



## **TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING**

RE: BURROWAY SOLAR FARM (SSD-55968733)

### **DEPARTMENT MEETING**

PANEL: ANDREW MILLS (CHAIR)  
SARAH DINNING

OFFICE OF THE IPC: GEOFF KWOK  
TAHLIA HUTCHINSON

DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANNING, HOUSING &  
INFRASTRUCTURE: NESTOR TSAMBOS  
RITA HATEM

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE: 2:00PM – 3:00PM  
FRIDAY, 30<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2026

## <THE MEETING COMMENCED

**MR ANDREW MILLS:** Well, good afternoon and welcome. Thank you very much for joining us. I'm just going to start with the opening statement. So before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking to you from Gadigal land and I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands from which we virtually meet today and pay my respects to their elders from past and present.

Welcome to the meeting today to discuss Burroway Solar Farm, State Significant Development 55968733, currently before the Commission for determination. The applicant, Edify Energy Pty Ltd, proposes to develop a 100 megawatt state significant development solar farm and associated 100 megawatt, 400 megawatt hour battery energy storage system, approximately 18 kilometres north of Narromine in the Narromine Shire local government area. The site falls within the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone.

My name is Andrew Mills and I am Chair of the Commission and of this Commission panel and I am joined by my fellow Commissioner, Sarah Dinning. We're also joined by Tahlia Hutchinson and Geoff Kwok from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.

In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website. 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 is 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, you may take the question on notice. But following the meeting, the Commission will advise you in writing of any questions taken on notice that the panel considers it requires a formal response to. Any subsequent response or information provided to the Commission will then be published on our website.

I request that all participants here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure they do not speak over the top of each other to ensure accuracy of the transcript. Thank you. We will now begin. Perhaps each of you, Nestor and Rita, would like to introduce yourselves.

**MR NESTOR TSAMBOS:** Thank you, Chair. My name is Nestor Tsambos, team leader for solar and battery assessments at the Department of Planning.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you.

**MS RITA HATEM:** Thank you, Chair. My name is Rita Hatem from the Department of Planning and I'm within the solar and battery assessments within energy assessments.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you very much both. Did you want to focus on any particular parts of the overall assessment from the Department today?

5 **MR TSAMBOS:** So we've prepared a presentation which I suppose has our key issues and then some other issues that the Commission alerted us to sort of beforehand. But I think Tahlia has also reached out and advised that there are a couple of matters which we can, I suppose, move over in slightly less detail, noting that the Commission's had some discussions around those matters  
10 previously. So maybe we'll get the presentation up, but if you feel that there's some matters there which I'm talking about which you've already covered, feel free to just let me know and we'll move over those quickly.

15 **MR MILLS:** Thank you. Nestor, you sometimes go a little quiet so just for the recording –

**MR TSAMBOS:** Apologies. Okay.

20 **MR MILLS:** Yes, thank you.

**MR TSAMBOS:** Is that a little better?

**MR MILLS:** That is. Thank you.

25 **MR TSAMBOS:** No worries. Apologies for that.

**MS HATEM:** Can you see my screen?

30 **MR TSAMBOS:** Yes, I think it just needs to be made full screen mode.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you.

35 **MR TSAMBOS:** Great. Thank you. So good afternoon, everyone. So like I said, my name's Nestor Tsambos, team leader in the energy assessments team. I'd also like to start off by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we all join today and I'd like to pay my respects to their elders past and present and extend that respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders here today. Next slide. Thank you, Rita.

40 So like I said, look, we've got a slide deck here which covers some key issues for us and then some other issues which are in a sort of shorter form. But we'll skip over some of those matters which you're already familiar with. But to start off with and just going into the context of the project. Next slide, please, Rita. So I won't spend too much time on this since you've already introduced the project,  
45 Chair. But like you said, Burroway Solar Farm, proposed 100 megawatt solar farm in the Central-West Orana REZ from Edify Energy, located approximately 18 kilometres north of Narromine within the Narromine Shire LGA and in proximity to the Dubbo LGA.

