



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: BULLAWAH WIND FARM (SSD-50505215)

MURRUMBIDGEE COUNCIL MEETING

PANEL:	NEAL MENZIES (Chair) SUELLEN FITZGERALD MICHAEL WRIGHT
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	JANE ANDERSON GEOFF KWOK
MURRUMBIDGEE COUNCIL:	RUTH MCRAE TROY MAUGER TIM STRAUGHN FAITH BRYCE CHRISTINE CHIRGWIN JOHN SCARCE STEVEN PARISOTTO KAITLIN SALZKE
LOCATION:	ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE
DATE & TIME:	11:00AM – 11:45PM TUESDAY, 25 th AUGUST 2026

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 **MR NEAL MENZIES:** Good morning everyone. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking to you from the land of the Jagera and Turbal peoples and I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of all the lands from which we virtually meet today and pay my respects to their Elders: past and present.

10 Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Bullawah Wind Farm State significant development application, currently before the Commission for determination.

15 The Applicant, BayWa r.e. Projects Australia Pty Ltd, proposes to develop a wind farm with an electricity generation capacity up to 804 megawatts, in the South West Renewable Energy Zone. The project site is approximately 28 kilometres southeast of Hay and extends across three local government areas: Hay Shire, Edward River and Murrumbidgee.

20 The project involves construction of up to 141 turbines with a maximum tip height of 300 metres, a 359 megawatt (718 megawatt-hour) battery energy storage system, transmission connection and ancillary infrastructure.

25 My name is Neal Menzies. I am the Chair of this Commission Panel. I am joined by my fellow Commissioners, Suellen Fitzgerald and Michael Wright.

30 We are also joined by Jane Anderson and Geoff Kwok from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.

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

40 So, this meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter, and it will form one of several sources of information from which the Commission will base its determination.

45 It's important for commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it's considered appropriate. If you're asked a question and are not in a position to answer, 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 require a formal response. 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.

And, Mayor, one final thing, if any of your team have an actual or potential conflict of interest, if they could just identify that verbally when they introduce themselves, that'll be great. So, Mayor, over to you.

CR RUTH MCRAE: Thank you very much, Neal. Thank you for the opportunity to be online with you so that you can walk us through where we're at, at the moment. I'm assuming that our operational staff will lead the conversation, that being Steve Parisotto and John Scarce.

I'd just like to introduce the councillors online here, if that's okay. Councillor Troy Mauger, Councillor Faith Bryce, and myself, that's it, at the moment. Christine?

CR CHRISTINE CHIRGWIN: Yes.

CR RUTH MCRAE: Yes, and Christine Chirgwin. I just can't see your face, Chris, at the moment, so. And Councillor Tim Straughn at the bottom.

So, as I said, thank you for the opportunity. We find ourselves in a renewable energy zone that is active, which is probably quite an understatement. And we do welcome the opportunity to be able to ask questions and just see where we're sitting at the moment. So, I'm not sure, Neal, how we go from here. Do we ask our operations, ah, councillor, I might pass over to our General Manager John Scarce. John, have you got anything to add?

MR JOHN SCARCE: Thank you, Councillor McRae. John Scarce, General Manager of Murrumbidgee Council. I just thought that we would start with our – with Steven Parisotto, just to set the scene from whatever the – what we've put forward to date. So, Steven, can you please take over?

MR STEVEN PARISOTTO: Certainly. Thank you, John. And thank you, commissioners. I'm Steven Parisotto and I'm the current Director of Planning and Community for Murrumbidgee Council. I will declare that I have no interest in the matter other than being part of providing advice over the past few years.

The first thing, I suppose, we as Council want to be clear as, like said, we support the proposal. We mightn't like the fact that we have the renewable energy zone thrust upon us, but we are dealing with that. So, as I said, it's one of support and we've said this since 2024. So, there's nothing what I'm going to say that should be read as any reason for the Commission to hold consent.

