



**New South Wales Government**  
Independent Planning Commission

**TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING**

RE: BALDON WIND FARM (SSD-40138508)

**APPLICANT MEETING**

|                               |                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PANEL:                        | MS JANETT MILLIGAN (Chair)<br>DR SHERIDAN COAKES<br>DR TURLOUGH GUERIN                                   |
| OFFICE OF THE IPC:            | KENDALL CLYDSDALE<br>CALLUM FIRTH                                                                        |
| APPLICANT<br>REPRESENTATIVES: | MEDARD BOUTRY (Goldwind Australia)<br>KRISTINA YAN (Goldwind Australia)<br>ALEX KUO (Goldwind Australia) |
| LOCATION:                     | ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE                                                                                     |
| DATE & TIME:                  | 12:15PM – 1:21PM<br>TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2026                                                           |

## <THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 MS JANETT MILLIGAN: Hello. Good afternoon and welcome. So, before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Gadigal land, and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the lands from which we meet virtually today, and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

10 Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Baldon Wind Farm state significant development application SSD-40138508 currently before the Commission for determination. The Applicant, Baldon Wind Farm Pty Ltd on behalf of Goldwind Capital Australia Pty Ltd, proposes to develop a wind farm with a capacity of up to around 1,400 megawatts located in the South West Renewable Energy Zone.

15 The site is approximately 13 kilometres north of Moulamein and the majority of the project is within the Murray River local government area with a northern section of the project being in the Hay Shire local government area. Edward River Council local government area is adjacent to the east of the project.

20 The project involves the development of up to 175 turbines across two stages. Stage 1 involves 46 turbines and Stage 2, 129 turbines, with a maximum tip height of 300 metres with a 200-megawatt battery energy storage system which will have a two-hour storage capacity of 400 megawatts, and other ancillary infrastructure.

25 So, hello, my name is Janett Milligan. I'm the Chair of this Commission Panel and I am joined on screen by my fellow commissioners, Dr Sheridan Coakes and Dr Turlough Guerin. Turlough may not be on camera the whole time due to reception issues, but please meet him now. We're also joined by Kendall Clydsdale and Callum Firth, with me here, from the office of the Independent Planning Commission.

30 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 it will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination.

35 It's important for the commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it's considered appropriate. If you're asked a question and you're not in a position to answer, you may take the question on notice. And following the meeting, the Commission will advise you in writing of any question taken on notice that the Panel consider requires a formal response. Any subsequent response that you provide, or information, will be published on our website.

40 So, I request that all participants here introduce themselves before they speak for the first time, and for all members to ensure that we don't speak over the top of each other, to make sure we get an accurate transcript.

45 So, let's begin. And can I refer now to the Applicant and invite you to introduce your team, and we'll start the discussion.

**MR MEDARD BOUTRY:** Good afternoon, commissioners, and thank you for the introduction. My name is Medard Boutry, I'm representing Baldon Wind Farm on behalf of Goldwind, and my role is General Manager for Development, the Development Department, and I have previously been the Project Manager for the Baldon Wind Farm. With me attending today is Kristina Yan, Head of Development Projects, and Alex who heads our Stakeholder Engagement Team.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. All right. So, we provided you with an agenda for our discussion today, and we can treat that as a loose guide to our discussion. But if it's all right with you, we might just jump into that agenda.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, that's fine. We have prepared a presentation with loosely covers the majority of that agenda, although it's not quite in the same order. So, I'm happy to put that up on the screen and talk to it, and happy for the commissioners to also direct and drive that. I want to make sure we have enough time to cover all the topics that you're interested in, in discussing.

**MS MILLIGAN:** That sounds fine. So, don't worry about the order in which you're presenting the information, but can I just ask you to make sure that we do leave plenty of time then to have the discussion.

**MR BOUTRY:** Absolutely. And I also, I guess, encourage any questions that come up on each of those topics as they happen. Feel free to interrupt me at the end of that slide to fire away with those particular questions, so that we don't hold everything back perhaps to the end, to make sure we do have plenty of time.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, Medard, over to you.

**MR BOUTRY:** Okay. Are you able to see the screen that I'm sharing?

**MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** Great. We also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and waters on which we meet today, and on which the Baldon Wind Farm is located, paying our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, as well as acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who may be here today.

The presentation covers an overview of the project, of which, yes, feel free to, you know, we can go as quick or take as long as go as quick as we need to on that one. I'm planning to cover on the process we've been through, the engagement, as well as the community benefits and the key assessment issues, which will cover the majority of those agenda items listed out.

So, as you've highlighted, the key facts of the project. They're a 1.4-gigawatt project up to 175 turbines. There is a 200-megawatt two-hour battery storage system proposed. The project is 15 kilometres to the north of Moulamein, 44 k's to the east of Balranald and 70 k's west of Hay. It's a state significant development. We have two landowners that make up the hosts for the project, of which the agreements cover a period of up to 60 years.

It's a large project area of over 46,000 hectares and the site is transected by two transmission lines, one being the newly developed Project EnergyConnect as well as the existing 220-kV X5 line which are sort of broadly shown across the landscape there as the yellow and the red lines.

