



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

**RE: KINGSWOOD BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM
(SSD-63207219)**

APPLICANT MEETING

PANEL: MICHAEL CHILCOTT (Chair)
ELIZABETH TAYLOR

OFFICE OF THE IPC: GEOFF KWOK
TAHLIA HUTCHINSON

**APPLICANT
REPRESENTATIVES:** IGOR BRANDAO (Iberdrola Australia)
MARIA CARUDO (Iberdrola Australia)
JONATHON CINI (Iberdrola Australia)
JOSE OPAZO (Iberdrola Australia)
GLYNN DIWELL (Arcadis)

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE: 11:30AM – 12:30PM
THURSDAY, 29th JANUARY 2026

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

[Audio gap until 00:00:19]

5 **MS MARIA CARUDO:** Good morning.

MR MICHAEL CHILCOTT: Good morning, everybody. Can you hear us?

10 **MS CARUDO:** Yes, we can hear you.

MR CHILCOTT: All right. You can see each of us, we can see a group of you in a room – the further away you are, the less distinct you are. But we'll deal with that along the way, just so you're aware of that, the way that comes across. And we'll need to learn all your names and attach them.

15 I have an opening statement to read, if you permit to do that, and then we'll move through into the meeting beyond that, if that's all right. Thank you.

20 **MS CARUDO:** That sounds good, thank you.

MR CHILCOTT: And so, welcome, everybody, to this meeting, which is to discuss the Kingswood Battery Energy Storage System, which is a state significant development application and its reference for our purposes is SSD-63207219, and it's currently before the Independent Planning Commission for determination.

25 My name is Michael Chilcott. I am the Chair of the Commission Panel, and I'm joined today by my fellow panel member, Commissioner Elizabeth Taylor. Elizabeth and I are joined also by Geoff Kwok and Tahlia Hutchinson from the office of the Independent Planning Commission.

30 I'd like to acknowledge that I am speaking to you today from the Blue Mountains, which is Dharug and Gundungurra country, and I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands from which we all meet today and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

35 The Applicant entity, which is Iberdrola Australia Development Pty Ltd – you can correct my pronunciation later – which is a subsidiary of Iberdrola Australia Limited, proposes to develop a 270-megawatt/1,080-megawatt hour battery energy storage system located approximately 6 kilometres southeast of Tamworth in the Tamworth regional local government area.

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

45 The meeting is one part of the Commission's considerations of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will determine the application.

As you would anticipate, it's likely that we, as commissioners, will ask questions of attendees and seek to clarify issues along the way as it's appropriate. If you're asked a question today and you're not in a position to answer it, you may take the question on notice. Following the meeting, the Commission will advise you in writing of any questions taken on notice that the Panel considers requires a formal response. Any subsequent response to the information provided, or information provided to the Commission will then be published on our website.

I'd ask that all participants today introduce themselves onto the record when speaking for the first time, and for all members to ensure that they do not speak over the top of one another, to ensure the accuracy of the transcript production in due course.

So, thank you, and let's begin. Perhaps in the first instance, could I invite the – and can I just confirm, is it Iberdrola – is that how you pronounce it correctly?

MS CARUDO: That's correct, Michael.

MR CHILCOTT: Thank you. Can I ask you to – I don't know whoever is sort of coordinating input from your side, to just introduce the team, get you on record.

MS CARUDO: Thank you, Michael. Iberdrola Australia would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners on whose lands we're gathered here today and the land where we operate. We would like to pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

On the Applicant side here today, we have Igor Brandao, the Executive General Manager for Development in Australia. We also have Jonathon Cini who is our GM for Stakeholders, Communities and Regional Investment. We have Jose Opazo who is the Development Manager for Batteries, Iberdrola Australia, specifically Kingswood Battery. And we have Glynn Diwell who is the technical Associate Director for Planning and Environment from Arcadis, who's been working very closely with Iberdrola Australia. And I'm Maria Carudo, GM for Development at New South Wales.

MR CHILCOTT: Great. Thank you very much. And you've had an agenda, I think, shared for today's meeting. Are you comfortable moving broadly forward with the agenda as it's presented?

MS CARUDO: Yes. Thank you, Michael.

MR CHILCOTT: Thank you. And perhaps I'll hand over to you and, Maria, if I could invite you to perhaps coordinate the presentation from your end, and we'll engage with interest. Thank you.

MS CARUDO: Absolutely, thank you, Michael.

MR CHILCOTT: Maria, in sharing that, if you could turn it onto that sort of screen presentation mode. There's a button down the bottom towards the right-hand side next to the slide scale which I suspect if you push that, you'll get your presentation up.