I'm really just going to talk about, like I said, I've gone through the recommended conditions of consent, and I just want to acknowledge that for what the Department has done, it addresses most of what we've requested. However, I see that there are a few gaps that the Commission should consider before making its determination. But before this, I just want to give a bit of background with Council's involvement in this project, because it has been fairly substantial.

As you'd all be aware, like I said, the public has just understood local government as being roads, rates and rubbish. This is no longer the case, and it no longer describes what a rural council like Murrumbidgee actually does, and particularly in this region at the centre of the renewable energy transition. I think that is the fourth R for councils these days. And over the past few years, Council staff and its elected representatives have spent an extraordinary amount of time not only on this project but because it's

one of many in the LGA. And that work has come not instead of – or it's come in addition to, not instead of, Council's core service delivery, and this doesn't show up in our roads budgets or our rate notices. So, and this is the context where I want to bring the Commission to today.

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So, look, if it's what the Commission is after, I would just like to highlight the remaining concerns of Council by focusing on the recommended conditions of consent. I'll start with the bushfire emergency management because it seems to be an area where the draft conditions need the most amount of attention. So, look, we welcome that the Department have imposed conditions that require a fire safety study and an Emergency Plan.

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With regard to the fire safety study, we've noticed that the requirement to prepare that is only before commencing construction of the battery storage facility and not for the wind turbine infrastructure, which makes up the great majority of the development. And it, like I said, probably has the greatest amount of risk to the surrounding farmland and the volunteer brigades. And probably more critically, neither the fire safety study or the Emergency Plan names Council as an approval party or even a referral party. That's linked to the Planning Secretary in consultation with the Rural Fire Service and Fire and Rescue NSW. And I think given our local knowledge of our brigades and access roads and the farming operations, I think this is an oversight that can be rectified.

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So, from my point of view and Council's point of view, we do request that the Commission extend the fire safety study and the Emergency Plan trigger to cover construction of the wind turbine infrastructure, and to consider adding Council as a party whose views must be addressed before either document's approved.

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The next point, and this is to do with waste management. Council has a policy which expressly prohibits any waste generated by the renewable energy development being disposed at any landfill or wastewater treatment plant in the LGA. We have asked that this prohibition be reflected in the conditions of consent.

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What we're concerned at is that the recommended waste management condition, while it goes some part of the way and requires the Applicant to classify, store and remove waste appropriately, but it actually explicitly contemplates using Council's facilities in consultation with Council. That is just inconsistent with what our adoptive policy has been and our advice. And the simple reason for this is, our waste infrastructure is sized for our own communities and not for a project of this scale or the other ones in the locality. So, what we are seeking from the Commission is to remove any provision that hints at Murrumbidgee Council's waste facilities being available to this development.

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Moving onto, I suppose, the social and economic benefits. Now, look, by and large, these conditions have been met, but I do have, like I said, a few things. Look, I think it's condition A19 requires the Applicant to enter into a VPA, and that VPA is set out in Appendix 3 and it has to be sorted out before construction begins.

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In terms of the megawatt rate for 30 years, this has been part of lengthy negotiation between the Applicant and Murrumbidgee Council, and we have formally accepted its

offer. However, Council does ask the Commission to strengthen how that commitment is secured. The way I interpret Appendix 3, it leaves the dispute resolution and the enforcement mechanisms for agreement as “to be advised”. So, that, like I said, that vague-ier is concerning. And what I’ve noticed, like said, while the consent defines the Applicant to include any successor who takes on development, Council has had experience in the past when developers have on-sold a project after consent has been granted, and been left in the lurch with one particular project.

Now, a VPA, as I understand it, is a contract with the entity that signs it. So, Council’s concerned that it’s not typically a condition that automatically binds the purchaser in the way normal conditions of consent do. And as I said, we don’t want the benefits sharing scheme, which has been a couple of years in the making, be left exposed if the current Applicant is not the entity that ultimately builds and operates the project.

