PADs and will fence them prior to construction. All are of low to moderate archaeological significance. The assessment supports development over disturbed artefacts scatters and isolated finds, with low to moderate significance. We'll continue engaging with local First Nations communities and incorporate culturally sensitive practices like fencing and signage and ceremonial protocols.

30 In relation to historical heritage, the assessment identified two unlisted local heritage items: a cottage around the 1900s, where we're proposing a 40-metre buffer; and a hut around the 1870s, where we're proposing a 30-metre buffer, avoiding any direct impacts.

35 Any questions?

40 **MR BAILEY:** My only curiosity would continue to be that interaction that you're having with the Native Title claimant group and their view on the significance of the sites.

45 **MR DOUGLAS:** In relation to Warrabinga Wiradjira?

MR BAILEY: Yes. And certainly reading their submission, so it is that there are – their view the significance of the sites and the sites that may be impacted in the footprint.

5 **MR DOUGLAS:** Yes. Yes, so we had a number of discussions with the Warrabinga Native Title claimant group. And they were over probably about nine months or so, we had several meetings, and we ran through our proposal, and we ran through the details. We brought in our cultural heritage expert from Umwelt.

10 I think there was a little bit of discussion and debate in terms of some of the finer details, but our view was that these disturbed artefact scatters and isolated finds were of low to moderate significance, and therefore we could implement sort of mitigation measures, including surface collection, documentation and artefact salvage to address those issues. And that was sort of consistent with the statutory requirements.

15 And in the Submissions Report, we address each of their points that they made in their submission as part of the EIS, I think it's in a table, it's roughly 12 points. So, I think during that consultation process – and I might be talking a little bit out of place – but I got the impression they were comfortable with our proposal at the end of the consultation process.

20 **MR BAILEY:** Okay. Thanks, Andrew.

MR DOUGLAS: Marion, anything to add to that?

MS O'NEIL: No, nothing.

25 **MR BAILEY:** Thanks, Andrew. Let's move on. I think we've got grazing agreements.

30 **MR DOUGLAS:** Yes. So, there's no land within the project area that meets the criteria for biophysical strategic agricultural land. The soil assessment found the site is mostly Class 4 and Class 6, meaning it has moderate to very high limitations for intensive agriculture.

35 While around 400 hectares of marginal cropping land will no longer be in use, sheep grazing will continue during operations. And importantly, once the solar farm is decommissioned, the land will be returned to agriculture.

Any questions?

40 **MS PENN:** Just a quick one from me. Would you mind just explaining the safety issue, how you're managing that with sheep, because I know that's something that has been raised and you've addressed. But would you mind just explaining that in brief to me?

45 **MR DOUGLAS:** Yes, we'll provide further details, and subject to secondary approvals, and as part of the Sheep Management Grazing Plan. But are you talking about issues with the sheep getting injured in reference to Beryl Solar Farm?

MS PENN: Animal welfare, yes.

MR DOUGLAS: Yes, yes. So, my understanding is the traffic device that they were using at Beryl will not be used at Tallawang Solar Farm. And I understand the sheep were getting caught within the tracking device, and they were seriously injured.

5 **MS PENN:** Yes.

MR DOUGLAS: So, that's one sort of measure. Were there any other specific concerns?

10 **MS PENN:** Yes, no, I was just curious to understand some of the nuance of that. Thank you.

MR DOUGLAS: Yes.

15 **MR KEOHANE:** If I may speak. David from Potentia Energy here. I may speak to that one. We at Potentia factored in grazing in the early stages of the design, so we design out any potential conflicts with animals. We have two operational solar farms at the moment where grazing is existing on site. We factor in – it's almost like a safety in design for animals into our designs, and it'll be the same principle employed for
20 Tallawang.

MS PENN: Is that detail in the submission that I could find, or will that come in the plan, the management plan that Andrew is referring to?

25 **MR KEOHANE:** It really comes into detailed design, to be honest. Factors like sharp edges, cabling, that sort of thing. It's a detailed design component. If you do require further information, we would be happy to provide it.