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What's important to note on this project is that we are part of the South West Renewable Energy Zone, and you can see there a number of projects that are directly adjacent to the project, to Baldon Wind Farm. So, to our west immediately is the Keri Keri Wind Farm which is also in the development pipeline. The Tchelery Wind Farm to the east, also in the pipeline. Abercrombie Wind Farm, which is earlier in the pipeline, it has prepared its EIS. As well as further east towards Hay, we have The Plains Wind Farm, Saltbush Wind Farm, Pottinger and Bullawah.

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One of the agenda items was cumulative impacts. I don't particularly have a slide on cumulative impacts, but this is probably a good one to talk to. In the context of all of these projects, of which there are more further to the east and more further to the west within the South West Renewable Energy Zone.

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What I might, I guess, just point out, and this is something we've been very open since the beginning to the community, is that we acknowledge and appreciate that it can be quite confronting to see the number of projects earmarked across the landscape and in this region. However, there very much is a limitation to capacity that can be connected to the renewable energy market, the grid, and that's predominantly being managed through an access rights process that's being coordinated through EnergyCo. And that access rights process has been progressed and a number of projects have been awarded access rights; it's only four or five projects that hold the access rights.

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Baldon was not awarded access rights, however, our project is planning to connect into the existing transmission line, the X5 transmission line, to which we have made significant progress in having achieved what's called a 534A and B letters which is effectively AEMO and the network service provider agreeing on the generator performance standards, the technical standards for connecting into the grid, and that's the first important step before finalising the network – the offer to connect documentation and the contract with the network service provider. And that's the stage we're in at the moment, finalising the contracts.

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**DR SHERIDAN COAKES:** So, Medard, Sheridan Coakes here, just a quick question on [cross-talk 00:10:34].

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**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, yes, please.

**DR COAKES:** So, yes, we note that you obviously don't have access rights and others have obviously been successful through that connection process. But are you confident, I guess, that should this project be approved, that those will, you know, that will flow ultimately across into [cross-talk 00:10:55].

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**MR BOUTRY:** We're very confident with the first stage of the project, for which we're not aware of any other projects in this area that have reached this milestone on the grid for Stage 1. For Stage 2, there is currently no existing pathway to progress Stage 2, however, this is a renewable energy zone and the government is continually

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looking for new ways, additional means of bringing in more generation into the network. This region, as you'll see and as you're probably aware, there are clearly a lot of projects in the pipeline, it's a great region to develop renewables. Urbanisation is quite sparse, there are good transmission networks in the region, and there's a – we expect that there is a likelihood that there may be further augmentations in the future to the network for which we want to be ready to apply as necessary to connect to.

**DR COAKES:** Okay, thanks Medard. And just one other question around cumulative impacts while we're there. Obviously, as you've highlighted clearly there within the REZ and obviously that's understandable given that that is an area that's been highlighted for quite intensive development. In terms of your engagement – it might be a question actually for Alex, but in terms of your engagement, have you, in making, I guess, going through your planning and decision-making processes as the Proponent, have you engaged with some of those other proponents that maybe have achieved access, in making some of your decisions around – and this might come out as we talk a bit more about workforce accommodation and other things. I just wonder you've taken that cumulative piece and used some of that in your individual company planning.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, we have to a certain extent. Certainly, the projects directly adjacent to us, we have. And also, there is the equivalent EIS documentation and plans available on the Planning website for each of these projects, to the extent of which they've been developed. So, our consultants have taken that on board in planning, and also being in assessing the potential cumulative impacts and how to manage those and ensure they're not going to be too much of a burden or any impost on the community.

The nearest project with access rights to Baldon Wind Farm is Bullawah and Pottinger wind farms, so much closer to Hay. The nearest township to us is Balranald. I don't have a slide on the accommodation camp, but we do have, are making plans to utilise an existing accommodation camp at Balranald. We're not seeing competition from any other projects that are significantly advanced to the point of, you know, that we are with regards to Stage 1, in particular, that we're expecting very little cumulative impacts to that township and to those services, in consideration of what's going on in the access rights space.

**DR COAKES:** Okay. Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** An interesting point, isn't it? Because the cumulative impacts particularly around workforce, also transport, depends so much on timing and phasing. Is there anything you wanted to say to us about that? It's quite difficult to sort of consider it fully when we don't understand your proposed timing and phasing. And I understand that some of those issues like connectivity are out of your hands at the moment. But yes, talk to us about that.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, absolutely. And it's, I think it's a challenge for everyone because we only have control over our own project. And even a project with access rights doesn't mean that that particular project will be ready to start construction as early as it was anticipating to. It is very challenging to get a wind project in particular to a financial close and to commence construction.

To a certain extent, there is that uncertainty that does remain across the industry and across the region. The only thing is, I guess I can point to with regards to Baldon is that we are distanced from other access right holders and so when ... Our Stage 1 project is planning to commence construction mid next year, subject to relevant approvals and post-approvals documentation, you know, moving in the right direction.

On that basis, we expect there may be an overlap on a transport and over-dimensionals perspective with access right holders. However, the access right holders, from what we are aware of, are also using a diverse location for their ports of arrival of the components. Baldon Wind Farm is proposing to import all of its components from Adelaide. Whereas some of the other projects are using a combination of Adelaide and Geelong and Newcastle.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. So, before we – I mean, maybe the next logical topic is to talk about transport. But the last question, we acknowledge of course the uncertainties and the unknowns. I suppose just the last question, maybe we're just interested more in what you – do you have a process for dealing with cumulative impacts given that there are unknowns and uncertainties. Is there a process in place to address that, as things become more certain?

