



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: YANCO BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (SSD-67478479)

COUNCIL MEETING

PANEL: KEN KANOFSKI (CHAIR)
BRONWYN EVANS

OFFICE OF THE IPC: JANE ANDERSON
ISAAC CLAYTON

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL: GEORGE WESTON
FRANCOIS VAN DER BERG
MICHAEL KIDD
JACKIE KRUGER

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE: 3:00PM – 4:00PM
MONDAY, 15th SEPTEMBER 2025

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 **MR KANOFSKI:** Good afternoon. So, look, before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands from which we're meeting, I'm on Wangal country, and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

10 Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Yanco Battery Energy Storage System (state significant development 67478479) which is currently before the Commission for determination.

15 ACEnergy proposes to develop the Yanco Battery Energy Storage System, a 250 megawatt, 1,100 megawatt-hour battery and associated grid connection infrastructure. The project would connect to the existing Transgrid 330 kilovolt Yanco substation which is located directly to the east of the site. The project is located approximately 7 kilometres south of Leeton in the Leeton Shire local government area.

20 My name is Ken Kanofski, I'm the Chair of the Commission Panel, and I am joined by my fellow commissioner, Dr Bronwyn Evans.

25 **DR BRONWYN EVANS:** Good afternoon.

30 **MR KANOFSKI:** And also from the Commission, we have Isaac Clayton and Jane Anderson from the Independent Planning Commission.

35 **CR KIDD:** G'day.

40 **MR KANOFSKI:** And in the interest of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting will be recorded, and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website.

45 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 the commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it is considered appropriate. If you are asked a question and not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing, which we will then put on the Commission's website.

50 I request that all members here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time, and for members to ensure that they do not speak over the top of each other, to ensure the accuracy of the transcript.

55 So, yes, so just, so welcome, with all of that said. And yes, we might just go through just a quick round of introductions on your end. I know we got introduced as we came in, but just a very quick round.

MR VAN DER BERG: I'm Francois Van Der Berg, I'm the Manager for Planning, Building and Health at Leeton Shire Council.

CR WESTON: I'm George Weston, I'm the Mayor of Leeton Shire Council.

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CR KIDD: I'm Councillor Michael Kidd, Deputy Mayor.

MS KRUGER: Hi, I'm Jackie Kruger, General Manager, and we meet today on Wiradjuri land.

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MR KANOFSKI: Thank you, welcome all. So, look, we don't have a huge agenda of items. What I guess we're – we're probably primarily concerned, primarily interested in two issues, and Council, we've obviously seen your submission to the Department. And – ooh – sorry, I just lost you off my screen for a minute, but you're still there. So, we're probably interested in just any concerns or issues that you'd like to bring to the Commission's attention.

As I said, we've read your submission but, you know, anything that you want to highlight. I also want to talk about whether you've reviewed and are happy with the conditions of consent. And the third thing is just to confirm our – we understand there's a bit of confusion in those conditions with regard to the VPA, so we just want to make sure we understand Council's point of view on that issue.

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So, really, over to you really to talk through any concerns, if any, with the development proposal.

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MS KRUGER: Thank you, Ken. Our Manager Planning, Building and Health, Francois, will do most of the speaking on behalf of Council. And we can chip in. So, I think, if there could be two dimensions to the discussion. The one is the Leeton Shire Council position. But then sometimes Council also hear things from the community which doesn't relate to our submission as such, but it might be worth just touching on some of those.

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MR KANOFSKI: Absolutely.

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MS KRUGER: I'll hand over to Francois to just highlight some of the key things we want to make sure the Commission has heard loud and clear from Council.

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MR KANOFSKI: Mm-hm.

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MR VAN DER BERG: Mr Chair, thank you. I've been working through Council's submission that we've made, and I've noticed that all the matters we've raised have been covered by conditions of consent. So, everything that we brought to the attention of the Department has been considered in the assessment process. So, in terms of our submission, I'm really happy with that one.

In terms of the draft conditions of consent, I see condition A14 talks about community enhancement. And that is what I downloaded this morning, and I've noticed that this

condition needs to be updated because the terms for the VPA is the original offer. It's not quite what is currently proposed.