So just give some quick strategic context around the project in relation to its location and also access to the electricity network. So noting that all coal fired power plants in New South Wales are scheduled for closure in the next 20 years, this project would assist in providing large scale renewable energy generation to meet increased electricity demand. The Department considers that the project is consistent with relevant national, state and local policy documents which identify the need to diversify the energy generation mix and reduce the carbon emissions intensity of the grid, whilst also providing energy security and reliability.

Now, from a regional perspective, the site benefits from direct access to the electricity network via an existing 132 kV transmission line which crosses the site. The site has good transport links and is in close proximity to the Newell highway. Biodiversity and heritage impacts are largely avoided through project design and site selection. Residual impacts are minimised through mitigation and offset as required. The site has confirmed as not containing any biophysical strategic agricultural land or BSAL land and will not impact the ability of any nearby agricultural activities to continue.

Overall, the Department considers the site to be appropriate for the project and also consistent with the Department's large scale solar energy guideline, which is our sort of policy document relating to large scale solar energy.

In terms of the project itself, it will provide benefits to the local community, including up to 250 construction jobs, contributions to Council of approximately 85,000 a year. There would also be broader benefits to the state through an injection of approximately 379 million in capital investment to the New South Wales economy. Next slide please, Rita.

So community engagement and public submissions and also agency submissions and advice really. The Department exhibited the EIS in October and November 2024, received 83 public submissions which consisted of 81 objections and two in support. Narromine Shire Council and Dubbo Regional Council provided comment on the project throughout the assessment process but did not object. All of the individuals who made a submission on the project were located further than 5 kilometres away from the project with the majority of the submitters or 93% being located more than 100 kilometres away from the project.

The most common matters raised in the public objections were the reliability of renewable energy, land use compatibility including the loss of agricultural land, biodiversity impacts, visual impacts and hazards including bushfire and contamination. In response to feedback from Dubbo Regional Council and some of the public submissions and also to address potential cumulative impacts, the project was amended to introduce a workers accommodation camp within the existing site boundary, which was supported by both relevant councils. Throughout the assessment process the Department also sought advice from 16 government agencies and visited the site itself in May 2025.

Next slide please, Rita. So like I said, key issues here, I think we'll go through all of them but traffic and transport we'll go through fairly quickly, noting the Commission's advice. So next slide please, Rita. So energy transition. So again, like I've said, the project aligns with a range of national and state policies relating to diversifying the energy generation mix and reducing carbon emissions intensity. The project is in an area with direct access to the energy network and the Department has also consulted with Essential Energy, who is the network operator in that area, throughout the assessment process, who raised no concerns with the project.

The project is located on land where solar development is permissible with development consent under the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP. It has a generating capacity of 100 megawatts, which would generate enough energy to power roughly 42,000 homes and obviously this generation is consistent with the New South Wales climate change policy framework of achieving net zero emissions by 2050. Next slide please, Rita.

Land use compatibility. So look, the project is located on land within the RU1 zone under the Narromine LEP. So under the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP, electricity generating works, which includes the solar farm and battery here, are permissible with consent on any land in a prescribed non-residential zone, which includes the RU1 primary production zone. So accordingly, the project is permissible with development consent.

So the lots themselves, I guess, which comprise the project cover approximately 495 hectares with a development footprint of approximately 396 hectares. Now, the site is largely cleared agricultural land, the majority of which has been previously used for some cropping activities. Within that development footprint, it's comprised of largely class 3 to class 6 land, so I suppose those sort of varied land classes there within the footprint.

Now, in terms of land use compatibility, the combined development footprint of this project along with other proposed approved and operational SSD solar farms in the Central Western Orana region represents approximately 17,250 hectares. This loss of 17,250 hectares represents a very small proportion or only 0.19% of the 8.9 million hectares of land currently used for agricultural purposes within the CWA region itself.