**MR BOUTRY:** Absolutely. So, the assessment, the EIS in itself, the assessment has been based on the information that's known at the time, and through the sort of – it's been quite a while since we've lodged. There have been updates provided to the Department of Planning during that time and we've had to update figures accordingly.

The process, there will be a contracting process which will – the contractors will need to also look at availability and consider availability. As much as possible, we've sought to remove the risk of cumulative impacts creating an impost on the project but also on the community, by being able to source or manage a lot of the requirements within the project area. For example, I mentioned the Balranald camp which we're hoping to use, which will provide benefits to that Balranald community. We also have allowed for the construction of an accommodation camp on site in the event that that external camp is not available and because we want to make sure that the staff will have somewhere to stay without preventing tourists from, you know, using up all the accommodation in the townships, the tourists won't be able to visit, locals, you know, rental properties will be not available etc.

We have been working with council, particularly Hay Shire Council, on, you know, they've been doing a lot of work in the background on strategies to address some of these cumulative impacts. So, we've liaised with them around waste, around accommodation they have some strategic plans there, which also will provide legacy benefits to the community with the residual accommodation being available for next to the hospital for some of the nurses and other critical workers in the region. So, there is planning happening and that will be part of the process as we get closer to construction.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. And with workforce, you talked about some certainty around Phase 1. What's your peak workforce for Phase 1 construction?

**MR BOUTRY:** For Stage 1, we're expecting approximately 350, a workforce of 350 during construction. That will start/ramp up in a bell curve shape and ramp down as the activities build and then slow down after construction.

5       **MS MILLIGAN:** And you said you're hoping to use the accommodation camp in Balranald.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes.

10       **MS MILLIGAN:** They're not geographically within the footprint of the project.

**MR BOUTRY:** No, Balranald is 45 kilometres to the west of the project.

15       **MS MILLIGAN:** Correct. So, can I just ask you about community, about VPAs, community benefits sharing, because if you're thinking that the accommodation camp in Balranald will be used, there'll be benefits to the town and there will be costs to the town. So, can you just talk to us a little bit about community benefits?

20       **MR BOUTRY:** Sure. And I might just jump to this slide here. So, the project does not lie within Balranald LGA, so we have not established a VPA with the Balranald Shire. We have, however, progressed and executed a Letter of Intent for VPAs with the Hay Shire and with Murray River Council. The basis of those is on the slide there, which is consistent with the Community Benefits Sharing Guideline published by the

25       Department of Planning.  
So, it will comprise of \$1,100 per megawatt per annum, based on the number of megawatts that's installed. So, say Stage 1 goes ahead, that number would be based on the Stage 1 number of turbines. And if Stage 2 progresses in the future, that would be increased and sort of reset for the Stage 2 and cumulatively build up that way.

30       What we've arranged with the councils, who have been – it's been a collaborative effort, so both councils and the Proponent agree on the approach – is that the majority of the turbines for the project are located in Murray River Council area, so Murray River will be receiving 80% of the VPA amount, and Hay Shire will be receiving 20% of the VPA amount.

35       We've allocated 80% of the total VPA amount to the councils, oh sorry, 85%, and we've reserved 15% of the community funding to be managed by the project to serve the local community more directly through a community benefits fund, as well as a First Nations initiative fund. And the reason for –

40       **DR COAKES:** Sorry, Medard, yes. Just on that – sorry to interrupt – just on that.

45       **MR BOUTRY:** Not at all.

50       **DR COAKES:** In terms of that, you obviously, you know, having your own, that separate fund that's administered by the project, do you have, is that to be targeted more on those smaller communities that are likely to be most impacted? What's your thinking, I guess, behind that fund and its application?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. Through the engagement directly with the local communities, they have tended to not be as supportive of all the funding going directly to the councils.

5 **DR COAKES:** Yes, yes.

10 **MR BOUTRY:** And have wanted to have a bit more control over that funding. So, we have taken that feedback on board and sought to establish this framework. There was then also a piece with the councils needing to accept that not the whole amount would be managed by councils, and that's worked quite well, because what you're seeing on screen has been accepted by councils, you know, accepting the 85% of the total. And that allows for that greater discretion at a committee level, established with community members, First Nations members, to manage the residual 15% of the VPA amount.

15 Back to these, I guess –

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Sheri, did you have a follow-up question there, because I had one? My question about Balranald was, because we understand the VPAs, I don't think we have any questions about that. But what about places like Balranald who are not captured but if they're hosting the accommodation camp, and in terms of transport routes, they are involved. And I noticed in their discussions with council, sorry, their discussions with the Department, they raised this issue about sort of, well, where are we, you know, we would like to be included somehow in this community benefits scheme.

25 **MR BOUTRY:** Hm. A couple of points to that. I guess the accommodation camp being in Balranald will present a number of positive benefits to the local economy there. And that's been demonstrated on – so, the camp has a permanent DA separate to the wind farm, which was originally established for the development of two solar farms in the past five years. It was originally a temporary DA, it's now a permanent, on the basis that they've also had a really good relationship with that local council and demonstrated the supplier relationship with the locals and how much that's benefited the locals.