5 **MS CARUDO:** Excellent. Is that showing properly on your end?

MR CHILCOTT: That's better now. Yes, thank you very much.

10 **MS CARUDO:** Excellent, thank you. So, on the agenda we followed the IPC proposed agenda for today's meeting, starting with an overview of the application and amendments. We'll move onto commenting briefly on the Department's Assessment Report and we'll move onto the key issues and close the meeting with the comments on the Department's recommended conditions.

15 The Applicant, Iberdrola Australia Development Pty Ltd, for the proposed SSD application for Kingswood BESS. The Kingswood BESS team at Iberdrola has been working closely with Arcadis as the lead environment and planning consultant, along with a number of technical specialists which are listed in this slide.

20 **MR IGOR BRANDAO:** Igor Brandao here as General Manager of Development. Just introducing Iberdrola, Iberdrola Australia is a long-term owner and operator of renewable generation assets across the country. We operate across the whole lifecycle of the projects, from development, construction of projects, through the operations, and all the way through to end of life as well.

25 One of the things that differentiate us from our peers is that we have a retail business as well which allows us to sell our firmied renewable generation to customers directly. We focus on commercial and industrial customers, and that also means that we've got a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week coverage on site and also through our control centre that
30 operates our assets.

In Australia, we have been operating and working closely with regional communities and farming communities for over 20 years. We've got 13 operating assets across the east coast as well as an asset over in WA. In addition to the two assets that we have
35 under construction, we've got quite a large pipeline of projects under development. And as you can note, one of our strong markets or at least where we have the largest presence is actually in New South Wales with a number of wind farms and renewable firming assets as well across the state.

40 **JOSE OPAZO:** I will present this section, it's Jose here, the Development Manager for Kingswood BESS. Next slide, please. So, in terms of project evolution, just very briefly, as Igor mentioned, Iberdrola is a long-term owner and operator of assets, which means that basically we design a project with a long-term view, we don't design projects to just obtaining an approval or just to construct and then go onto the next one.
45 We develop and design our projects with a long-term view and knowing that these projects need to responsibly and safely and in balance operate with the community and their surroundings.

In that context, the Kingswood BESS has been part of an iterative design process, the design has evolved in accounting for three main streams of feedback, and one of them is of course the technical studies that we prepare for the EIS but as well all internal studies for engineering, procurement etc.

5

Another stream of information that has shaped the project is the feedback that we have obtained from the community and key stakeholders, that is [unintelligible 00:10:11] and has been fundamental on refining the project layout. The third stream is of course the advice received from government agencies following the assessment requirements and guidance from DPHI.

10

Since the EIS, the project layout basically has been refined to reduce environmental, traffic and amenity impacts. We have improved the site layout and access arrangement and constructability thanks to these different feedbacks. The design is responding as well to community feedback. We accommodated changes to the grid connection as well as the grid connection solutions connecting into the Tamworth Substation. We strengthened consistency with the planning framework and assessment outcomes.

15

Overall, this process has resulted, basically, in a more robust and efficient and impact-minimised project that is better aligned with the stakeholder and community expectations.

20

To the next one. Very briefly, on the timeline. We started this project in 2023 with the origination of this project and early feasibility studies in early to mid-2023. In mid to late 2023, we already kick off the community engagement, that was very early on in the process. In October 2023, we lodged the Scoping Report, giving basically formal kick off to the SSD assessment of the project.

25

2024 was the year where we progressed mostly for technical studies as part of the EIS and internally as well. And in February 2024, we did a two-days community drop-in session where we gathered very critical feedback for the project. And then in mid-2024, we lodged the EIS of the project, then it was exhibited in July-August 2024. Just another key milestone of 2024 in terms of planning was the issue, the first VPA offer letter to Council, the voluntary planning agreement.

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In 2025, it was also a big year for the project in terms of planning. We submitted the Submission Report of the project, in April 2025, we submitted as well an amendment or First Amendment Report for the project. Then in September 2025, we had further discussions with key local community groups, aiming to structure a long-term initiative and potentially with different groups. In October 2025, we lodged our second Amendment Report that then it's like we go a bit more into what triggered those amendments.

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And in November 2025, we did another two-days community drop-in sessions just to support the information, that it was discussed in these new amendments made throughout the year, and gather, again, more feedback from the community. In December 2025, DPHI recommended the project for approval and issued the Assessment Report to the IPC, which brings us then now to this year.

45

In January 2026, we started, again, a round of sponsorships for the project and reaching out to the local community, and as well the IPC case commencement this month.

