



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

**RE: MAYFIELD CARGO HANDLING FACILITY – MODIFICATION 3
LITHIUM-ION BATTERY STORAGE (DA8137-Mod-3)**

DEPARTMENT MEETING

PANEL: SARAH DINNING (CHAIR)

OFFICE OF THE IPC: KENDALL CLYDSDALE
GEOFF KWOK

**DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING, HOUSING
AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** GLENN SNOW
MICHAEL YOUNG
INGRID BERZINS

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE: 10:00AM – 10:38AM
FRIDAY, 29 AUGUST 2025

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 **MS SARAH DINNING:** Excellent. I might just kick off then. Okay. So, good morning and welcome. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Gadigal land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the lands from which we virtually meet today and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

10 Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Mayfield Cargo Storage Facility – Modification 3 (DA8137-Mod-3) currently before the Commission for determination. The Port of Newcastle has applied to modify the development consent (DA8137) for an open-air cargo storage facility, the Mayfield Cargo Storage Handling Facility, to store lithium-ion batteries.

15 My name is Sarah Dinning, and I am the Chair of this single-member Commission Panel. We are also joined by Kendall Clydsdale and Geoff Kwok from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.

20 In the interest of openness and transparency, and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded, and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website.

25 This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination. It's important for me to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it is considered appropriate.

30 If you are asked a question and are not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing, which we will then put up on our website. I request that all members here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time, and for all the members to ensure that they do not speak over the top of each other, to ensure accuracy of the transcript.

35 We will now begin. Thank you very much, Michael, Glenn and Ingrid for coming today, and we circulated an agenda previously and we understand you have a presentation for us. So, now over to you. Thank you.

40 **MR GLENN SNOW:** I think Michael's going to present that. So, Michael, you're on mute.

45 **MR MICHAEL YOUNG:** Sorry, okay. Good morning. So, my name is Michael Young, I'm the Principal Planner in the Transport & Water Assessments Team. So, you've all got a copy of the slide, so it may be worthwhile if we use that. I'm not sure whether I'm screening my screen – can you see the presentation?

MR KENDALL CLYDSDALE: Not at the moment, Michael. If you do have troubles, let me know and I can possibly share it on my end as well.

MR YOUNG: Yes. Perhaps if you could share your screen, because I'm not too familiar with Zoom.

5 **MR CLYDSDALE:** Sure, won't be a moment. You just let me know when you would like them ...

MR YOUNG: Yes. So, if we go to the second slide. So, that's the regional context map of Newcastle City. So, the site is located on the southern side of the Hunter River in the Mayfield precinct.

10 Go to next slide. So, the Applicant, the Port of Newcastle Operations Pty Ltd, lodged a modification application of DA8137 for the Mayfield Cargo Handling Facility. So, the proposal was to permit the receipt, temporary storage and transport of lithium-ion batteries. Now, these batteries are classified as a Class 9 Dangerous Goods.

15 And the Port of Newcastle are proposing to store batteries to receive batteries on the site and to store them potentially for a period of up to 12 months. Primarily to – the batteries are intended for use in the renewable energy projects across New South Wales. So, as shipments come in, they are stored on the site – offloaded off the ships
20 and stored on this site, and then they would be distributed out to the projects sort of as required. So, potentially they may be stored for periods up to 12 months. And undertaking the storage then are various separation distances between the battery units and between other cargo and the boundary of the site.

25 And as part of the modification application, there are no physical works proposed. So, all storage will be carried out within the existing hardstand of the storage facility. And no battery charging is proposed. And in terms of the site's stormwater system, that will remain unchanged.

30 So, the Department exhibited the modification application for a period of 14 days in August 2024. We didn't receive any public submissions from the community. The City of Newcastle Council provided comments on the proposal, and their comments included a request for a multi-level assessment be undertaken to determine the appropriate separation distances between the batteries.

35 So, the Department's team reviewed the preliminary hazard analysis and confirmed that no additional assessment was required or recommended. So, in undertaking that assessment, they also reviewed the City of Newcastle's comments about the need for a multi-level risk assessment, and the conclusion of the Hazards Team was that it wasn't
40 necessary.