So, this is the one where we or I would really like the Commission to require the dispute resolution and enforcement mechanisms to be settled, the agreement fully executed, and its – sorry, I’ll start again – and its obligations expressly assumed by any successor in title before any CC is issued.

Getting onto the last couple of things. The workers accommodation camp. Council is satisfied with the need for a management plan and an employment strategy to be prepared in consultation with Council. Our areas is mainly covering, like said, any utilities that these sites may require, particularly in water supply and wastewater. What we do suspect is, like I said, where it’s located, that might be something more for Hay Council to deal with.

And then lastly, I’ll say this is the constant bugbear of Council is regarding traffic. What I can say with this one here, that the draft Traffic Management Plan addresses all the points that we’ve raised, so we’re happy with that. And this is the, like I said, our most practical concerns as a rural roads authority.

There does appear to be either an omission in Table 5 in Appendix 5 of the recommended conditions. That’s on page 61 of the Department’s thing. And it has this reference to “before use by semi-trailers”. My question is whether or not this should mean over-size and over-mass vehicles, and that again what we’re asking for is that the Commission require this condition to be amended to include OSOM vehicles and that roads within the Murrumbidgee LGA be constructed in accordance with our policy, our Road Risk Management Policy and what have you.

So, that’s it from my end.

MR MENZIES: Thank you very much, Steven. Look, just as a quick jump in from me on the roads. The meeting we had earlier this morning was with Hay Shire Council. They were more concerned about the movements of those normal semi-trailers perhaps more than they were about the over-size/over-mass. And I’m putting words in their mouth in a way, I think they were content with the over-size/over-mass arrangements, but they were concerned that normal truck movements weren’t being given so much attention. And because there will be so very many of them, they were concerned about

the quality of the roads that were going to be used and whether they were up to handling that sort of traffic.

5 So, Steven, I just wanted to make sure that I've heard you correctly. That you, as a Council, are happy with what's proposed, the sort of assessment of dilapidation, responsibility for fixing roads that have deteriorated because of the use by the Applicant. Is that a correct interpretation of the Council's stance?

10 **MR PARISOTTO:** Look, that is correct, and that's certainly where our position was when I think we first provided a response. And what I've noticed over the last few years, like I said, our position has shifted slightly, and this is as we get more information about what is happening and get a better understanding of how it's going to affect.

15 So, like I said, I don't want to say we're moving the goalposts and what have you, because we're not. What we're saying, okay, our local roads really need to be of a standard to meet the traffic generated by the development. So, whether that's semi-trailers, whether it's the OSOM vehicles, whether it's other fleet vehicles associated with it, because, like I said, when you do your site visit in the next few days, you will
20 see what these roads are like, and then you'll get a better appreciation of where Council (and all councils) are coming from.

And what we do understand is that any delays associated during the construction which will be borne by the Applicant, like I said, they want roads that are safe and efficient
25 for their movements. The last thing that they want to do is, oh, let's do a partial maintenance program, partial works on a road, and then you get 30 mils of rain and it becoming impassable, and that's only going to cost the developer big bucks.

30 **MR MENZIES:** Yes, that's a fair comment, Steven, that they're looking after their own interest by looking after the shire's roads.

And I'm going to avoid answering one of the things that you've raised there in the VPA, because there's a whole lot of legislative/legal bits and pieces that I don't have expertise in. But I've heard your question and will ask the Commission guys to put
35 some work in on this so that we can fully understand both what the law is but also what our role as a commission in looking at that one is. So, I'm in no way providing an answer, I'm just stating my level of ignorance that I'll have to address before we can ... And my fellow commissioners are more knowledgeable in these affairs than I am, but even so I think we'd all prefer expert advice and guidance before we commit
40 to what we think about this.

John, I see your hand up there.

45 **MR JOHN SCARCE:** Thank you, Commissioner. I don't have the in-depth knowledge, I haven't read the EIS's or anything, I leave that to Steven Parisotto. And the same with all the councillors when we speak, we will speak in a generic term of our expectations. And in relation to the roads, and this comes from experience, we want them to continue to use their nominated roads and not any other roads.