30 **MR BOUTRY:** Hm. A couple of points to that. I guess the accommodation camp being in Balranald will present a number of positive benefits to the local economy there. And that's been demonstrated on – so, the camp has a permanent DA separate to the wind farm, which was originally established for the development of two solar farms in the past five years. It was originally a temporary DA, it's now a permanent, on the basis that they've also had a really good relationship with that local council and demonstrated the supplier relationship with the locals and how much that's benefited the locals.

35 I take your point around the VPAs and that arrangement. Strictly speaking, that's not a requirement under the guidelines, to establish a formal VPA with the council, however, the 15% component, which will be managed by the wind farm, does have the discretion to extend out to Balranald.

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right. That was – yes, that's what I was asking. All right. Thank you. All right. I might do something wild and let you go back to your slides.

**MR BOUTRY:** That's okay.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** I just want to make sure that we've covered off some of these issues as they arise.

50 **MR BOUTRY:** Absolutely. And I'll just take a note of the ones we have touched on. So, this is just to the project, we've talked – broadly speaking, just to familiarise yourself, you have the Sturt Highway which runs here to the north of the project. We

haven't installed any turbines to the north, just to keep things simple to the south, there was plenty of land to work with, there are also some receivers to the north and some other sensitivities. So, we just thought keep everything to the south of the highway. There's a single primary site entrance there with a little 'A', I'm not sure if you can see that. The accommodation camp is earmarked there just once, within a couple of hundred metres of entering. And you have a construction compound not far after.

And if you just look at all the dots, so that's 175 turbines there. The blue dots represent Stage 1 of the project, which is the initial stage we're looking to construct. And the substation where the project will connect into the transmission line is this sort of pink square where my cursor is, just to the north of the Stage 1 turbines, so that'll be a switching station. So, that's sort of how the connection will work. There will need to be a 20-kilometre access track built within the project site to be able to access those turbines.

**MS MILLIGAN:** So, in Stage 1, will access for workforce be from the north entrance ...

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** ... or the south entrance?

**MR BOUTRY:** The north.

**MS MILLIGAN:** So, you're going to have to construct those internal roads ...

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** ... before you start? Okay.

**MR BOUTRY:** Correct. That's been built into the program.

**MS MILLIGAN:** And can I just ask a related – oh, sorry?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, that's part of the program. So, there's about six months of road building before the first turbines, the first foundations start being established.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. And just one associated question. We noticed a submission from receivers who live on the eastern edge, outside the project, but on the eastern edge. And I think, from memory, their concern was will you only be using that northern entrance and that southern entrance? Is there any reason why anybody would be using Keri Road, which is adjacent to the submitter's residences?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, that's right. And we did respond to that submission. There is no plans during construction to utilise that Keri East Road outside of the project boundary. During operations, there is the possibility that a small number of light vehicles, so construction staff – not construction, sorry, operational staff – may use that road from time to time to access the site. However, that is a very small number, in the order of five or so vehicles per day, up to that much, that's anticipated, and that's allowed for in the Traffic Impact Assessment.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Yes. So, during construction, you say you're not planning to use it, but could workforce who are living in town use it? Like, is there any, in your Transport Plan are you planning to have prohibited routes?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, well, it's all unsealed. So, the fact that it's not going to be built to cater for construction vehicles makes it all the more problematic, and there will certainly be rules and protocols about accessing the site through the allocated and nominated designated access routes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. And that's for workforce using their own private vehicles?

**MR BOUTRY:** Private vehicles, work vehicles, yes, any vehicles, yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Good. How are we going for time? We're halfway through our time, so I'll let you move on.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. So, the project will obviously have benefits in terms of the amount of generation and avoided carbon dioxide equivalent through the renewable energy generated, the equivalent of about 600,000 homes. I'll just move on.

One thing of interest which I'll just touch on quickly is the BESS is a little bit unusual in that it allows for the ability to have either a decentralised or centralised BESS. There's a picture there on your right of an example of a decentralised BESS, which co-locates the wind and the battery on the same hardstand. That's something that Goldwind is able to do through its technology and specifics around the technology.

We see that as really positive, by reducing, by maximising the use of shared infrastructure that would be built for the wind farm and being able to install BESS on the hardstands for the wind turbine and connect them into the same cables and use the same substation that would otherwise need to be built separately. We've allowed that optionality in the project and we're currently optimising the BESS size for Stage 1. And the picture is an example actually on one of our Victorian projects where we've built a pilot in the last couple of years.

**MS MILLIGAN:** So, what, you've got the option to do consolidated or by turbine. When will that decision be made and what will influence the decision?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. So, we're actually moving forward on Stage 1 with the decentralised pathway.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. However, Stage 2 obviously is, until we know what's going on for Stage 2, no decision has been made, so we wish to retain the flexibility.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** I don't think I need to say anything else on this one.

**MS MILLIGAN:** That's good [cross-talk 00:32:41].

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. So, yes, there's been a number of extensive community and stakeholder engagements through the EIS process, including pop-up sessions, face-to-face meetings, stalls at public events, phone/emails etc. We've got over 600 interactions recorded on our CRM, you know, a summary of which is within the EIS and Amendment Letter.

And just some photos from the different engagement we have there. The one in the middle at the bottom there, not all of it is monetary, there we donated to the Men's Shed one of our trailers which was holding the LiDAR system, so a wind monitoring system. They were very pleased to receive that and use it for Men's Shed activities. Yes, as well as various donations in kind as well, some chairs from the – ah, tables from the office and things like that, which were greatly appreciated by the community.