5 Very briefly on the project overview, because, Michael, you mentioned already some of the items here. But the project site is located roughly 6 kilometres southeast of the town of Tamworth, within the Tamworth local government area. We are proposing a lithium-ion battery technology up to 270 megawatts of power and up to 1,080 megawatt-hours of energy storage.

10 Very important information, the message of this slide is that one of the main reasons why we selected this site is because of the proximity to the existing Tamworth Substation that is owned and operated by Transgrid. It's a 330 kV and 132 kV high-voltage substation, and given the proximity of our site, that is 800 metres southeast of the substation, it will allow us then to leverage the existing grid infrastructure, have a sure, efficient connection to the Tamworth Substation, minimising environmental and construction impacts.

15 This project, if approved, will contribute as well to energy security of the state, grid reliability and system stability. On this scenario, it's like we already told you, I'm sure you're familiar with this layout, it's the same layout in the Second Amendment Report and as well the one shared in the Assessment Report by DPHI.

20 It basically shows the location of the different components of the battery, their connection solutions and the proposal to connect into the Tamworth Substation. The location of the BESS on site substation will be required to step up the voltage. And the new site access from Ascot-Calala Road that will be required for construction and operation. The use of existing access of Transgrid as well as the substation [unintelligible 00:16:11]. The next one.

25
30 **MR JONATHON CINI:** It's Jonathon here and I'll just go through some of the project benefits. So, as with all projects that we have, we commit to supporting the communities and delivering some positive benefits as well throughout the lifecycle of the project. Kingswood is one that we have already kickstarted this process, and we will look to do some financial benefits with host properties and nearby residences.

35 We will be looking to dedicate some direct funding towards supporting community development, in particular grassroots and local community organisations as well, and as Jose mentioned, we do have a grant round which is on foot at the moment. We'll also be working and very soon to hopefully finalise a voluntary planning agreement with the Tamworth Regional Council, which we'll speak to in a few slides later.

40 We're also working through delivering energy credits to neighbours and dwellings situated along the transport route. In addition to that, we will be looking to create local employment opportunities, in particular for First Nations and local people during both construction and operation. And as you can see up the top there, looking to have around about up to 100 construction jobs during peak construction, and a capital investment of \$458 million. In addition to that, providing benefits and supporting local businesses as well.

5 **MR OPAZO:** Just on the amendments done, I mentioned in the timeline before of the project, we lodged in 2025, just very briefly, in the First Amendment Report was lodged in April 2025. The main objective of this amendment was to refine the project design with grid connection options, so within this amendment we're proposing different connection solutions, including Tamworth Substation, and as well as reflecting the ongoing consultation with Transgrid and connection feasibility and constructability.

10 In the Second Amendment Report that was a few months later in October 2025, was to respond to follow-up feedback received from mainly Transport for NSW, Council and Transgrid again. Where we revised it and also on transport routes mainly and updated construction traffic volumes based on our refined methodology.

15 In terms of comments to the Department's Assessment Report, Iberdrola is generally comfortable with DPFI's report and it considers it to be a very comprehensive and robust assessment of the project. There is just a few items that we just wanted to provide further clarity for completeness and the Commission's consideration.

20 On the VPA, we noted that the Assessment Report mentions an agreement has been reached with Council on the VPA. We would like to clarify that while discussions are moving very positively and constructively as it's been along the journey of the project, that a final agreement has not yet been executed. We issued our last VPA offer on the 25 12th of November last year. Final negotiations are underway though and full execution is anticipated shortly.

The other point is around –

30 **MR CHILCOTT:** Just in relation to that, Jose. You say it's anticipated shortly, has it been to Council? Normally, VPAs need to go to council meetings to be signed off. Has that step been undertaken yet, just out of information?

35 **MR OPAZO:** Yes, so what we understand now, because we found being in this process, I guess, as I flagged in the timeline, since 2024. The VPA offer, just for context, is based strictly on the NSW Benefits Sharing Guideline of 2024. From what I understand from discussion with Council is that they are in internal assessment and policy on how to, yes, what expectation they have on proponents in how to structure the VPA. The discussion is still ongoing.

40 **MR CHILCOTT:** Okay. So, it sounds like it hasn't gone to the Council for any sort of sign off as yet.

45 **MS CARUDO:** We'll probably take that one on notice and get back to you with an answer.

MR CHILCOTT: No, I'm just thinking that normally VPAs have to go to a formal council meeting to be approved, that's all. I was just interested in where you were in the process. Thank you.