Now, neither Council nor DPI Agriculture raised concerns that the project would compromise the long-term use of the land for agricultural purposes and importantly, the loss of a relatively small area of agricultural land in the region must be balanced against the broader strategic goals of the government, along with the environmental and economic benefits of solar energy.

Now, through the assessment process, Edify prepared a land use conflict and risk assessment or a LUCRA as part of their EIS to assess the potential impacts of the project on land uses surrounding the site. The LUCRA concluded that the potential impacts to surrounding land uses were manageable with the implementation of a

number of proposed management measures, including a number of management plans and other strategies, all of which Edify has committed to. DPI Agriculture also made some recommendations, which Edify Energy has also committed to.

5 The Department notes that this project's location aligns with the relevant technical and commercial factors required for selecting suitable sites for solar energy under the large-scale solar guideline and based on the findings of the EIS and the Department's assessment, the Department considers the project would not result in any unacceptable impacts on the local community or the environment.

10 Anecdotally, but during the site visit, the existing landholder also advised that they would be continuing their agricultural activities on their other properties which surround the site itself. Overall, the Department considers that the project would be unlikely to generate any significant land use conflicts and would be compatible with the existing and future proposed land uses. Next slide, please.

15 So traffic and transport, I think we'll keep this brief but really the story here is that the Department has worked quite closely with Transport for New South Wales and Narromine Council and also Dubbo Council to reach a solution which is amenable to all of those parties in terms of the access arrangements. Throughout the  
20 assessment process there was a number of I guess additional information that was provided by the applicant and some, you know, amendment of transport routes, which has ultimately led us to a position where all the roads authorities are comfortable that the trips generated by the development can be appropriately serviced by the route and the relevant intersection of roads that are proposed. So  
25 we can go further from there. If there's any further questions on that, we're happy to go back in further detail at the end. Next slide, please, Rita.

Temporary workers accommodation. So like we said, this was introduced to the development through amendment and really in response to feedback received by  
30 the Department and also to mitigate a lot of the potential social and cumulative impacts that the development could have caused. Now, in terms of the accommodation itself, so up to 250 workers will be required during the peak construction period. That peak construction period is for about six months. Obviously, the full construction is longer but they've indicated to us that they'll  
35 operating at that peak for around half a year and the proposed construction of a temporary workers accommodation facility will have capacity for 250 construction staff, so proposing to fully cover that, I suppose, demand for workforce accommodation during peak construction for the project.

40 The camp is located in an existing corner of the site, which is to say that when the project was amended, the introduction of the camp didn't introduce any additional lots or go beyond existing boundaries that were assessed. It was located within the original footprint. And as a result of that, the camp does not result in any  
45 additional biodiversity or heritage impacts, nor any significant increases in noise or visual impacts. The camp is to be accessed from the main site entrance, so same as the original proposal. So there's no additional entrances that are proposed or required and I guess importantly it significantly reduces both the cumulative impacts on temporary accommodation within the REZ, which is a key pinch point

at the moment, but also it reduces the transport impacts of the proposal, obviously reducing the number of vehicle trips that are required to access the site day in and day out.

5 Edify has demonstrated suitable means of effectively servicing the TWA facility in terms of water and waste, which we'll discuss a little bit more about later on, and Edify has also committed to establishing an onsite medical centre and first aid station, which will be resourced with a qualified nurse. A GP would be made  
10 available either onsite or via telehealth services in accordance with New South Wales Health requirements. We consulted with New South Wales Health on the project throughout the assessment, who raised no concerns with this approach.

15 So in order to ensure that these appropriate arrangements are implemented, the Department has recommended a condition for the preparation of an accommodation camp management plan in consultation with Health New South Wales and Council, which will cover those matters in more detail as is appropriate. Edify has also committed to employing security personnel on the site and New South Wales Police raised no concerns with the project or with this approach.

20 The Department is satisfied that the addition of the temporary workers accommodation facility would reduce the potential cumulative impacts, social impacts and also traffic impacts of the development and is appropriate for the site. Next slide, please.