We've touched on the VPA. Is there ... There are, there will be additional commitments being made. The project has been awarded a capacity investment scheme at a Federal Government level, and there are additional commitments within that process, but they're separate to the State process.

So, I'm not sure how much I need to talk to this slide. Obviously, it's been a long ...

**MS MILLIGAN:** I think we probably prefer to move on, so we can dig into some important issues like environmental etc.

**MR BOUTRY:** Sure. Probably just – the Amendment Letter documented the reduction. The original project, it was 180 turbines, there was a lot of, I guess, consideration and micro-siting to get to that 180, however, following the Submissions Report and the submissions received, we then did reduce, remove an additional five turbines. And that was on the basis of a combination of ecological matters, particularly a couple of eagle nests as well as reducing some impacts to potential Plains-Wanderer pathways as well as some threatened species.

The other one was, once we completed the detailed flood assessment, we thought it was simpler to remove a couple of turbines which were in the sort of high risk flood zone rather than needing to do a whole bunch of other surveys and moving them elsewhere, to reduce that to the now 175 turbines.

So, moving onto the key assessment ... We'll move to biodiversity.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, please.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. So, the whole project area comprises of over 46,000 hectares, of which the estimated development footprint will be a small portion of that, it's 795 hectares, which is 1.7% of the estimated footprint. Extensive assessments were undertaken. A number of PCTs were identified, a couple of which were Threatened, as well as a number of threatened species which are documented and detailed in the BDAR. I'll just – here's the PCTs. It's a large site, you can't really see much out of the map, but there's a list of the PCTs.

One of the threatened species which was assessed in detail was the Plains-Wanderer, which was of interest to the State and the Commonwealth. There were 21 records across the survey period, 6 of those records were within the assessment corridor, and the remainder were sort of incidental chance observations as ecologists were travelling through the site. The ecologists, ecological studies and the BDAR determined based on the proposed mitigation measures, that the project would not result in a significant impact to the Plains-Wanderer, nor would it constitute an SAII (serious and irreversible impact).

The DPHI commissioned the Independent Expert Advisor Panel for the Energy Transition to also take a look at the Plains-Wanderer, because CPHR had a differing view on the potential for the significance. That was concluded that the project would not constitute an SAII to the Plains-Wanderer.

**DR COAKES:** Medard, just on the eagles, the eagle [cross-talk 00:38:05].

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes.

**DR COAKES:** I note, and correct if I'm wrong, but I note Goldwind's been involved in a trial of some systems, I think it's called IdentiFlight in Tasmania on your Capital Hill Wind Farm. Is that correct?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, that is correct.

**DR COAKES:** So, I just wondered, has there been any consideration, given the sensitivities around birds, bats, other things in this particular area, I just wondered was that ever a consideration of utilising that sort of technology here?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. So, on our Tasmanian project, the Wedge-tailed Eagle in Tasmania is a listed Threatened species.

**DR COAKES:** Yes.

**MR BOUTRY:** It is not a listed Threatened species in New South Wales. And the Commonwealth condition for that project required the IdentiFlight to be installed.

**DR COAKES:** Yes.

**MR BOUTRY:** It is an expensive system, and it does also reduce the output from the project. The assessment and the considerations in New South Wales by our specialist ecologist determined that such a – the potential impacts of the project do not pose a significant impact to the Wedge-tailed Eagle or other bird and bat species, and that IdentiFlight system is not a required standard mitigation.

If, during operations, and we have submitted a draft Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan, if continual impacts were identified which could lead to a significant impact at the time, then a range of options, including IdentiFlight, would be further considered.

**DR COAKES:** Okay. And I can see you've got, obviously there's detailed management, in the management strategies there's a lot of detail around that. And I think the regional Plains-Wanderer working group and strategy is an important one from a cumulative perspective as well, so, yes.

**MR BOUTRY:** That's right. And one of the outcomes which is above and beyond what we would normally have on an individual project is this more coordinated approach around managing the Plains-Wanderer. There are a lot of scientific unknowns around this species. And, you know, it's a boom-and-bust species, it moves around when the conditions are good, it breeds really quickly, and then when conditions are bad, it contracts to its home ranges.

And so, it was important through the discussions with the IPET and what has ultimately been recommended, is that all of the projects in the region form part of a regional Plains-Wanderer working group to develop a Regional Plains-Wanderer Management Strategy to which each proponent will need to implement that strategy. We don't know the details of that strategy yet, but we are allocating funding to be able to undertake the various monitoring and other activities to ensure that, well, firstly scientifically it's better understood and, or better managed as well.

**DR TURLOUGH GUERIN:** Yes, I think, thanks Medard, I was concerned about the – whether your mitigation and those alternative strategies would take into account the cumulative effects on biodiversity, so I think you've answered the question I've had. But, you know, I guess if there's any alternative to the bird flight, sorry, the IdentiFlight mechanism which sounds really useful for other projects, if there's an equivalent, I guess that would be of interest.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, noted. Also, the Plains-Wanderer itself isn't known to fly very much.

**DR GUERIN:** Oh, absolutely.

**MR BOUTRY:** Although that is a little bit unknown. But, yes, that is why we have an important adaptive bird and bat management system to not close the door on any – you know, there may be new technologies as well, or different ways to address issues that may arise or be identified through the research or through the monitoring that happens.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Can I just check if there were any other questions on biodiversity. If not, I'm going to invite us to move on.