MR OPAZO: Yes. On the community engagement side, we just wanted to note that DPHI's report does a really good job in highlighting the engagement with Council and government agencies. But we just wanted to note that Iberdrola has done extensive community engagement since the beginning of the life of this project, and we have presented many venues for the community to be able to give feedback and influence the project.

So, there are some of the metrics there. We did four community drop-in sessions throughout 2024 and 2025. We have had multiple face-to-face meetings with residents along the relevant Burgmanns Lane sections, Whitehouse Lane, Ascot-Calala Road and nearby residents. We have discussed, and we keep discussing with key local community groups such as Tamworth LALC, TAFE, Clontarf Foundation, RFS, the Chamber of Commerce. Yes, just to note that we also did a community survey in 2025 with 250 respondents [unintelligible 00:22:30] specific in the area of Tamworth.

Lastly, on the Amendment Reports 1 and 2, yes, we just wanted to note that amendments were primarily undertaken to ensure that all agency and stakeholder feedback was fully captured in one single robust SSD application, and also to note that this highlights the iterative nature of the planning and design process.

MS CARUDO: Thanks, Jose. Glynn will take us through key issues next. Just to open up this section, we just wanted to highlight that the Department considers that the project is in the public interest and is approvable subject to the recommended conditions of consent. And also, that the site is appropriate for a battery, given the access to major electricity transmission network infrastructure, as Jose pointed out in the previous section. And it also aligns with the objectives of the New England North West Regional Plan.

This project would also provide substantial investment towards improving the reliability of the energy network, and providing that storage and firming capacity to the NEM.

MR CHILCOTT: Thanks for that. And just for your information, we have earlier today met with the Department and during the discussions, put a number of questions to them which will be on the record, and at some point you'd probably want to have a look at them once that material is published.

MS CARUDO: Thank you, that's noted.

MR GLYNN DIWELL: My name is Glynn Diwell, I'll be giving an overview of the key issues for the project. Those key issues that were assessed in EIS and the subsequent amendment reports in accordance with the SEARs for the project.

The key issues have also kind of been highlighted based on the submissions received during the exhibition phase of the project. So, the first key issue is visual impact. Landscape and visual impacts to the surrounding receivers was, as I said, it was highlighted as a key issue and concern for the local community and residents, particularly in relation to receiver views towards the construction activities within the

project site and the BESS facility itself during the operation, including night-time lighting at the BESS facility during operation.

5 A Landscape and Visual Assessment was prepared for both the EIS and then again updated for the Amendment Report 1. During the construction, due to the temporary nature of construction, it was considered unlikely that the project would have significant visual impacts to surrounding receivers. During operation, the project ranged from between low, very low to low for visual impacts, and again considered low during the Amendment Report for the connection option to the overhead
10 transmission line.

The proposed mitigation measures, as part of the Visual Impact Assessment, included the use of materials for the project which integrated within the surrounding landscape. So, the implementation of good design principles, including the integration and
15 ensuring that the project itself integrated and blended with the surrounding landscape, including even the colour of the ancillary buildings and the noise walls.

Also, the installation and maintenance of landscaping to the north, east and south of the BESS facility, which would be planted once construction is commenced. And with fast-growing species that integrate with the surrounding landscape. We would also – I think Iberdrola may have commenced consultation with some of the surrounding
20 residents around particular screening locations and dimensions which would enhance mitigation measures for those impacted neighbours.

Also, just touching on the night-time impacts. The project would include installation of low-intensity lighting in accordance with the Australian Standards. And on the whole, the project was viewed as an extension of the existing landscape and visual character, primarily due to the transmission infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the project.
25

Onto noise. So, a Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment was prepared in accordance with the SEARs, and updated for the Amendment Report following project refinements, including operational and construction assumptions. The assessment concluded that non-associated receivers were not expected to be highly noise-affected during construction. During operation, the project was predicted to comply with Noise
30 Policy for Industry criteria under typical conditions which occur 90% of the time.
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Under worst-case meteorological conditions, the project – which would occur up to 10% of the time, there would be limited exceedances of the criteria at a small number of receivers.
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From a road traffic noise perspective, the project was predicted to comply with the EPA's Road Noise Policy, and there would be no operation or vibration impacts expected.
45

Proposed mitigation measures for noise included the preparation of a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan. During operation, the project would be managed in accordance with the conditions of approval, compliance with the Noise Policy for Industry criteria, and the project's approved noise limits. Also, the

preparation of a Design Noise Verification Report and post-commissioning monitoring for up to three months upon commencement of operation.