25 **MR MILLS:** Sorry, Nestor, it might be best if we just dwell on that now, if you don't mind.

30 **MR TSAMBOS:** Sure.

35 **MR MILLS:** So you won't be aware that the applicant has put to us that the condition B37 is perhaps onerous in the sense that it requires the construction and operation of the temporary workers accommodation facility to occur prior to the commencement of all other construction activities. And we're aware that that peak period will mean that there'll be 150 and then up to 250 during that six months or seven months, according to their documents and indeed the 250's only required for two and a half months. And they are putting to us that that requirement should be expressed [unintelligible 00:18:51] differently and perhaps it's already covered by B39.

40 I just wanted to get – well, first of all I guess I'm taking you or telling you something that is new perhaps to you, unless you've heard it directly from Edify already and wanted to get a reaction from you in relation to that. In particular, they seem to be exercised in relation to the timing of the expectation of building and  
45 then building all of it at once as opposed to potentially staging the building.

**MR TSAMBOS:** Sure and yes, thank you, Chair, and I think it's a good question. So look, really what my response to that would be is that the Department is

absolutely open to Edify, with appropriate information, coming back to us under that condition and outlining a more detailed case as to when certain parts of the construction facility or let's say how many beds or whatever it might be, when those, you know, are required, I guess in accordance with the construction schedule and particular works and for the Department to consider that. And if appropriate information is provided, there's Planning Secretary's discretion within that condition itself to allow the flexibility to have potentially only, you know, whether it's 100 beds or whatever it might be, an appropriate number of beds constructed to match whatever construction activity is required on the site. The Department's absolutely open to that.

What was presented to us in the amendment report and in the EIS documents does not contain a sufficient level of detail for us to understand exactly at which stage how many beds will be required, what activities will be required, how many vehicle movements will be required and so the Department's approach has been to leave the door open for that for the applicant to come back to us in post-approval and for us to have those conversations and look at that additional assessment and potentially issue Planning Secretary's discretion over that matter. But in the lieu of I guess, you know, a really detailed understanding at this stage of how many workers will be required at which stage, the Department has drafted the condition in that way to provide the security that no matter what, there will be appropriate safeguards in place to ensure that these workers are not using a drain on the local accommodation.

So we're absolutely open to that. I understand what Edify is saying but I think our approach with this is to work with them in post-approval rather than what would ultimately need to happen at the moment for us to condition in some way would be to delay the assessment and receive a lot more information around what's happening at those various stages. So we're absolutely open to it. I understand where they're coming from. Our position isn't a blanket that they need to go and build this whole 250 camp before the first shovel is dropped on the site, but, you know, that's our I suppose the risk-based approach to conditioning that we've taken in this instance.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you. That's quite helpful. Sarah, did you want to comment or ask questions in relation to that point?

**MS SARAH DINNING:** Yes, thank you and that's good to hear, Nestor. I suppose the next aspect to do with this was a discussion around whether they would need to have a temporary workers accommodation once they've developed the accommodation and employment strategy. This is they being, sorry, the proponent Edify and it was an indication that, you know, they develop the accommodation and employment strategy and at that point then decide whether they needed to have one at all.

**MR TSAMBOS:** So our consent is structured to require them to need to construct a camp unless either the planning – well, I think really my view would be they need to do a workforce accom and employment strategy. That's a standard



requirement, whether you need a camp or not. Now, if there is some, I guess, way in the future that they consider that an accommodation camp isn't required, the mechanism for that would be to modify this consent ultimately, in my view. I think this consent is clear that a camp is required and certainly that is the level of security that councils and the community really want from this issue, in our view. We hear very strongly from councils that they don't consider that the use of their temporary accommodation by these projects is a matter that can be appropriately dealt with in post-approval. They want to see it assessed up front and that's really why we've conditioned the matter in this way.