And we got – when Transgrid was building the Dinawan Substation, we had contractors go offline and they destroyed some of our roads completely. We were fortunate enough with our relationship with Transgrid that we got them repaired afterwards.

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Though if they find a shortcut, they will find the shortcut. That includes their utilities, that includes their semi's and their things. Some of our roads see four vehicles a day, if that. And then to have 300 utilities go on it when it's not a nominated road, then all the complaints just come straight back to us. Hence, the rationale if they build the roads to the standard that they need, and they maintain them for the life of the project, which is in accordance with our policy, they will be fine, they'll hit no roadblocks or anything else like that.

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We have another policy that's in draft, and probably not so much with these guys, but we've had others (Origin) wanting to put safety barriers on the road near their towers that they're building because they're too close. Now, we can't afford as a small rural council to maintain those safety barriers for in perpetuity. They have to remain Origin's for life, and so we've got a policy to capture on those things. So, if BayWa or who they're selling to is proposing any of those things that's done.

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The other thing that we've always raised is that everybody wants to come to the centre of the universe, which is the Dinawan Substation, which is in our patch. And with just VNI West, EnergyConnect, Origin, Pottinger, Dinawan and BayWa, there's like 1.2 kilometres of easements that could be coming into there just with transmission lines.

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We have over and over again and asked EnergyCo to see if they can co-locate, they can join up with other powerlines so that we don't have this – we love the movie, The Castle, but it's not progress when it's just so much of it going absolutely everywhere. They're the things that we want common sense to prevail – we know it's not that common anymore, but it's just a scar on everything.

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So, Steve Parisotto premised it. We're not against any of the renewables that are coming in, they're doing everything, they're ticking their boxes and doing that stuff. Each owner of the land can do what they like, if they wish to lease it to a renewable, then that's them there. But there's certain things that are outside that land – our roads, reserves and all of those other infrastructures that they need to transmit to the substation – where we need to limit the exposure, the risk to everybody that drives on our roads and the constituents and things, so.

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MR MENZIES: Thanks, John. That's very clear and very sensible. I think we've all, w as commissioners have all looked at other developments like this, and this issue of trying to – needing to control which roads are used and needing that control to extend beyond the applicant and the things that they're directly looking after, right down to the people who work for them and the people who work for subcontractors to them etc., so it's a message we've heard and understand, but it's an important message, I think, John.

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Let me jump to my fellow commissioners. Michael?

MR MICHAEL WRIGHT: Thanks, Neil. Steven, thanks for your presentation. Just going back to the fire safety study and the trigger for its preparation. So, your concern is that the trigger is limited to it being done before construction of the battery energy storage system as opposed to the erection of the turbines. Just to be clear on that – is that ...?

MR PARISOTTO: Yes, that is correct. I think when you look at the total scale of the development, like I said, the best component is in a very confined area, whereas the wind turbines are spread across the larger part of the site. So, we just figure that if you're going to have to go to the trouble of these fire – the studies and the emergency evacuation plans and the like, it would make sense that it is done with the – each sort of component of the development.

Now, if for example, they were to install the BESS first, then obviously that's your trigger. But if it's the turbines and what have you –

MR WRIGHT: And that's the trick. Yes.

MR PARISOTTO: Yes. That's exactly right, yes.

MR WRIGHT: Yes, I understand. Thank you.

MR MENZIES: Suellen?

MS SUELLEN FITZGERALD: Neil, I wanted to ask the General Manager a question, just going back to this issue of the damage and negative impact to non-registered roads with the Dinawan substation. As Neil said, we have dealt with this issue on a number of projects, and one of the issues that comes up repeatedly is the difficulty of being able to attribute the damage to a particular project. I'm wondering, John, whether you ran into that issue in that particular example you gave, and if so, how it was addressed.

MR SCARCE: So, no, we had many spies out there ...

MS FITZGERALD: Oh, okay.