5 Provision of receiver based architectural treatments would also be investigated for the neighbours where exceedances of the Noise Policy objectives occur for more than 10% of any season. And that would be done in consultation with landowners.

10 **MR CHILCOTT:** And will that be at your initiation or will that be dependent on them approaching you?

MR OPAZO: So, currently through the planning framework conditions, we are working on that more proactively.

15 **MR CHILCOTT:** Sorry, can you say that again – did you say that would be a proactive initiative rather than a reactive initiative?

20 **MR OPAZO:** Yes, sorry Michael, maybe I wasn't very clear. But yes, we are, prior to the planning framework and the recommended instrument of consent on the architectural treatment request by the residents, we are actually already engaging with those residents that are comparatively mostly impacted by the project during operations, and tailoring an agreement.

MR CHILCOTT: Thank you very much for that advice.

25 **MR DIWELL:** So, onto traffic and transport. The main increase is in project related traffic would occur during construction, which would be temporary in nature for the 12 to 15-month construction period, with peaks occurring just for a few months within that period.

30 Peak daily vehicle movements during construction would be up to 80 heavy goods vehicles and 80 light vehicles in an hour. Heavy vehicles would access the facility by the New England Highway onto Whitehouse Lane and then onto Ascot-Calala Road, where the project site access point is located. Any heavy vehicles travelling onto Tamworth Substation would continue up Ascot-Calala Road and then turn left onto Burgmanns Lane.

40 Due to the existing road network, it's expected ... The existing road network is expected to be able to cope with the traffic related projects for traffic for the project, with only relatively minor increases. Operational traffic would be minimal, just a few maintenance vehicles during the operational phase of the project.

45 Just touching on the over-size/over-mass traffic movements. The BESS facility components would be transported to the project from Newcastle and would be using approved BW approved routes, including the New England REZ project approved route.

We undertook some swept path analysis for the route, which looked at the ability for those intersections to accommodate the size of the vehicles. As a result, we did some consultation with Muswellbrook Shire Council and came up with two options. One

would use the Thomas Mitchell Drive, which is an approved mining transport route. And then the other would completely bypass Muswellbrook and follow Denman Road.

5 **MR CHILCOTT:** There's a low bridge as you go through Muswellbrook, isn't there, if you make your way through the highway. I could imagine that might be at least a matter of focus for you. But ...

MR DIWELL: Yes, that was one of the considerations for these two routes.

10 **MR CHILCOTT:** Yes, yes.

MR DIWELL: Within the Tamworth Regional Council area itself, we will be undertaking some minor road upgrades on the Whitehouse Lane, Ascot-Calala intersection, which just includes some temporary infill and some temporary relocation of some signage.

15
20 And then on the New England Highway, Whitehouse Lane and New England Highway/Burgmanns Lane intersection, there will just be a need for some line marking works just to increase the right-turn lane for the size of the vehicles. Proposed mitigation includes the preparation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

25 Moving onto fire. So, we assessed fire from two perspectives. The internal BESS related fire scenarios, and external bushfire. The BESS related fire looked at a number of scenarios which were assessed but not expected to result in any significant impacts beyond the site boundary. The project is located on land mapped as Category 3 Bushfire Prone Land and the assessment was done in accordance with the NSW Regional Fire Service requirements.

30 **PROF ELIZABETH TAYLOR:** Could I just – oh.

MR CHILCOTT: Elizabeth, do you have a question? Sorry, just my colleague, Elizabeth Taylor, had a question.

35 **PROF TAYLOR:** Could I just confirm that the original study was undertaken, the PHA was undertaken on the basis that you will be having an energy volt battery system, volt DC model technology? Have you any plans to move from that, because in which case their report suggests that there would need to be a different analysis undertaken.

40 **MR OPAZO:** Yes, we are considering other suppliers.

PROF TAYLOR: You are?

45 **MR OPAZO:** Yes. But we need to update the report once the supplier is selected. And as part of the proposed mitigation measures as well, we need to prepare our fire safety study once we have the supplier selected, the final supplier selected.

PROF TAYLOR: So, perhaps that needs to be considered as a condition to ensure that we're all on the same page regarding the suitability of the PHA data analysis to underpin the final outcome decision of technology being used.

5 **MS CARUDO:** Thanks, Elizabeth. Yes, we'll definitely take that point into account.

PROF TAYLOR: Thank you.

10 **MR DIWELL:** Thank you. Just moving onto proposed mitigation measures for fire impacts or fire risks. For the PHA, we would be preparing and implementing a fire safety study, an Emergency Management Plan, and include an emergency services information pack and responder inductions, incorporation of compliant separation distances between BESS units and infrastructure, 24/7 monitoring and alarm systems, and provision of trafficable fire breaks and compliant asset protection zones.