Now, I understand where Edify is coming from and it is true to say that look, you know, these are projects that occur over a large number of years and certainly by the time at which a particular project goes to commence construction, perhaps there is a different context there in terms of those workforce accommodation requirements. But it would be my view that they would really need to modify the project in that instance and the Department, if they can demonstrate that, would potentially be open to such a modification. But to ensure, you know, we have to make a recommendation obviously at this stage based on the information that's in front of us and the information in front of us and what we're hearing from Council is that they need an accommodation camp.

So whether that camp needs to be scaled up or down potentially as a result of that accommodation strategy, that's certainly something that can be considered but I would consider it, you know, with everything we know about the REZs, what we're hearing from councils about their temporary accommodation, I think we really, you know, we've sought to be strong in our conditioning on this matter and that's why the conditions are drafted as they are. That's not to say that in the future the context wouldn't change and that the Department wouldn't consider otherwise, but I suppose in my in my view or at least in the Department's view, the conditions are set up to allow some flexibility there in terms of the solution for temporary workers accommodation through the means of Planning Secretary's discretion.

Yes, the Department is absolutely open to working with Edify and councils when it comes time to undertake those sort of post-approval activities but I guess it's our view that as set up by these conditions, an accommodation camp is appropriate at this stage based on the information.

**MS DINNING:** Thank you, Nestor. Andrew.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you.

**MS DINNING:** Thank you.

**MR MILLS:** It's fine. I think on that point I think we understand where you're coming from in relation to this. So we'll take that on board and consider what we might be able to do with the conditions and engage with you again.

**MR TSAMBOS:** Sure. Right, next slide, I think, Rita. So now we're going into some of the other matters here. Now, I think in here are some of the matters that were raised in the Commission's initial email to us but then there's also some here which I'll go over fairly quickly, noting the previous advice. But of course, please stop me if there's any matters that you want further clarification on. So starting off with cumulative. Next slide, please, Rita.

**MS HATEM:** This is the slide that we're speaking to.

**MR TSAMBOS:** Is it? Sorry, okay, cool. Of course. Yes, that's right. So I suppose in terms of cumulative, now while it is, I guess, you know, broadly setting the context, while this project is within the REZ, it's located a fair distance away to most other projects that are within the REZ. It's not in one of the, I suppose, the hotspot REZ areas, at least at this stage. So the Department's done an assessment of the project in accordance with our cumulative impact assessment guidelines. Now, that's considered other and nearby projects in the REZ. Edify's assessment itself also identified relevant projects and considered what the potential cumulative impacts would be.

Now, really the introduction of the accommodation camp and I'm not going to talk too much more about it but that does significantly reduce what we consider would have been some of the key impacts of the key cumulative impacts, particularly from a social, workforce, accommodation and a transport perspective. From a visual perspective, the project will not – or visual or noise perspective, the project won't result in any significant cumulative impacts with nearby renewable energy projects. There aren't many others that are that nearby.

In accordance with the cumulative impact assessment guidelines, of course, if Burroway is to be approved, obviously other applicants will need to account for Burroway within their assessment in accordance with the cumulative impact assessment guidelines. With that said, I think the Department is satisfied that the project has been designed to really minimise those potential cumulative impacts, noting its location within the REZ, which is obviously a key area.

Moving to I suppose the social and I suppose this is sort of somewhat related to that previous discussion, there are a relatively small number of residents near the site. The closest residential receiver is around 1.8 kilometres away, which is a fairly – which is, you know, in terms of I suppose some other renewable energy projects, that's a fairly good or large distance.

Now, there were some public submissions that raised concern regarding the impact of the project from a social perspective and to the community's rural lifestyle. The Department's considered this and considered Edify's social impact assessment. Now, none of these submissions, I suppose, were from people located within 5 kilometres of the site. Most of them, the vast majority of them, like I said, from people located further than 100 kilometres away. That notwithstanding, obviously the Department's considered the assessment and Edify's social impact assessment in detail.