We also received advice from Transport for NSW and NSW DCEEW and the Environment Protection Authority, and none of the agencies raised any concerns about the proposal.

45 Fire and Rescue NSW were also consulted during the assessment, both by the Applicant and the Department notified Fire and Rescue NSW, but no formal advice was received.

5 Now, the reason for a referral of this application to the Independent Planning Commission is that the Applicant has made a political donations declaration. And in accordance with the Minister's delegation, the Commission is the determining authority in terms of the Minister's delegation. And the application was lodged in August 2024.

10 Next slide please. So, just a little bit about the site details. It's located at 109 Selwyn Street, Mayfield North. On the aerial figure on the right-hand side, so the area in purple is the site. So, the original Mayfield Cargo Storage Facility was approved in June 2017 under DA8137, and the consent permitted the use of an existing hardstand area for port facilities for the storage of freight, which included the loading and unloading of freight and also roll-on and roll-off cargo such as the motor vehicles.

15 So, the site occupies an area of approximately 18.6 hectares and is within the Mayfield Port of Newcastle Mayfield Port Lease Area under the Transport and Infrastructure State Environmental Planning Policy.

20 So, in terms of surrounding development, we have to the north, or the top of the site, the Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group, their coal loading facilities. To the southeast of the site is the M4 berth and that's the primary site where all the project cargo is unloaded from vessels and then transferred to the Mayfield site for storage and distribution as required.

25 We have the Intertrade site in green to the south. To the northwest in the pink colour is the Stolthaven Bulk Liquids Terminal. And the nearest residential properties are approximately 800 metres to the southwest in the suburb of Mayfield East.

30 So, before I sort of continue with the slides, are there any questions about the site or the application at this point?

MS DINNING: No, thank you.

35 **MR YOUNG:** Okay, all right. Next slide. So, in terms of our assessment of the application, the key issues in terms of hazards and risks, given that lithium-ion batteries are a Class 9 Dangerous Goods. So, as part of the application, the Applicant submitted a preliminary hazard analysis which assessed the fire and safety risks of storing batteries on the site.

40 The conclusion of the preliminary hazard analysis was that there would be minimal risk to people and property. And in terms of the recommendations of the preliminary hazard analysis was a recommendation that batteries stored on the site have a maximum stage of charge of 30% and also include the separation distance for battery storage. So, in terms of state of charge, I guess that terminology is used to describe the
45 capacity of the battery when it's received on the site.

And the preliminary hazard analysis recommended that that maximum 30% state of charge. So, in our assessment, we – I guess one of the questions we had was, why did

the preliminary hazard analysis make this recommendation for a 30% state of charge? And we asked that question of the Applicant and we also asked the Applicant to confirm that Fire and Rescue NSW supports any increase in the state of charge of batteries above 30%.

5

Subsequently, the Applicant in May and July this year provided an updated preliminary hazard analysis and an addendum report, which basically concluded that removing any limitation in terms of the maximum state of charge, the preliminary hazard analysis said that there would be no change to the recommendations of the original application, in the sense that batteries would be received and stored in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines.

10

So, when batteries are shipped, they have a certain state of charge and during the voyage from the original port of manufacturing location, they during the duration of the journey they would lose some of that charge, and then as the batteries are stored on the site, again, depending on the duration, they would lose a little bit more of that charge.

15

Now, the preliminary hazard analysis concluded that the state of charge is only relevant when batteries are in operation or they are linked together in an operational state. So, in this case, the batteries are not operational; they are basically stored as separate units. You can see on the right-hand side of the slide, a typical standalone battery unit about 3 metres in height and about 2.5 metres in length. These can be a standalone battery unit, or they can be contained within a shipping container, 20-foot or a 40-foot shipping container.

20

25

So, the key conclusion of the preliminary hazard analysis is that when the batteries are stored, separated from adjoining batteries, and they are not being charged or not being linked, then the key concern with fire and safety risks are from damage to the batteries themselves either through the unloading from the vessel or through transfer from the dock to the storage facility.