MR SCARCE: ... that they know if they see a foreign vehicle on their road, they tell us. So, that's what alerted us to it first of all. And there was always – and when Dinawan was signed, and it's a failing of the Department of Planning, they virtually have that we'll do a condition assessment at the start and we'll do a dilapidation report at the end and then we'll marry it. Now, some of these projects are five years in duration. It doesn't lend itself to have any of those things.

So, we invested years ago for a completely different reason for our asset management of our roads. We purchased a racker system which is a camera and everything else like that. So, anytime we get a complaint from a ratepayer about their road, we dispatch that vehicle right now and we can identify the exact place where that work needs to

happen. So, it might only be a 20-metre section on a corner, so we just dispatch people out to fix that 20-metre section.

5 So, we have the ability to run our roads daily if we need, of these ones. So, we can determine what damage is happening on a daily basis from these vehicles. And if we get a message from a ratepayer that is seeing all of BayWa's vehicles running down this road because it's a shortcut from Hay, then we'll dispatch our equipment will go out there and we'll do it and we'll raise it to them that they, one, they shouldn't be there, and two, they are damaging the road because we can prove it with our systems
10 that we have in place as well.

15 So, that's why our policy is that they bring the road to a standard they need. And you've got to see – Steven went to another REZ where they were building, and the quality of their roads inside their project were immaculate, and that should be on the outside, that should be on the public roads as well. Because there's no point – if they get bogged on our roads, they lose a million dollars a day just as well as they do if they're bogged inside their own thing.

20 So, if they're going to have a standard inside their development, that standard should be outside the development. And then we're not going to have that, because our roads traditionally, we have three or five vehicles a day. They have 300. So, we know over the years that we've only graded that road once a year and that's all that's needed, or twice a year, that's all that's needed, and now it needs to be done weekly, it's because of that impact. It's quite easy to tell.

25 **MS FITZGERALD:** Mm, that's interesting. Thanks, John, that's very helpful. So, you've got data that you can rely on. Thanks, Neil.

30 **MR WRIGHT:** And Neil, can I just follow up on that with another question for both John and Steven. In terms of Murrumbidgee Shire Council's local road network and usage by the Proponent as proposed. The Proponent, I think, is pursuing a sort of dilapidation/maintenance regime. So, repair as damage as occurs. Is that, from Murrumbidgee Shire Council's perspective, is there any requirement for any upfront proactive upgrades, or is it all more, do you think, going to be dealt with through that
35 sort of more reactive 'the road's been damaged and then it's repaired' type approach.

40 **MR PARISOTTO:** I'll take that one there. With regards to the roads, and this is where things have shifted slightly over the years, and that's why when I referred to the table there about the roadworks needed, and that's why I've suggested that the condition be amended to include the largest vehicle, the one that's going to cause the most damage, and reference that policy, because the policy will require construction.

45 And going back on what John said, I was at the Ungula Wind Farm Project near Wellington, and the roads that they built internally were magnificent. And they had to be, because the vehicles that were coming in – and we witnessed one OSOM come in with one part of the wind turbine – and apart from the fact that it had to get towed up the hill by another prime mover, gives you an idea the weight and damage.

5 So, it comes down to, yes, look, we've initially said the dilapidations pre and post and what have you, but that only talks about, well, what's there now and what is going to be handed back to Council at the end of the project. It's really in the best interest of Bullawah to build the roads to the standards in our policy, because if they do that, it will be designed to meet their needs for the lifetime of the project.

10 So, for them, yes, it may be additional cost upfront, but they're going to be, as I said, saving money by having it built to that standard. And as John alluded to, like I said, potentially a million dollars a day delay when they could probably spend maybe half a million dollars once to fix up the road. We think that's smart money.

MR WRIGHT: Mm-hm. Okay. Thank you.

15 **MR MENZIES:** One of the other issues that – and once again, this is reflecting on other wind farms that we've worked on – one of the other issues that comes up for council is where the materials to make the concrete pads are going to come from. So, whether sand and aggregate is sourced from, where water is sourced from. Are those issues of concern for Murrumbidgee?