5 The social impact assessment itself goes into some of those potential social  
impacts in more detail, including on local businesses and the economy. It  
identifies some potential impacts to accommodation and rental short-term  
accommodation, which have then subsequently been sort of resolved through the  
project amendment. Really from a social perspective and including the site visit,  
the Department thinks the project is reasonably well located to minimise social  
impacts, both through I suppose a relatively favourable transport route, which  
largely avoids local roads, the distance of the project to nearby receivers, which  
10 minimises visual and noise matters and then obviously the accommodation camp,  
like I've mentioned.

15 So moving then to visual, which I'll keep fairly brief, but ultimately the  
Department, you know, we assess solar farms in accordance with our large-scale  
solar energy guidelines. That solar energy guidelines has a technical supplement  
for landscape and visual impact assessment, which really clearly sets out a  
methodology for us to assess solar projects against. The applicant undertook a  
detailed assessment in accordance with that technical supplement, which the  
Department has assessed. There are, like I said, four non-associated receivers  
20 within 2 kilometres of the site. The closest is approximately 1.8 kilometres away.

25 To summarise, I suppose, the conclusions of the LVIA and the assessment, the  
Department found that the predicted visual impact on those four receivers who  
may have a view would be negligible due to a combination of distance,  
topography and intervening vegetation. And I'll leave that there but can obviously  
go into more detail into that as required. Similarly for water –

**MR MILLS:** Sorry –

30 **MR TSAMBOS:** Sorry, go on.

**MR MILLS:** – can I just jump in there and ask a question in terms of the visual  
impact?

35 **MR TSAMBOS:** Yes.

**MR MILLS:** I've seen the photo montage and so on but you've visited the site.  
We haven't as yet.

40 **MR TSAMBOS:** That's correct.

**MR MILLS:** You made reference to the topography. What is the – I just must  
admit I had the impression that the topography was generally pretty flat but –

45 **MR TSAMBOS:** It is. It's largely flat.

**MR MILLS:** Right, okay.

5 **MR TSAMBOS:** So I suppose and just to expand that further, so largely flat can be favourable from a visual perspective. Let's say if you have intervening vegetation or a screening, if you're in a flat landscape, that screening is more effective than if it was undulating or sloping down. So I suppose that's what I was referring to there in terms of favourable topography. Not necessarily that there's mounds or anything obstructing the view, but that it can be screened or is screened appropriately by vegetation and it doesn't slope, the views don't slope down towards the project, which means that it's less visible through the distance and, you know, roads and other things that go between those residences and the site itself.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you.

15 **MR TSAMBOS:** No problem. So then to water supply and really this is a simple one for us. So the applicant identified as part of their EIS that they would require a total of 76 megalitres of water during construction and then an additional 350 to 500 kilolitres of water required during operations for cleaning panels, maintenance, staff amenities and stuff like that. Edify has clarified its ability to obtain sufficient water volumes to satisfy the project's water demand, both during construction and operation, from three council owned water sources, including a potable water standpipe and some other sources which are, I suppose, within the local region to the site. And Narromine Council had no concerns with the use of these water sources and confirmed their ability to service the site.

20 The site itself isn't flood prone land and does not contain any water courses apart from some sort of I suppose man-made dams and accordingly the project's also not going to alter the hydrology of the site in any way. So we've got some standard conditions of consent in there relating to, you know, emergency management plans and so on but it's really quite a straightforward matter for assessment for us in terms of the water.

25 Moving on to the hazards and risk and I'll spend a little bit of time here. So the project has the option to construct either a centralised or a dispersed battery energy storage system. The Department has considered and assessed both BESS options and is satisfied with the location of the centralised BESS and considers that for the dispersed BESS, that the separation distances from surrounding land uses, including the temporary workers accommodation facility, suitably minimise the risk of hazards. The Department's consulted with both Fire and Rescue and the Rural Fire Service at various stages throughout the project, including implementing recommended conditions of consent from them and is accordingly satisfied that the risks associated with the project can be managed.