5 **MR KANOFSKI:** Mm-hm. And just on that, what's the totals – let's not go through the detail here, but what's the total sum of what you, what Council believes it's agreed with the Applicant?

MR VAN DER BERG: All right. So, the total sum of this VPA is \$3 million.

10 **MR KANOFSKI:** Yes, okay. That's fine, that's consistent with what we've been told. So, we need to work through the process with the Department to ensure that the conditions of consent are reflective of what's been agreed.

15 **MR VAN DER BERG:** Yes. We currently have a draft VPA that is on public exhibition, and it's on exhibition until the 25th of this month.

MR KANOFSKI: Okay.

20 **MR VAN DER BERG:** So, there's a draft currently on exhibition.

MR KANOFSKI: Yes, so that will come off exhibition and then what's your process within Council then?

25 **MR VAN DER BERG:** I'll go back to Council for a council meeting to adopt the recommended VPA then.

MR KANOFSKI: Okay, and what date's that likely to happen on?

30 **MR VAN DER BERG:** That will be late in October.

MS KRUGER: We could do a late report at the Mayor's indulgence. If timing is of the essence, actually I think I've just told – the council meeting's earlier this month, isn't it?

35 **CR WESTON:** Yes, the 4th, Tuesday.

MS KRUGER: Yes. So, it will before the end. Did you say the 28th?

40 **MR VAN DER BERG:** The 25th.

MS KRUGER: The 25th. And our council meeting is on the 23rd. Yes. We could call an extraordinary meeting if that was of help to you.

45 **MR KANOFSKI:** Yes, look, let's – we'll be back in touch via the Commission. I'm not sure how vital it is that we get it resolved by Council. I'm just conscious of our dates as well in terms of when we're required to make a determination by. But let's – we'll be back in touch via the Commission staff on that and you just talk through the issue.

MS KRUGER: Okay. Thank you.

5 MR KANOFSKI: But yes, we're conscious and we're, you know, we've been advised that what's in the conditions of consent doesn't reflect what's currently agreed between the parties. So, we're certainly aware of the issue.

MS KRUGER: Thank you.

10 MR VAN DER BERG: Sorry, Mr Chair, that's basically my concerns that I had. I'm fairly happy with the recommended conditions of consent. There are conditions dealing with fire safety. There are conditions dealing with waste management, and that's basically going to address what we said in our submission.

15 MR KANOFSKI: Okay. Thank you. And I think we talked about concerns you're hearing from the community, so very happy to hear about those as well.

20 25 MR KANOFSKI: Yes, and they're probably not new to you at all, but it's these urban myths out there about these things igniting and exploding easily and creating firebombs and giving off toxic gases and what not. So, our council is satisfied that those risks are all manageable and will be managed through the conditions of consent.

But we just thought we'd relay to you there is some of that sentiment in the wider community. But I'm sure you've heard that in some other submissions, probably.

25 MR KANOFSKI: Yes. Yes. Fire risk forms part of a kind of, I guess, a suite of concerns community has about these sorts of facilities.

30 MS KRUGER: Yes.

35 MR KANOFSKI: And so, certainly we'll be looking carefully at the conditions that the Department's proposed to satisfy ourselves as the Commission, should we be of a mind to approve the application, we'll certainly be looking carefully at those conditions. But as you say, there's quite a lot of – there is community concern about those issues, so we've certainly heard it in a number of submissions.

40 MS KRUGER: Thank you. Other than that, I think people are generally supportive. And we do note that the location is more than a kilometre from the township. Have I got the distance right, it's a kilometre?

45 MR VAN DER BERG: The nearest dwelling is about a kilometre away. That's the southwestern side of Yanco.

MR KANOFSKI: Yes. I know it's not right on their doorstep, if that makes sense.

MS KRUGER: Yes.

5 **MR KANOFSKI:** One of the other issues I just want to test with you. I mean, in communities across regional New South Wales, worker accommodation and pressures on local housing has been an issue. Is that a concern at all for Council in this particular case, noting this is a relatively small project from an employment perspective, although it is still a peak of 70 workers during construction. Is that something that Council is satisfied is okay for this project?

10 **MS KRUGER:** Do you want to give it a go, do you want to ...? We believe it can be accommodated. It's not a long period of time, it's a quick – my understanding from Francois, is most of it comes already made and just gets hooked up. So, it's not like it's months and months and months and months of, you know, a very long period of this congestion.