MS PENN: I'd be interested if that's, like, in summary, that would be great.

30

MR KEOHANE: We could provide principle details in design, principles, correct.

MS PENN: Thank you, that would be helpful.

35 **MS MCCABE:** Just following up on that. Did I read correctly, was it the Bomen Solar Farm that you have as well, or there was an ongoing study or an assessment of grazing under one of the solar farms. I thought it was Bomen. Are you aware of any work or study that's been done that's kind of monitored the successfulness or otherwise of the grazing under the solar panels?
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MS GIULIA SCATAGLINI: So, if I can maybe jump in here. I'm Giulia from Potentia Energy, I work in the Community Engagement and Sustainability Team. I don't know if you were referring to Cohuna Solar Farm, where we did a research with AgVic, Agriculture Victoria, and it was essentially to, within 12 months' time, figure
45 out which type of plants were the most suitable for solar farm. Is that what you were referring to?

MS MCCABE: I thought I had read, and I can be corrected, and David's just mentioned that you've got two working solar farms that have sheep grazing under them. Is that correct?

5 **MS SCATAGLINI:** Yes, we now have three operational solar farms with all grazing [unintelligible 00:43:07].

MS MCCABE: And is there a monitoring – and presumably there's a monitoring of that grazing, just to see how successful it is and that type of thing?

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MS SCATAGLINI: I think we'll look into that and take that on notice. I don't know, David, if you have further details on that.

15 **MR KEOHANE:** We should of course study, I guess, the stocking of the solar farms, dependent on the capacity of the land and that sort of thing. So, that would be a tracking and monitoring component to it. We should be able to provide you more information on that.

20 **MS MCCABE:** A lot of the submissions that we – I know that you have responded to, but we're responding to as well, is the ... You've got the animal welfare piece, but there's also the loss of agricultural land. So, I had thought I'd read a little bit that there were some studies, but if you've got three existing solar farms where this is actually happening and if there's a monitoring piece that can help us kind of answer some of the questions about the loss of agricultural land.

25

I understand the categorisation of the land and from a land capability assessment, but it's set across the board, it seemed to be this loss of agricultural land which is of concern, so the continued use or potential for the lands to be used as grazing, notwithstanding the issue at the end of the life of the solar farm if that's actually the case as well, but it can get returned to grazing. I'd just be interested in current information that it has on successful or otherwise of the grazing sheep under the solar panels.

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MR BAILEY: Yes. In essence, we'll ask around any co-existence information that you've got that points to co-existence of the grazing and solar. So, we'd welcome any information on that. You almost touched on the next point, Alison, that we might keep moving on, just looking at the time, which is around that decommissioning piece. So, we'll hand back. Andrew.

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40 **MR DOUGLAS:** Yes. Thanks, Terry. The decommissioning strategy includes full removal of the temporary accommodation camp. In relation to the solar farm, all infrastructure will be removed to a 50-centimetre depth, with land restored to the current soil classification. The Social and Environmental Sustainability Plan outlines commitments for waste and decommissioning. Recycling is prioritised; panels, batteries, concrete and cabling will be safely dismantled. Non-recyclables sent to licensed facilities.

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Infrastructure may be reused or repurposed where feasible, such as access tracks may stay subject to agreement with host landowners. Waste will be managed under current regulations; we anticipate compliance with future national product stewardship schemes.

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We aim to achieve up to 95% recovery with partners like Reclaim and Veolia for our recycling initiatives. And the Decommissioning Plan will be required within three years of operation, subject to the conditions.

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MR BAILEY: And I think a critical piece on that is the currency and the maintenance of decommissioning planning to meet best practice at points in time, given you'd be preparing some work that will be done in over 30 years.

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MR DOUGLAS: Correct, correct. And that's why we acknowledge that we're likely to be part of those national stewardship schemes in the future.

MS PENN: A quick one.

20

MR BAILEY: Yes, absolutely, Shelley.