30 Now, there was a question from Tahlia relating to a particular condition relating to the limit on the dispersed battery storage, which I can talk to a little bit now and if you've got any further questions obviously we can get into it a little bit more detail. So really I guess from an assessment perspective, when we look at a project that's got different options, obviously we need to ensure that both of those options,

if we're going to allow for a consent that considers them, have been assessed fully and in appropriate detail.

5 Now, guess that condition has been placed on the consent really in discussions with the Department's hazard team and ultimately on advice from the Department's hazard team, which relates I guess to the information that was provided as part of the application and really if – I guess in a common sense, you know, understanding of centralised BESSs versus dispersed BESSs, obviously centralised BESS, all the batteries in one location, dispersed in several modules  
10 throughout the site. Now, typically I guess and, you know, when we start talking about dispersed BESSs, a dispersed BESS which has individual modules of 20 megawatts, up to 20 megawatts, we would consider that's fairly large. A battery which is 30 megawatts by itself would be considered – you know, could be considered as an SSD project if it reaches the appropriate triggers under the  
15 Planning SEPP.

20 So really having quite a small number of relatively large decentralised BESSs is something that the Department's hazard team advised that there was not sufficient information within I guess the EIS or the subsequent assessment to endorse at this stage without further consideration. So that's why that condition is there because really when you get up to dispersed batteries which are of that size, the hazard team has informed us that some of the consideration of them needs to be almost like you're assessing a small standalone battery, right, in terms of the size there.

25 Now again, and it's, like I said on our discussions on the conditions earlier, the Department is open to the applicant providing further information to us to support decentralised batteries in that form and for the Department to consider that assessment in accordance with our hazard team and potentially issue Planning Secretary's discretion over the matter if the relevant information can be provided  
30 and we're satisfied. We're certainly not opposed to that and that's why Planning Secretary's discretion has been included in that condition as well. But on the basis of the information that was provided to us as part of the EIS and subsequent amendments, our hazard team wasn't confident that the potential impacts of those larger dispersed batteries had been fully covered.

35 So we're not – same as previously, we're certainly open to it, we're more than happy to work with the applicant in post-approval to potentially come to a solution there, but on the basis of what's before us, we've had to take a conservative approach in conditioning and that's what's resulted in that condition.  
40

**MR MILLS:** So this is 20 megawatts of energy storage capacity as compared to the total energy storage capacity of 400 megawatts, which could be all collocated –

45 **MR TSAMBOS:** That's correct.

**MR MILLS:** – [unintelligible 00:38:47] centralised one. So what are the risks that are different, I guess, associated with a dispersed one [unintelligible 00:38:58].

**MR TSAMBOS:** Yes, because those dispersed – because the centralised battery is assessed on a basis of a clear understanding of where that battery will be located, how much space has been provided for it, how far away it is from each of the, you know, relative boundaries and different land uses and the dispersed batteries obviously can be spread throughout the site, they can be closer to people’s potential property boundaries or other infrastructure or whatever it may be.

So that’s I suppose the difference in assessment between the two is that when you’re dealing with a centralised battery, you know okay, we have this much space, we know how many battery units are going to be there, based on that we can work out the separation distances, the hazards people can work on the hazards, and from there we can have a clear understanding of exactly what it looks like. When we talk about dispersed systems and particularly if we don’t know what size the dispersed units will be, obviously there’s more questions that do need to be asked. Like you say, they are obviously of a smaller size, right, so the individual risk from any particular cell might be lower, but they are dispersed across the site.

Now, if it were to – and again, I’m not a hazards expert, this is the discussions that we’ve had with our hazards team within the Department, but certainly if you want further clarification on that, we can certainly go and provide further information on notice if you’d like.

**MR MILLS:** Okay. We’ll reflect on that and work out what we may need additionally.

**MR TSAMBOS:** No problem.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you. Sarah, did you have any further questions in relation to that one?