**MR BOUTRY:** Shall I move to heritage? Okay. We had over 48 days, so we engaged with the local representative Aboriginal parties, a number of which registered to the site. We've met with them, I've met with a number of them outside of the sort of RAP survey process. So, there's three predominant groups. We've got the Nari Nari Tribal Council. We've got the Wemba Wemba group in the Balranald, the LALC at Balranald as well, and a couple of other family groups.

So, we were out on site with representatives from the RAPs for 48 days, and a number of sites were identified through the process. There was a lot of micro-siting and changing the assessment corridor to avoid important sites. As a summary there, we

have 206 newly recorded sites, and 117 of those were completely avoided through design refinements. So, what that means is that the assessment corridor has deviated around the site. So, the project approval doesn't allow for any activities to happen outside of the development – the assessment corridor.

There are 77 sites within the development corridor that do have the potential for impacts. They'll be refined through further micro-siting as the detailed design progresses. However, those are sites that, in consultation with the RAPs, there is the ability to salvage those if they cannot be avoided, and there is also a range of mitigation measures including involvement of the RAPs in a monitoring process as the works, the ground-breaking works progress in a number of the more sensitive areas, and there's a handful of more sensitive areas that have been mapped and identified in the ACHA.

**DR COAKES:** So, Medard, just on that. So, there is, just in looking through the ACHA, there were a couple of sites that were particularly highlighted by your consultants and your ecologists in relation to – so, the archaeologist in relation to being their rarity and high significance. One of those was that site BWF-14, which is supposedly a large lunette pad which was seen to be quite a rare feature in the broader regional landscape. That was highlighted as well as there was a couple of sites which I think you are avoiding, which were BWF-29 and 49, which had some possible [cross-talk 00:45:29].

**MR BOUTRY:** We've avoided all burials.

**DR COAKES:** Yes, that's right.

**MR BOUTRY:** They were the most – the RAPs were very, you know, that was clearly for them the most significant sites, the burial sites, and we were very clear from the beginning we will avoid all burials and we'll work around those. That's the beauty with windfarms, you know, you can typically ...

**DR COAKES:** Yes, you can do that. So, yes, it's just that BWF-14 site which seemed to be quite significant. And I guess you've outlined that there is a process obviously of them working through that as you would progress.

The other question I had was just around, there's obviously been quite a clear expression or desire by the RAPs to, in terms of collection of artefact and keeping of artefacts. I just wondered are you considering, because I think obviously there is, with any of these projects and other projects and other sectors where you've got that significant collection of artefact and a desire for that to be used for educational or training purposes or then even to be put back onto the site once development concludes. Yes, are you considering working with those groups around the development of a keep-in-place or [cross-talk 00:46:41].

**MR BOUTRY:** Most definitely. We would love to do that, and we have liaised with the groups. We would love to have an artefact cabinet, whether it's at the local school, at the construction compound, operational compound, or at a place of their choosing. It's something that really does need to be guided by the RAPs, and that's something that we will need to land as part of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

In the discussions I've had directly, the groups have certainly been open and interested in having the display in the educational aspect and we've shown them examples where we have delivered on that on other projects in the past. However, that will require their confirmation. There is always the, I guess, the tension about wanting to keep the artefacts on land, on country, on site as much as possible. And so, it may end up on, you know, within the project, as I said, in one of the construction or operational compounds, but we'd really be guided by the groups on how they want the artefacts to be kept and managed.

**DR COAKES:** Okay, good, thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** But a hundred per cent open to all of those ideas, we think it's great.

**DR GUERIN:** Yes, I think also, just on that point, just making sure and even testing the very specific mechanism of when one of the construction workers or consultants or whoever identifies an artefact on site, that there is a very clear pathway for notifying the relevant LALC or RAP owner or Aboriginal group. And so, because that needs to be resolved, like, does it remain, is it picked up, is it agreed to be one that's considered for putting in a cabinet, either on site or in township.

I think you want to make sure that mechanism is quite clear, because it can – the RAPs sometimes don't go to that level of detail. But this is a really practical issue because it could cause long-term challenges.

**MR BOUTRY:** And if you don't have it sorted out logistically, then it's going to lead to delays when it comes up.

**DR GUERIN:** Of course, yes.

**MR BOUTRY:** Absolutely. That is the intention and hopefully, you know, the CHMP can include that level of detail rather than the broad standard chance-finds protocol, hopefully it can have that next-level detail, whether it's in the document itself or understood by the parties, yes, that will be important. Agree.

**MS MILLIGAN:** All right. Where are we up to in the ...

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, if we move onto visual. So, yes, the site is blessed by the – although it is very flat and there's probably only five or so metres elevation difference across the 40 kilometres north-south, there are very few residences in the local area. So, the visual assessment was completed. There were two receivers, non-associated receivers within 4 kilometres for which mitigation measures have been recommended and proposed. One of those, I think it's the R13, is lived in, R24 is not, hasn't been lived in for decades. So, it'll be a discussion with the landowner at the time. And neither of those are close to Stage 1 but they would be considered, you know, they would need to be implemented in advance of any Stage 2 progressing for the project.

Overall, as you can see in the overview, there are only four non-associated receivers within, yes, 5.9 kilometres of the project, which is pretty amazing when you think there's 175 turbines being proposed.

**MS MILLIGAN:** So, the issue of the screening, the plantings for the receiver off to the right, why wouldn't you do that in Stage 1, given they need to grow?