20 **MR SCARCE:** They are an issue of concern for Murrumbidgee, because we can go back to the EnergyConnect and the Dinawan. There were times there where we could get one truck of gravel out a day from the pit, because all of the gravel was going to the sites for the towers and the substation. So, we've learnt from that. So, our management, our practice is now we're looking well ahead, 12 months ahead of our roadworks, and we're starting to put everything into inventory that we can, so that we don't get caught out like we did last time. That's just going to be a fact, there are limited, there are hardly any quarries around within a reasonable distance.

30 We travel 150 to 160 kilometres to get some of our material, but we prefer to go the 35 k's to Berrigan, but we have to go out. And when they were smashing Berrigan, everything out of Berrigan and we couldn't get in there, it really stopped our works from happening.

35 Our water, we can supply, we believe we're in a position to be able to supply the two, the camps with potable water and things like that for that area. They will probably, for their concrete water, I know that we supplied the Dinawan Substation with some of their concrete water because the stuff out of the channel wasn't meeting their requirements, so that was coming out of us, we had no issue with any of those things, the quantum of water.

40 But we're in the process of upgrading our treatment plant here in Jerilderie, so we'll definitely be able to supply the water that they need if they want to do that. But it'd be far better for them to have some local area and have their own settling ponds and everything else like that for their concrete water, but their potable water we'll have no issue with.

45 **MR MENZIES:** Great. Thanks, John. I think the whole system is learning how to cope with these large-scale developments, so things that went wrong with the first ones we're avoiding with the next iterations.

Suellen, you've got your microphone on – did you want to say something?

MS FITZGERALD: Neal, I didn't have a further question for Council, no.

MR MENZIES: Okay. All right. I have one more, John, if you'll bear with me. And that's just checking on the impact on tourism, was one of the things that Hay Council were concerned about, the impact on accommodation. Is that something that you guys are worried about?

MR SCARCE: I would say not as much, we're not a destination when it comes to tourism at all. We're five or six hours out of Melbourne, so the grey nomads, they may or may not pull up here, a lot of them don't want to pay for anything in their caravans or anything else like that or whatever, so they camp free a lot of those times.

We didn't see or have any grumbles. We only had some fairly positive comments back from our caravan park operator, because Transgrid or Elecnor put in over 30 hired vans in his park for the duration. So, he was getting his fifty bucks a night on those 30 vans whether somebody was staying in there or not.

And that's the thing that we found out, that there's probably about, if the Dinawan camp was for 800 people, there was probably 80 people over and above that that were in our patch in our motels, in our caravan parks and things like that, about 10% above. They're the ones that were coming in with the engineers, the soil testers, the whatever, the whatever, the whatever that was flying in and out, so they were never accommodated in the camp. And whilst we've got about 2,000 people in camps for some of the other projects, we're expecting that they're going to have to add a lot more caravans to the caravan park to fit their 10% there.

But one of the biggest gripes with the whole thing is that it's like – we put it akin to the water. Now, the almond grower goes and buys some cheap land down river and then we have to pay for the, or everybody pays for the conveyance of that water for him to get to use it. They looked at down here at the South West REZ and thought, you beauty, we could put all of this infrastructure down there for NSW and Australia, but they didn't see that we might be struggling with water, we might be struggling with waste, we definitely would be struggling with housing, definitely be struggling with all of these things, and we as a small rural council do not have the capacity to capitalise on any of this.

It was sort of a backward move, right, so we're trying to – because it's coming here, we're trying to leverage as much as we can for the community, and it's very difficult, we would love the 55 operational employees that are meant to be in the district to be living here. But as it is, we don't have any land, we don't have any housing, we don't have anything. It was sort of an asinine way that the government went about it, which is really what annoys us out here. Right.