15 We've got – I'm not sure what the company's accommodation arrangements are, but I'm assuming they're going to use extensively our local hotels and motels probably. Do you have any other information on this, Francois? We didn't anticipate that they would be gobbling up rental accommodation in a very big way.

20 We also have the opportunity, we have a Yanco Ag Institute with some dormitories that are unutilised. Now, we're having conversations with the government at the moment about making those available, but that's a potential option, provided it doesn't clash with the wind farm that is also looking at the same venue, but that wind farm will only be developed in '27. Whereas we're hoping this will get up and running sooner.

25 **MR KANOFSKI:** Yes. I mean, as you point out, I think this, compared to some of the other projects that we see, this project has a relatively short duration, a relatively not low number of people.

30 **MS KRUGER:** Yes.

35 **MR KANOFSKI:** So, yes, I think there's – it would appear highly likely that accommodation options would be very temporary rather than putting pressure on local rental, I would imagine. But yes, I just for completeness wanted to make sure Council were okay with that.

Bronwyn, do you have other questions for Council?

40 **DR EVANS:** No, thank you Ken. No, and when I look at your application, they're the primary areas that we're investigating as well. Fire safety, emergency response, noise, visual impact, waste management. So, I think the way the conditions of consent, if we are minded to approve it, we'll certainly be taking those into consideration. And we will be requiring that accommodation and employment strategy, and it's good to know about the Yanco Ag College dormitory as one of those pieces in the accommodation puzzle. So, thank you, no additional.

45 **MR KANOFSKI:** No. Is there anything – and we'll – I note that Bronwyn and I and the Commission staff will be in Leeton tomorrow and on site tomorrow afternoon, and

I think some members of Council or staff are attending the site visit with us, so thank you for that.

5 Is there anything else that councillors or Council staff would like to raise?

CR WESTON: I've got letters from different constituents, but I've read between the lines and I've been talking to our Manager of Planning and they're okay.

10 **MR KANOFSKI:** Mm-hm.

MS KRUGER: Yes.

CR KIDD: Conspiracy theories.

15 **CR WESTON:** Yes, yes.

MR KANOFSKI: Yes, I mean, we weren't overwhelmed with local – with submissions from people who live very close to this facility. So, a lot of submissions from people across the country, but yes, certainly not many submissions from local 20 people, so.

MS KRUGER: We had a look at that and noticed that, and I think it's more the – the things that we've just mentioned is more you read on social media from our local 25 community. But if people haven't taken the trouble ... Have you got lots of people registered for the next two days, do you know?

MR KANOFSKI: I'll just go to Commission staff.

MS JANE ANDERSON: No, there aren't a huge amount of people registered to 30 speak to the Panel. Up to six, so.

MR ISAAC CLAYTON: Yes, I think six are registered at this stage.

MR KANOFSKI: So, it's a relatively – you know, so that, again, it's not – you know, 35 we're not getting run over by people who want to come and speak to us, so.

MS KRUGER: Yes.

CR KIDD: I had some conversations with the Yanco Town Improvement Committee 40 last week and they were fully on side, and they weren't aware of any locally based objections at all. I think they're quite looking forward to that sort of development within their town space. And another thing worth noting is probably the closest neighbour is the Yanco Bushfire Brigade, to be honest, so it's very conveniently located.

45 **MR KANOFSKI:** We did note the location of that.

CR KIDD: Oh, well, you've done your homework, so.

MR KANOFSKI: Okay, look, thank you very much for your time, and for those of you who are attending tomorrow afternoon, we'll see you there.

5 **DR EVANS:** Thank you.

MS KRUGER: We really appreciate the Commission making proactive contact in this way. Yes, we're very grateful, because had it been very controversial things, this is a great opportunity to engage more than just in writing. Thank you.

10 **MR KANOFSKI:** Yes, certainly, I mean, this one, as we say, is not as controversial as some. But we allow the process to take its course regardless, so.

15 **MS KRUGER:** Yes. Thank you, good to meet you.

MR KANOFSKI: Thanks, everyone.

[All say thank you/goodbye]

20 **>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**