30

Now, in December 2024, Fire and Rescue published their position statement on yard storage of batteries. So, the Fire and Rescue provided guidance on typical storage facilities, so they would be looking at when batteries are stored on project sites or when batteries are stored on port locations. They made a number of recommendations in terms of ensuring that batteries are separated from both battery units and between the other project cargo and site boundary, to ensure that if in the event of a battery fire, that it can be contained within that one unit rather than – and then minimising the risk of a fire spreading to surrounding batteries.

35

40

So, in terms of the separation distances that were recommended by Fire and Rescue NSW was that a 1-metre separation between units, that units are stored in clusters of 50 metres by 50 metres, and that batteries shouldn't be stored – there should be a separation distance of 6 metres from other project cargo and site boundaries.

45

So, this is the key document that we used in our Hazards Team to review the proposal. And upon review of the updated preliminary hazard analysis and the addendum Hazard

Assessment, the conclusion is that the documents are prepared in accordance with the Department's hazardous development guidelines. And the Department supports the recommendations made by the preliminary hazard analysis which sets out various distances in accordance with the Fire and Rescue position statement in terms of the various protocols that would be used to check on the batteries and whether there are any leaks or hissing sounds from the batteries. But primarily, as the batteries aren't being charged, then the state of charge of a battery is not a major concern or a significant concern for the proposal.

So, our conclusion is that the storage of batteries can safely occur within the existing site, and that there is no significant risk to surrounding receivers. And as seen in the previous slide, there are mainly just industrial users in and around the storage facility. And the Department's recommended conditions of consent include these separation distances in the Fire and Rescue position statement.

So, this kind of a snapshot. Yes?

MS DINNING: No, no, just before – I was just going to say on that, back to the other slide, so I think what you've just clarified in the presentation and the materials we've read is, the SOC was a concern. The Applicant with their PHA put it in as the 30% maximum, but now over the course of, you know, since August 2024, with Fire and Rescue's December 2024 position statements and the review by your Hazards Team [cross-talk 00:20:05].

MR YOUNG: Yes.

MS DINNING: – the Applicant. It's not the SOC that's an issue; it's the distance between the –

MR YOUNG: That's correct, yes.

MS DINNING: [Cross-talk 00:20:12] ... and the clusters and so that's – yes. Because I think when everyone was reading the SOC, it was a little bit where's this going, so no, thank you, so that's quite – I think that's very clearly explained. Thank you.

MR YOUNG: Yes, thank you. So, we did a sort of investigation and that 30% maximum state of charge really only applies to air transport.

MS DINNING: Oh, yes.

MR YOUNG: So, in terms of transporting lithium-ion batteries by air, then there is a maximum 30% state of charge. In terms of transport of batteries by sea, there is no recommended maximum, and it just basically comes down to the guidance of the manufacturer's specifications.

MS DINNING: I have some questions around fire.

MR YOUNG: Are there any other questions?

MS DINNING: Yes, well I do have a question around fire, but I'm happy to wait until we get to the conditions discussion, I think.

5 **MR YOUNG:** Yes, okay.

MS DINNING: Thank you.

10 **MR YOUNG:** Okay, that's fine. Okay. Next slide. So, the other issue that we looked at was in terms of traffic and transport. Now, within the Mayfield Port Lease Area, which is the former BHP Steel Works site, a concept plan was approved in 2012 which identified, I think, six precincts within the former Steel Works site. And the concept plan also set the parameters or the or the limitations in terms of traffic generation.

15 So, under condition 2.3 of the Mayfield Concept Plan, a maximum of 462,000 traffic movements are permitted per annum, on a daily basis being 1,268 movements, and 95 during peak periods.

20 The table on the right-hand side of the slide just provides what the Mayfield Concept Plan, there are two developments which are operational – the Stolthaven Mayfield Bulk Liquids and Bulk Fuel Terminal, and the Mayfield Cargo Storage Facility. And both of these developments [audio glitch 00:22:50] maximum of 314 per day and 32 during peak periods.