5 **MR BOUTRY:** I guess you could, and we wouldn't be necessarily opposed to that. However, as you can see, R13 is over 10/15 kilometres from any Stage 1 turbine. And there is no current known pathway for Stage 2.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

10 **MR BOUTRY:** So, yes, there's ...

**MS MILLIGAN:** All right, okay, thank you.

15 **MR BOUTRY:** Shall I move to noise? Yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Given that we don't have a lot of time left, if you can talk to us quickly about that.

20 **MR BOUTRY:** Yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** I'm not sure that we had any key issues to consider.

25 **MR BOUTRY:** No issues, no major issues at all on noise. All receivers, all non-associated receivers are within the limits, I guess is the high-level summary, and you can see the contour there based on the modelling work that's been done by a consultant.

30 **DR COAKES:** I think, Medard, my only question there would be that obviously no significant noise impacts from the gypsum extraction area on neighbouring [cross-talk 00:52:11].

**MR BOUTRY:** No.

35 **DR COAKES:** No?

40 **MR BOUTRY:** No, that's right. That's right. And it's not the sort, you know, it's an activity that would not be differentiated differently to other construction activities for the roads in any way, it's not rock breaking, there's no explosives proposed for that. It's all sort of surface materials.

**DR COAKES:** Yes, okay, thank you.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** Are you moving to traffic and transport?

**MR BOUTRY:** Ah, yes. Okay, so over-size/over-dimensional turbine components coming from Adelaide. There are, within New South Wales there are four upgrades required. EnergyCo is actually in the process with Transport for NSW, they have received \$65 million of early funding to support the REZ, and we've been in discussion with them as well as the other access right holders. And they are

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progressing with three of those intersection – or two of those intersection upgrades. And we're in discussions with them. If that were not to happen, the project still is seeking the ability to undertake those upgrades themselves, ourselves. You can see, so one of those is at Balranald, another one is on the Sturt Highway and Murray Valley Highway intersection, as well as the site intersection which will be wholly the responsibility of the project.

And then within the project area itself, there is a small unsealed council road called Baldon Road or Tchelery Road, both names are used. And the portion of that road that is within the project area is proposed to be upgraded for the purposes of Stage 2, and because it isn't currently, you know, it is unsealed and not currently suitable as an all-weather road to handle any vehicles really when conditions are wet, that road is currently dry-weather road only by council.

**MS MILLIGAN:** So, the Commonwealth funded or the government funded intersection upgrades, if they're not completed by the time you need to install, the project will undertake them. Is that what you're saying?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, basically, that's right.

**MS MILLIGAN:** And the Balranald one would need to be done when?

**MR BOUTRY:** In terms of the project program and scheduling, the large turbine components that need to use this road are scheduled to commence arriving approximately 12 months after the commencement of construction. So, there would be a period of 12 months from which we would need to take a material action to progress those works, and the designs are already, you know, we've got concept designs for each of those intersections which would be progressed to detailed design etc.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** Do you have any other questions about ...

**MS MILLIGAN:** On transport?

**MR BOUTRY:** ... about transport and traffic?

**MS MILLIGAN:** I don't believe so.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. It's much simpler than many of the other projects around because it is a direct turn off the highway, which does help a lot. There will be, yes, the intersection will help facilitate the turn to, yes, make sure that can be done safely.

**DR GUERIN:** I think the only – Chair and Medard – I think the only issue there is the concern, making sure that the vehicle can pull over and the highway traffic can overtake as the driver prepares to navigate into the site. So, there needs to be enough offset, basically another lane, prior to them stopping and setting up the turn into the site, because that's not something you can just slow down to 50, hit the skids and then turn in. You actually can't, you need to pull right off the road, because there could be a bank of traffic behind you. So, that, I think there needs to be consideration of that

practical aspect, and it allows the driver then to be relaxedly consider the whole approach to the site, and you can't do that by just leaving it on the road, right? So, it's a consideration I think that needs to be taken into account. It is a real risk.

5 **MR BOUTRY:** It has been – the designs and the concept designs and the requirements for the turn-ins have been considered in a lot of detail. And the engagement with TfNSW, you know, is one of the reasons why it has taken so long to get to this point.

10 So, the design as you can see in the top right is the site, and the blue areas are where the extensions of the road and hardstands do include some widening in the lead-up to the turn. There will also be escorts behind and in front, so if that is a police escort/escorted component, there may also be a slowing down that happens behind to allow for the safe turn. But yes, that will be in, I guess, and the specifics around each component will be detailed in the subsequent management plans as well. But it has  
15 been considered as part of the assessment.

And one of the key factors Transport wanted us to consider was that none of the movements would cause more than 10 minutes' delay to any vehicles travelling anywhere, of the over-dimensionals, and so you'll see in the additional information  
20 section of the project planning website, specific consideration that was made as to available pullover bays and areas where that overtaking could happen, to not hold up traffic unnecessarily.

25 **DR GUERIN:** Thanks, Medard.

**DR COAKES:** And Medard – oh, sorry, Janett.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Go ahead, Sheri.

30 **DR COAKES:** Just in relation to obviously lighter vehicles then, should the Balranald workforce facility be utilised, is there a consideration of bussing workforce in?

**MR BOUTRY:** Absolutely.

35 **DR COAKES:** Yes.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, absolutely. And we have already checked with the facility, they can make buses available, and contractors can organise that as well.