MS PENN: Just a little one, which is thanks for that 500 mil – I was wondering how far down you go. I think the panels are on piles. What sort of spacing, I'm just curious about what sort of spacing the piles are? One of you is available?

25

MR DOUGLAS: Yes, yes, I'll hand you over to Tim.

MR TIM LAM: The spacing between ...

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MS PENN: The piles.

MR BAILEY: Sorry, if you could introduce, Tim, for the record.

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MR LAM: Sorry. Tim Lam from RES, I'm the Solar Engineering Manager. So, between – if you look at that picture, say, between rows, you're typically talking 5.5, depending on the configuration of the tracker, that one would be a one in portrait, so about 5.5 metres between row to row. And then if it was a 2P tracker, which is bigger, which is what we've allowed for in our design, that could be up to 11 metres spacing between rows.

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Now, you can look along the tracker, there are piles along there about 7. They were varied between 6 and 8 modules, so they'll be between 6 and 8 metres will be in pile.

MS PENN: Thank you.

45

MR LAM: [Unintelligible 00:48:13]

MS PENN: Thanks.

MR DOUGLAS: Thanks, Tim. I might hand over now – oh sorry, another question.

MS MCCABE: Yes. There was just a question on the – I understand the application's for the – there's a temporary workers accommodation and it will be decommissioned at the end of construction. Just, has there been any or is there any opportunity to, or discussions in looking at whether or not that facility is useful for other projects that may have been approved in the area?

Like, just from an infrastructure point of view, there's a lot of work to provide infrastructure for the kind of ongoing use for a period of time for other facilities in the area. Is there any thought gone to that?

MR DOUGLAS: Yes, there has, and we have been previously in discussions with Bellambi, well, it was Bellambi Solar, which was next door to the south, it's now Bellambi Battery Storage Facility. However, in terms of construction timelines, they don't really overlap.

If we do have construction timelines that do overlap, then it does become problematic as well. Because you obviously effectively need it for your whole construction schedule. At one point, RES was involved in the Barneys Reef Wind Farm that's no longer going ahead, so we're looking at some kind of joint accommodation camp. But it just seems to create issues when it comes to timelines and practically speaking, it's quite difficult to arrange. And hence, what we've found is most the developers in the REZ have their own accommodation camps.

MS MCCABE: There's too many moving parts, I take it.

MR DOUGLAS: That's correct. Yes, yes.

MS MCCABE: Thanks.

MR BAILEY: Let's move on.

MR DOUGLAS: Okay, Darren – I might hand over to Darren Chesterfield to run through community engagement.

MR DARREN CHESTERFIELD: Thanks, Andrew. Afternoon, all. My name is Darren Chesterfield. I'm the Social Performance Manager for RES Australia. As it relates to this project, I assisted with or rather led the community engagement throughout the EIS phase for the Tallawang Solar Farm.

Before I start, I just wanted to check, just noting the time, I have two slides, and I appreciate that they are not on the set agenda. So, one was to provide a summary of community engagement, and the other was to provide a summary of community benefits sharing. So, I just wanted to check with the commissioners that was a fine use of the remaining time.

MR BAILEY: So, I wouldn't mind, Darren, more emphasis potentially on the second slide. We'll be able to read the material on the first as well, with a little bit more emphasis on the second and how that's come together please.

5 **MR CHESTERFIELD:** Sure, no worries. Well, I'll just pause here and just let everyone read over the slide here. Are there any questions in relation to community engagement? I feel like everyone on the call is aware of the requirements in New South Wales for engagement and how that informs the SIA.

10 From my perspective, I think one thing to note here as it relates to this slide, is the breakdown of the objections or the community submissions that were received for the project. So, that was a total of 54 community submissions, and I view that as indicative of the sentiment or level of community acceptance of the project.

15 We've broken it down in this slide by proximity. I think that's quite relevant. We can see here that of those 54 objections, actually half of them were from community members more than a hundred kilometres away from the project. Closer to the project, I believe it was 9 community submissions that were made within 5 kilometres of the project. So, suggestive of what we sort of say, limited local objection to the project.