15 We'd also be including an on-site firefighting water supply system which would have a minimum capacity of 20,000 litres. In terms of bushfire risk, again, we would be incorporating an asset protection zone, emergency access tracks, potential undergrounding of electrical infrastructure where practicable, and again, a Bushfire
20 Emergency Management and Evacuation Plans in accordance with NSW Rural Fire Service.

PROF TAYLOR: And so, again, I'm just reiterating that of course those would be, those conditions would need to reflect the technology you end up using.

25 **MR DIWELL:** Okay, thank you. Biodiversity. As Jose said at the beginning of the presentation, the project was designed to avoid areas of significant impact, particularly in relation to biodiversity values, and avoidance of higher quality vegetation.

30 The project would potentially involve the clearance of just over 4 hectares of native vegetation, including 0.11 hectares of PCT 3396. No threatened flora or threatened fauna habitat would be cleared as part of the project.

35 **MR CHILCOTT:** Could I just confirm that. So, you're going to clear 0.22 hectares of a critically endangered ecosystem which is flora. But then you have no threatened flora to be cleared? I'm not sure how those two statements align.

MR DIWELL: We'll probably, it may be something we will have to come back to you on. I just need to check – I'll have to check the correct answer to that.

40 **MR CHILCOTT:** It's just the juxtaposition you're saying you're clearing 0.22 hectares of a CEEC, which is a threatened community which is flora, and therefore – maybe you mean no individual flora species rather than flora communities. But there is some impact on something.

45 **MR DIWELL:** Yes, I will get back to you on that one.

MR CHILCOTT: Okay.

MR DIWELL: As part of the proposed mitigation measures, a Biodiversity Management Plan would be prepared for the project in consultation with CPHR.

5 Flooding and water supply. The project is not located on flood prone land, and it was predicted that there'd be negligible impact on groundwater sources. There would be potential for erosion and sedimentation, potential for spills and leaks, and potential for unexpected migration from contaminated material. A Water Impact Assessment was undertaken ... Did somebody ...?

10 **PROF TAYLOR:** Yes, sorry, I'm probably not being loud enough and then you moved onto more information. I just wouldn't mind walking through, if there was a road closure and a fire at the same time during flooding, your system in place to ensure that you do have capacity to deal with the fire in that situation, or are you comfortable or is the Fire Service comfortable that the roads will now be capable of being open in
15 that type of scenario?

MR DIWELL: I'll probably have to get back to you on that particular question. There will be varying ... There would be the inclusion of flood emergency response protocols in the Traffic Management Plan and Emergency Management Plan. I can get
20 back to you on the details of those particular protocols.

PROF TAYLOR: Thanks very much. As somebody who used to live in north Queensland, I'm fairly sensitive to this.

25 **MS CARUDO:** It's a very good question.

MR DIWELL: As part of the water supply study, an impact assessment was prepared which looked at potential options for water supply for the project. Three options were proposed, including the reuse of stormwater and rainwater which would be captured by
30 our on-site tanks. Second option was the use of the town water supply in consultation with Tamworth Regional Council. And then there's an existing groundwater bore on site. For the Amendment Report one, we did a preliminary Groundwater Assessment for that particular bore, which concluded that the bore would be feasible to used for the project, but subject to further test during detailed design, water access licences and
35 water supply approvals.

PROF TAYLOR: Could you give an update on where you're at with water approvals and those ... I note that the Water Authority was fairly keen to get further information, I'm just not quite sure of the status of the recent discussions on this regarding water
40 access licensing and the impacts that might have on local water supply.

MS CARUDO: I think we'll be engaging with them shortly.

MR OPAZO: Yes, we plan to engage very shortly. Plus we are refining the
45 methodology of construction and the consumption as well of water. But it is on the agenda as a key priority item, just to be able to use the groundwater bore if possible during construction, and if feasible, and if it's not affecting or impacting nearby bores.

PROF TAYLOR: And so, are you also having conversations with Council regarding how you might engage with them for use of their water if the bore is not going to be totally available?

5 **MR OPAZO:** Yes, yes. We've been engaging with Tamworth Council on this. We know it's [unintelligible 00:45:32] that water is a bit of an issue in Tamworth. There is a lot of competition in between, that's why.

10 **MR DIWELL:** It's probably worth noting that most of the water needed for the project would be during the construction phase, mainly for dust suppression. And if there's any, I guess, we would like at other methods for dust suppression if there was a potential issue with water supply.