25 In terms of the proposal, the proposal is seeking up to 1,800 movements per year over and above the 74,000 generated by the existing operations. A total of 5 movements per day and 5 movements during the peak periods. So, in terms of the impact of the additional traffic generated by the proposal, it is very minor and within the truck movement limits under the Mayfield Concept Plan.

30 Transport for NSW concerns raised no objection about this proposal, and they advised that it's unlikely – there was no significant impact to the surrounding road network. And that the City of Newcastle Council is the road authority for Selwyn Street, which links the cargo site with the state road (which is Industrial Drive), and Industrial Drive then provides access to the main roads to the north on Pacific Highway and to the west
35 on the New England Highway and the M1 southwest Sydney.

In terms of Transport for NSW, no objections to the traffic impacts of the proposal, and the City of Newcastle Council also raised no concerns with proposed traffic
40 movements. So, based on the likely generation of truck movements generated by the proposal, our conclusion is that the proposal is minimal in terms of traffic impacts and is well within the total traffic movements under the condition 2.3 of the Concept Plan.

Any questions on traffic and transport?

45 **MS DINNING:** No thank you, Michael.

MR YOUNG: Okay, all right, fine, I'll go to the next slide. So, this is our evaluation. Just before I start on talking about our evaluation, are there any other questions you may have on other aspects of the proposal that I haven't touched on?

5 **MS DINNING:** No, thank you. It's very thorough, thank you.

MR YOUNG: Okay, thanks, all right. So, in our assessment of the proposal we reviewed the modification set forth, the Response to Submissions prepared by the Applicant, and we assessed that the merits of the proposed modification taking into
10 consideration advice received from the Council and government agencies.

So, in terms of the proposal, our consideration of the evaluations considered that the storage of batteries would diversify the range of cargo handled at the Port of Newcastle facilities, which supports economic growth in the Hunter region and within New South
15 Wales itself. So, it's an activity which is appropriately located at a port location.

The proposal would enable the temporary storage of batteries in an existing cargo storage facility. So, as I mentioned before, cargo is offloaded, stored temporarily at the site before distribution to the various renewable energy projects across the state.
20

A key consideration for us was the separation distance. So, our conclusion was that, based on our Hazards Team advice, that the batteries would be stored at appropriate separation distances from other cargo and surrounding developments. And in terms of the separation distances, it minimises the fire safety risks presented by the storage of
25 the batteries.

Another consideration for us was that the proposal would facilitate the achievement of the State Government's net zero by 2050 targets by providing logistical support for temporary storage of the battery units for the various green energy storage systems which are being developed around the state.
30

In terms of traffic movements, the limits are specified within the Mayfield Concept Plan and the proposed additional traffic generate as well within that limit specified. And the proposal would also generate approximately 18 operational jobs through the transport and storage of batteries on the site.
35

So, our conclusion was that the storage of batteries would be carried out in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines and recommendations. And that appropriate separation distances would be maintained between battery units. And our conclusion was that the impacts of the proposed modification are acceptable and can be appropriately minimised through the implementation of our recommended conditions of consent.
40

So, before I go on to discuss the conditions, are there any questions about the Department's evaluation conclusions?
45

MS DINNING: No, thank you. Thanks, Michael.

MR YOUNG: Thank you. So, in terms of recommended conditions of consent, to ensure that appropriate separation distances and the emergency management and safety are carried out, we required compliance with position statements from Fire and Rescue.

One is the open yard storage of battery energy storage systems, so this is in terms of the appropriate separation distances and clustering of batteries. The second is a position statement that Fire and Rescue also issued in December 2024 in terms of requiring an Emergency Plan be prepared for sites that store or handle lithium-ion batteries. So, that's a key condition that we require.

Our recommended conditions also include the preparation of a Battery Storage Management Plan. So, this management plan would include the requirements for separation distances. It also required the Applicant to prepare a protocol to manage damaged batteries.