20 I might leave it there for this slide, if you're happy to move on.

MR BAILEY: That's fine, I think, Darren, and we do get this information as well in the Assessment Reports that we look at.

25 **MR CHESTERFIELD:** No worries. So, in terms of community benefit. The project's committed to provide significant community benefit locally and to the region, far in excess of the state's requirements for community benefit sharing, which for a solar project like this, would be the equivalent of, I think \$850 a megawatt per annum for the project.

30 Noting here, the VPA that has been agreed in principle with Mid-Western Regional Council is actually for that value, so \$850 a megawatt. So, what else we're looking at here, which would be in the community contribution that the project would make through the REZ access fee, that's in addition to the VPA. The partnership that we developed with traditional owners, which is a 30-year partnership, is in addition to the VPA. The local sponsorships have gone on throughout development and will continue in construction.

35 Again, very much a separate thing, as is the neighbour benefit program, which is something I think is really noteworthy for the project, to the credit of everyone involved in developing it. I think it's \$3.6 million will be provided to eligible natures of the program across a 30-year period.

40 From my perspective, a really good win was the level of co-design that we were able to achieve with this benefit program. It involved a lot of the neighbours who were eligible for the program, to provide input into the terms and conditions and we were able to

enact a few really good optimisations or refinements to the program, which includes additional recipients of benefits.

5 So, expansion during construction of the eligible neighbours to receive the benefit. Inclusion of terms that would mean that benefit goes with the property, so if a property is sold, then the benefit would continue on with the new owner. Eligible neighbours are able to register several eligible properties. So, a really beneficial – I'd sort of say leading practice neighbour benefit program is proposed for this project.

10 **MR BAILEY:** Thanks, Darren. I'll just check quickly with fellow commissioners if there are any queries. All good. Thank you.

MR CHESTERFIELD: Thanks, Terry. The economic benefits there, they're on the slide as well, they sort of speak for themselves.

15 **MR BAILEY:** Yes.

MR CHESTERFIELD: Thanks, Andrew. I think this one's actually me as well. I probably won't say too much more, again noting the time. I'd say I think this is a good project; I think that Andrew and Manfred should both be proud of this project. And on behalf of the project team, I'd like to thank the commissioners for the opportunity to speak to its merits in this process. So, thank you.

20 **MR BAILEY:** Thanks, Darren. Is there anything you wanted to add, Andrew, before I draw to a close?

MR DOUGLAS: No, no. Other than we're happy with the conditions. And I think we didn't have a slide in relation to VPA, but Darren touched on it. So, effectively, it's been agreed by Council, they went through a 28-day advertising period and endorsed the VPA. It's just waiting to be signed by both parties.

30 **MR BAILEY:** Thanks. Thanks, Andrew. I just wanted to check with Shelley and Alison if there were any other questions or comments?

35 **MS PENN:** No, thank you.

MR BAILEY: I might also just check with the Office, just to see, Brad and Geoff, if there are any other things that we need to follow up on. Noting, Andrew, questions that have arisen today, we will capture and put across to you in writing. So, things that have arisen, it's good to get ahead of that in terms of the response with your team.

40 And clearly, we're looking forward to a site inspection in a couple of weeks' time, which will help us and open our understanding of the project as well. And anything, Brad or Geoff, that we needed to cover off?

45 **MR JAMES:** Nothing from me, Terry.

MR KWOK: Nothing from me, Terry, thanks.

5 **MR BAILEY:** So, just to say thank you for your time, thank you for your representation, very helpful. And as mentioned, looking forward to that site inspection in a couple of weeks' time, and we'll be catching up with you in more detail then. So, thank you for your time today.

[Multiple people say thank you]

10 **MR BAILEY:** And my sincere apologies for the delay in start.

MR FAHR: Looking forward to meeting in person.

MR BAILEY: Thanks, all.

15 **>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**