15 **PROF TAYLOR:** Yes. I suppose the two areas are that construction phase but also if there was a fire, I note that you were going to have a dam on site and the Water Authority was then asking questions regarding what that meant in terms of profiling the water runoff and sort of impact on local water supplies like bores. Has that all been worked through and resolved, is perhaps a question.

20 **MS CARUDO:** I think there's further discussions that we'll have to have with the different authorities, but it's a really good point.

PROF TAYLOR: Thank you.

25 **MR CHILCOTT:** Thank you.

30 **MR DIWELL:** As part of the EIS process, cumulative impacts were assessed and particularly in relation to the Tamworth BESS project and Calala BESS. The final details of those projects in terms of their timing and overlap with the Kingswood project is largely uncertain at this stage. But Iberdrola would commit to continue monitoring the timing and location of those other developments in the vicinity of the project and commit to undertake consultation to ensure the best outcomes for the project.

35 **PROF TAYLOR:** So, can I just ask a question about that last one. Is that picked up in the conditions of consent, or is that something that you will send a letter noting you will undertake that commitment? How will that be actioned, that last dot point.

40 **MR OPAZO:** Good question. Maybe it's not reflected in the instrument of consent.

PROF TAYLOR: No.

MR DIWELL: I don't think it's currently reflected, but it's a good point.

45 **PROF TAYLOR:** Great. Maybe that could be something for the Department. Mm-hm.

MR CHILCOTT: And just for my point, just in relation to the second and third points, that is the two above the point that Elizabeth was raising with you. You've

noted that you've looked at the cumulative impacts of traffic, transport, noise vibration, hazards etc., and they've been considered. And then you say, "all other issues are expected to have negligible or minor cumulative impacts." So, the anticipation is those other matters in that dot point starting with traffic and transport will have non-negligible impacts to be managed. Is that correct?

MR DIWELL: Yes, that's correct, yes.

MR CHILCOTT: Right. Thank you.

MR DIWELL: Onto decommissioning and rehabilitation. The project would be suitably decommissioned at the end of the project life if operations unexpectedly ceased. And there would be implementation of decommissioning and rehabilitation measures to meet the decommissioning triggers and rehabilitation objectives for the project.

PROF TAYLOR: Could you just go back ...

MR CHILCOTT: Yes, so if you could go back there, guys, just a question. I was anticipating Elizabeth would have one here as well. Elizabeth?

PROF TAYLOR: Dot point 2. What's the depth of 500 millimetres – as a construction engineer, I'm fascinated that that's been limited to below ground to a depth of 500 millimetres. That is not very deep in terms of rehabilitation or what's likely to be constructed if you are constructed a building.

MR DIWELL: I think all underground infrastructure would be removed that would be able to be feasibly removed as part of the project. I will have to check where that 500 millimetres came from, I think that might be incorrect.

PROF TAYLOR: I think that is worth it, particularly as Michael noted also, that within the table 3 of the conditions of consent, there is land use should be able to restore land capability to pre-existing use. But if there was a great slab, that might not be possible.

MR CHILCOTT: You said things that would be feasibly removed. I'm interested in knowing what are the things that are not feasibly removed below 500 millimetres.

MR DIWELL: We can definitely get back to you on that one.

PROF TAYLOR: Thank you.

MR CHILCOTT: Yes, it'll be good to know if there is something that's proposed to be left, what that might be, and why.

MR DIWELL: And just going back to the VPA. So, under the NSW Benefits Sharing Guideline 2024, as you know, we have entered into a negotiation with the Tamworth Regional Council around getting a VPA in place. Just to break that down, we will be looking at approximately \$3.24 million across the life of the project, and that will be

split between 2.7 million administered by the Council and \$486,000 which will be managed through Iberdrola's community benefit program.

5 Under some of the social and economic analyses that's been done to date, we have seen that the project is expected to increase Tamworth LGA's economic output by around about \$125 million, also increase statewide economic output by \$234 million. We will be able to hopefully generate two new full-time equivalent jobs which will provide long-term economic benefits with the intent of contributing to a more resilient, efficient and sustainable energy system.

10

MR CHILCOTT: I think it was mentioned that the project would generate something like a hundred jobs in total, presumably most of those in construction phase. Did you address or are you able to speak to us in relation to matters concerning worker accommodation and sourcing of your workers?

15

MS CARUDO: Thanks, Michael. We'll be working on an accommodation strategy as the kind of next step. But Glynn, if there's anything else you'd like to add.

20

MR DIWELL: No, not at the moment. As Maria said, there will be the commitment to prepare an accommodation strategy for the project, which will look to ensure that there's no adverse impact on the local area or Tamworth itself. But yes, that is something that's been committed to, yes.