**MS TAHLIA HUTCHINSON:** You’re on mute, Sarah.

**MR MILLS:** You’re on mute. No, you don’t.

**MR TSAMBOS:** Okay, I’ll keep rolling on. So yes, like I said, condition set, obviously developed in consultation with the relevant agencies. Contamination, the applicant provided a preliminary site investigation or a PSI in accordance with the Hazard SEPP. The Department considers that the risk of contamination is low across the site and that it’s suitable for its proposed use, as identified in the PSI. The Department’s also implemented a unexpected fines protocol, which is in the conditions of consent to manage any unexpected contamination there.

Waste and I think this was one of the ones which again, I’ll just go over briefly but look, similar to the water supply matter. Edify has identified some potential facilities which would be capable of receiving waste streams from the development. They’ve also committed to preparing and implementing a waste management plan in consultation with Narromine Shire and Dubbo Regional

Council. So they've identified a couple of sewerage treatment options, either an onsite sewerage treatment, subject to section 86 approval via Council or disposal of sewerage directly to the Dubbo sewerage treatment plant, which has indicated that it could accept the liquid waste.

So I guess we're satisfied that feasible options for the treating of waste and disposal of waste are available and our conditions reflect that, ultimately requiring the waste management plan to confirm those final options prior to the commencement of construction, in consultation with councils.

And then decommissioning and rehabilitation. So the operational life of the project has been identified by the applicant at likely to be 50 years, however there is potential to be to operate for a longer period of time if panels are upgraded, which would be permitted under the recommended conditions of consent. With the implementation of objective based conditions and monitoring requirements, the Department considers that the solar farm would be suitably decommissioned at the end of the project life or within 18 months if operations cease unexpectedly and that the site be appropriately rehabilitated.

Additionally, within 12 months of commencing operation of the project, the applicant must decommission and rehabilitate the temporary workers accommodation facility to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary.

And then I've got one other here which I haven't listed on the slide, sorry, but I will just touch briefly, which is bushfire, which I've sort of already discussed in the hazards section but I guess just to say the Department's got strong conditions in relation to bushfire management from discussion with the agencies, so I won't spend too much longer on that.

And then last slide, please, Rita. So look, in summary and in our, I suppose, evaluation, ultimately electricity generating works on the site are permissible with consent in accordance with the SEPP. The Department's satisfied and Council and DPIAg haven't identified that the overall agricultural productivity of the region would be significantly reduced as a result of the project. The site has good solar resources, good access to the road network and also access to the grid and the electricity network.

The project has been designed to largely avoid site constraints including nearby non-associated receivers, remnant native vegetation and some Aboriginal heritage sites, whilst maintaining its ability to, you know, utilise that existing electricity infrastructure and the connection. The project would assist in transitioning the electricity sector from coal and gas fired power stations to low emission sources and is consistent with New South Wales state policy, including its generation capacity, which we've been through before.

I guess ultimately the Department considers that the project achieves an appropriate balance between maximising the efficiency of the solar resource development and minimising the potential impacts on surrounding land users and

the environment through job creation, capital investment and also an agreement with the benefit sharing with Council. The project would also stimulate economic investment in renewable energy and provide flow on benefits to the local community and ultimately on balance the Department considers that the project is in the public interest and is approvable, subject to the recommended conditions of consent. So look, that's what we have but obviously more than happy to answer any more questions that you've got.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you very much for that. We have been peppering you with questions as we've gone through and I've appreciated the way you've interacted with that. I think I've covered all of the questions I had through that process. Sarah, did you have anything additional?

**MS DINNING:** Thank you, no, I didn't. And apologies before, I lost the screen and I couldn't find my unmute button, apologies. No, that was very good. Thank you.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you.

**MR TSAMBOS:** Thank you.

**MR MILLS:** So it seems that we have nothing additional to ask of you at the moment, so thank you very much for your time today and the presentation and going through those issues. We're very grateful.

**MR TSAMBOS:** Thank you very much, appreciate it.

**MR MILLS:** Have a great weekend.

**MS HATEM:** Thank you.

**MS DINNING:** Thank you.

**MS HATEM:** Thanks, bye.

**>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**