And the management plan requires the batteries be stored in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. And also provide a requirement for inspection and monitoring of batteries that are stored on the site of up to a 12-month period. So, in terms of batteries, it's ensured that they are regularly inspected to ensure that there are no damaged batteries. And also a requirement of a Battery Fire Emergency Plan be prepared in consultation with Fire and Rescue NSW to manage any potential fire safety situations.

So, both the Management Plan and the Fire Emergency Management Plan are consistent with Fire and Rescue's position statements on the storage of lithium-ion batteries. So, these are our key conditions which relate to the storage of batteries on the site and the handling of batteries on the site. And they would be implemented in accordance with other requirements of the existing consent, which include the preparation of an Operational Environmental Management Plan and other renditions.

So, sort of basically our conclusion is that with the implementation of these conditions of consent, then we conclude that the storage of batteries can be carried out in a safe manner on the site and doesn't present fire safety issues going forward.

So, any questions?

MS DINNING: Thank you. Thank you, Michael. I did have a question around the – I'm looking at open yard storage battery energy storage systems, the position statement from Fire and Rescue. And in there, it requires – there's two dot-points saying, "Any required firefighting equipment must be operable prior to the delivery and storage of BESS units. Where firefighting equipment is not required, provision for firefighting should be considered." Will that be captured in one of the plans that are – because it's not spelt out, so is that going to be captured in one of the plans that are referenced in conditions B21 or B22.

MR YOUNG: Yes. I would say that would be included within that Battery Fire Emergency Plan. So, you know, that would provide information about the firefighting equipment or procedures and processes that would be implemented on the site.

5 **MS DINNING:** Okay. So, that will be picked up under B22 within that, I was just looking at those position statements.

MR YOUNG: Yes.

10 **MS DINNING:** Thank you, thank you, that's clarification.

MR YOUNG: Yes. Mm-hm.

15 **MS DINNING:** Just bear with me while I look at my notes here. I'm just looking at the Operational Environmental Management Plan.

MR YOUNG: Yes.

20 **MS DINNING:** I'm looking for a clarification. It talks about B7(d) is looking at roles, responsibilities, authority, accountability of personnel involved in the environmental management of the development. How many background – and I will ask this question of the Applicant too – for people who are on site, as in workers, will there be – will that cover the workers who will be in amongst the BESS, the batteries, in terms of identifying issues, hazards? Or is it specifically here to do with – no, yes, are the workers involved in transferring batteries part of this Operational Environmental Management Plan?

25 **MR YOUNG:** It would need to – yes, so the – our proposed condition B22 would require a protocol be implemented for identifying and managing damaged batteries. So, how we see it is that the Battery Storage Management Plan and the Battery Fire Emergency Plan would need to be included within the Operational Environmental Management Plan, which applies to the whole of the site.

30 So, we would see that these are specific requirements for battery storage. But that would be carried out in accordance with the wider OEMP (Operational Environmental Management Plan) which sets out, as you said before, the roles and responsibilities of the various people who work and manage the operation of the storage facility.

35 **MS DINNING:** Yes, great. Thank you.

40 **MR YOUNG:** Okay.

MS DINNING: I have no further questions. The material provided was very clearly explained, thank you, and the evaluation, the summary report as well. I will be visiting the site on Tuesday with colleague Geoff Kwok.

45 **MR YOUNG:** Yes.

MS DINNING: And we'll be talking to the Applicant just after this. So, I think there are no further questions from the Commission's ...

5 **MR CLYDSDALE:** No further questions from the Office, thanks, Chair.

MS DINNING: And Michael, Glenn or Ingrid, any further comments or questions from yourselves?

10 **MR SNOW:** No, I think ...

MR YOUNG: No.

15 **MR SNOW:** So, Glenn Snow, Director of Transport & Water Assessments, I didn't introduce myself before. But no, I think Michael has summarised the project excellently, so.

MS DINNING: Right. So, I think then on that note, thank you very, very much for your information and your participation this morning, and we'll proceed on with considering the information for our determination. Thank you.

20 **MR SNOW:** Thank you.

MR YOUNG: Thank you very much. Okay. Bye-bye.

25 **>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**