25

MR CHILCOTT: But not yet defined?

MR DIWELL: It hasn't been prepared at this point. The strategy will be prepared in accordance with Tamworth Regional Council.

30

MR CHILCOTT: It was a matter they raised in their initial submissions.

MR DIWELL: Yes, and they've highlighted particularly periods of high pressure on their housing stock, given some of the events that they do actually host, and they do see populations ... And so, that is something that has to be taken into consideration in the plan.

35

MR CHILCOTT: Yes. Did you go to Country Music Week or ...?

MS CARUDO: Yes, we did, yes.

40

PROF TAYLOR: Could I pick up another point around that in terms of the employment. I note within the expectation there'll be an accommodation and employment strategy prioritising the employment of local workers and use of local businesses during the construction and operation, where feasible.

45

Would there be any limits, particularly, say, during the operation phase, I assume around maintenance and things like that, where you would not anticipate being able to use local workers?

MR OPAZO: So, I can talk to that. So, we will have site presence and that would be an Iberdrola site representative that is managing the site on a day-to-day basis. And on time at some occasions we will have to be bringing in specialists to problem solve and fix matters, and those ones might not be feasible to have in the local communities. But
5 in general, a lot of these – the maintenance that goes in a battery facility is not too dissimilar to the maintenance that goes for a, say, the substation next door to it as well. So, there is a lot of opportunities to employ local expertise.

PROF TAYLOR: I assume also the maintenance of the grounds and the roads, the fire
10 breaks, all that sort of thing, you would be, assuming, would be a sort of second order employment opportunity. It just doesn't seem to be noted anywhere, but is that what you're thinking?

MR OPAZO: Yes, and those would be sourced locally as, yes.
15

PROF TAYLOR: Thank you.

MS CARUDO: I'm just conscious of time, I appreciate we have one minute left. Just
20 to conclude, and I appreciate the IPC just met with the Department this morning. But to conclude, the project does provide long-term strategy benefits to the state of New South Wales and Australia more widely. It does align with the strategic direction of NSW Government, so that investment on storage and firming, to secure reliable energy for New South Wales. And it does contribute to the dispatchable energy availability and improving that stability and reliability in the New England North West Region and
25 also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

On the comments for the Department's recommended conditions, Iberdrola Australia's
generally comfortable with the recommended conditions and we also note the
30 comments made during this meeting around taking into consideration, making sure it's reflective of the technology once the final OEM is selected.

We've also taken note the other two points raised by Elizabeth and Michael on the
consideration for potential impacts when it comes to cumulative impacts in the area
and also the decommissioning and rehabilitation points noted today.
35

MR CHILCOTT: Thank you. No, that's great, thank you very much. I'll just check
with Elizabeth. Elizabeth, any further questions from you?

PROF TAYLOR: Not at this time. I think we perhaps will be looking at the proactive
40 engagement with some of the responses or how the operational organisation of some of the conditions of consent might work to ensure that both parties are comfortable with whatever outcomes come of the consultations you had. So, there might be tweaks in wording and things like that, I would certainly wish to foreshadow.

MS CARUDO: Absolutely. We'll take note of that, Elizabeth, thank you.
45

MR CHILCOTT: All right. And we're out on site next week to do the site view, and
we'll be having a look at some of the local transport issues, the road configurations and
so forth, and engaging with some of the receptors to the local receivers, doing some

site views out there. That's all still a work in progress, but just to give you a heads up that we're keen to get on site and to understand everything on site, but also keen to understand the context as well.

5 **MS CARUDO:** thank you, Michael.

MR CHILCOTT: Yes, you'll be in touch with Geoff and Tahlia in relation to details of timings for meetings and so forth out there.

10 **MS CARUDO:** Yes.

MR CHILCOTT: I'll just check with Tahlia and Geoff. Do either of you have questions or points you want to clarify with the Applicant at this point?

15 **MR GEOFF KWOK:** Nothing from me, thanks Michael.

MS TAHLIA HUTCHINSON: Me either, thanks Michael. We'll just send a formal letter with all the questions taken on notice to you in the next few days.

20 **MS CARUDO:** Thank you.

MR CHILCOTT: All right. Well, thank you, so thanks for your time, and thanks for the effort you put into giving us your perspective on the project, the insights you've been able to provide. We'll look forward to seeing some of you on site next week.

25 **PROF TAYLOR:** Thank you.

MS CARUDO: Likewise, Thank you, everyone. See you next week.

30 **>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**