40 **DR COAKES:** Okay, great, thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, and that also helps – actually, our construction team was a little concerned, although it's 45 kilometres in the scheme of this area, that's not very far, but it does have implications to how many hours individuals can work. And so,  
45 bussing helps alleviate that fatigue management issue as well.

**DR COAKES:** Yes.

50 **MS MILLIGAN:** So, a couple of issues before we finish. Wanted to talk about water licensing.

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Sheri, did you have a question?

5

**DR COAKES:** Yes, thanks Janett, yes. I understand that you did have a water licence, temporary water licence access in place and that was expiring towards the end of 2025. Has that been reinstated and updated?

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**MR BOUTRY:** I'm not sure there was a licence that was expiring as such, I'll have to double check that. I am aware the project has obtained a water access licence, zero WAL. So, what that usually means is – and I'm not aware of a timeframe around those licences. You hold the licence but there's no link to any water.

15

**DR COAKES:** Yes.

**MR BOUTRY:** The project would then need to acquire that temporary allocation of the water sufficient for its needs. The EIS also contemplates the installation of bores on site.

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**DR COAKES:** Yes, I noted that, about four, I think, isn't that ...

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**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, that's right, in addition to the possible use of an existing bore on the second landowner's property. So, that has been assessed as part of the groundwater assessment and deemed to not result in undue drawdown or issues to groundwater-dependent ecosystems or other land users in the vicinity of the project. It's quite a deep – there's quite a large vertical separation, the water is expected to be over a hundred metres deep.

30

The alternatives to the bores, you know, the existing main landholder does have rights to pump water from a nearby waterway, Billabong Creek. We are liaising with that landholder, they may destock their property while construction happens, and if that were to eventuate, the water could be made available to the project, so it's a backup.

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Potable water requirements would need to be trucked to site, but that is quite a small component compared to what we expect for water suppression material conditioning, sorry, dust suppression material conditioning and so forth.

40

**MS MILLIGAN:** All right. And can I ask you please about waste. It's an issue that's raised by councils, particularly Murray River. And yes, what are your plans for disposal of waste? Because I think we do understand their concerns of those very small landfills.

45

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes. Absolutely. Firstly, we would seek to minimise the amount of waste that does go to landfill by implementing the waste hierarchy and maximising reuse and recycling and avoidance. There will, however, be inevitably waste that does need to go to landfill. We're acutely aware that some of the councils such as Edward River have clearly stated that their waste facilities are not suited to take this waste. Hay Shire Council is willing to accept the waste and have quite innovative ideas around

further recycling and further reuse of that waste. So, we would in the first instance look to liaise with Hay Shire Council to manage and accept that waste.

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. And so, would you, in doing that, would you have similar agreements with other councils that you wouldn't use their facilities?

**MR BOUTRY:** If those councils require that, then that's something we certainly would be open to.

10 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

**MR BOUTRY:** But I think probably at the, you know, as we progress and finalise the environmental management, the EMS, the strategy, as well as supporting waste management, that can also become part of the management processes for the project.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** And, of course, you would have seen that the Department has suggested should the project be approved, a set of conditions around waste, so I think that's fine. So, we're coming to the end of the discussion and so I'll give you a chance to add anything you'd like to. But can we ask you about those recommended  
20 conditions that the Department has provided; did you have any comment about those conditions?

**MR BOUTRY:** Look, we had the opportunity to review the draft conditions and have provided feedback on those. We're generally accepting of those conditions. I think  
25 there's a couple of conditions that could be improved, and I'm considering supplying a separate submission to yourselves with some recommended minor tweaks which could, yes, further enhance and benefit just practically some of the – the way the project is managed and some of the outcomes. But generally, yes, accepting of those conditions.

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** So, you made those suggestions to the Department but they didn't make their way into the draft conditions at the moment – is that what you're saying?

**MR BOUTRY:** Actually, one of them is to do with turning, heavy vehicles turning  
35 into site, one of them, I think, was a little bit of an oversight. And so, I'll be seeking some input from our traffic consultant to support a submission. And then, like I said earlier, we are currently reviewing and optimising the BESS size. So, just depending on that outcome, we may be possibly looking at a larger number of hours for the BESS, and I just need to work out, probably with Planning and yourselves, what the best way to do that is. And whether it's post approval, should the project be approved,  
40 or whether that's something that can be integrated into the current process.

**MS MILLIGAN:** All right. So, let me ask firstly, Turlough and Sheri, do you have any other questions or comments to make?

45 **DR COAKES:** No, no thanks, Janett.

**DR GUERIN:** No thanks, Janett, no, those – that's all good, thank you.

50 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. And Medard, in terms of Goldwind, did you have any last comments to leave with us?

5       **MR BOUTRY:** No. Overall, I think, you know, in the scheme of wind farms in the state, I think this is a pretty low-risk project in a great area that does have government support and community support. So, yes, I trust all of these factors will be considered by the Chair and the commissioners, and yes, look forward to showing you around the site further in the coming weeks, and yes, progressing this process.

10       **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Well, thank you very much. Thank you for the thought that went into your presentation and for the information that you've given us. We can conclude at that point. Thank you very much.

**MR BOUTRY:** No problems. If there's any other questions, don't hesitate to reach out.

15       **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** Thanks a lot.

**>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**