If they had of planned it, if there had have been a manager somewhere anywhere in the government that just said, 'hang on, can we manage this a lot better and bring local government along', then you wouldn't get a lot of the pushback and everything from

rural communities that all these projects are getting. It's got nothing to do with – we're not against renewables or anything like that, it's just a tsunami has come down, and it's what Steven pointed out before, we don't have any resources, we could not push back that water, we just had to let it drown us, and some way we come to the surface to do things. So, yes.

MR WRIGHT: Hey Neal, can I just ask? John, what's the rental situation like in your LGA; do you have very low vacancies or ...?

MR SCARCE: We have no vacancies.

MR WRIGHT: No vacancies, yes.

MR SCARCE: There are some people that are getting \$600 a week for a bed.

MR MENZIES: Oh my goodness.

MR SCARCE: Right. And so, they've got three or four people in the one house, I think there's five in one house, and they're getting 600 bucks a week for each. Right. There is nothing. There is nothing here. And that's no good because the state sends nurses and they send ambulance and everything like that down here to get their own accommodation, and they can't. We've had paramedics that have just turned around and gone because they can't get a rental here.

MR WRIGHT: So, even though you might like to have those operational workers reside in your LGA, there's no housing effectively for them.

MR SCARCE: None. We don't even have a block of land that we could build a house on for them. So, all of that infrastructure needs to happen. And yes, we'd love them to be here because our state school's got 12 kids in it, the catholic school's got about 60, but another 50 employees is going to help that out. We've got one doctor, we'd love to attract another doctor, but it's all about services, it's all about population. So ...

MR WRIGHT: Thank you.

MR MENZIES: Any last questions, Michael, Suellen? No. Mayor McRae, did you want to jump in?

CR MCRAE: I was just going to make a closing comment, Neal. And I think from the conversation we've heard today, this council has got their reality hat firmly seated on their head. All of the issues we have raised really are core business to Council – our roads, our waste, our water. We're not looking for anything out of the ordinary, we're just looking to be able to support what's coming our way, like a bit of a tsunami.

To relate to your housing questions, it's just not Murrumbidgee Council that's got no available housing, even the regional centres are struggling. We're in a national housing crisis. So, to John's point, where a little bit of, a more thorough thoughtful approach may have been a little easier to manage, is probably a gross understatement.

We have the scope and capacity to do this under extreme duress. With a small rural council, Steve and John are – they’re the leaders in this space with very capable staff below, but with what is expected of us, it’s a serious challenging environment. And we don’t wish to be vulture-like or greedy, but if this impost is coming our way, we need to make it work for us.

And my hope as the Mayor and the leader of our councillors, I would hope that the VPA comes to the table with a generous inclusive mindset, because it shouldn’t be about minimising what comes our way as a council caught in this storm, it should be a generous recognition for what we are enabling for our region and our country. That’s it.

MR MENZIES: Thank you. Mayor McRae, I do appreciate the time that you and your time have spent with us. You have given us a really pragmatic view of what are the issues and great clarity on what’s exercising the Council and what we might do about it. I’m assuming that you will probably give us a revised submission later or – let me rephrase that, we would welcome submission from you. If there are conditions that you think could be improved, we’re very happy to accept your version of how that might be written. Perhaps the appropriate timing would be to wait until after the public hearing, just in case there are other things that emerge there that are useful to us, to you.

I’m sincerely hoping there are things that are useful to us, or it’ll be a day wasted, but almost invariably we learn things at public hearings that are useful. We’re certainly looking forward to our visit to the site and once again, we invariably have value in getting a sense of location and impact by visiting the site, so we’re really looking forward to that.

So, thank you very much, Lady Mayor for your help and the assistance of your team, it has been really useful for us in understanding and will be useful when we come to thinking about a decision.

CR MCRAE: Thank you. Thank you for your time today.

MR MENZIES: Yes. Okay. Bye, everyone.

MR PARISOTTO: Thank you very much.

CR MCRAE: Thank you.

MR WRIGHT: Thank you.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED