



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: BALDON WIND FARM (SSD-40138508)

HAY SHIRE COUNCIL MEETING

PANEL:	MS JANETT MILLIGAN (Chair) DR SHERIDAN COAKES DR TURLOUGH GUERIN
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	KENDALL CLYDSDALE
HAY SHIRE COUNCIL:	CR CAROL OATAWAY (Mayor) DAVID WEBB ALISON MCLEAN
LOCATION:	ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE
DATE & TIME:	10:00AM – 11:03AM TUESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2026

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

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

10 So, welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Baldon Wind Farm state significant development application, which is SSD-40138508, which is 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 around 1,400 megawatts located in the South West Renewable Energy Zone.

15 The site's approximately 13 kilometres north of Moulamein. The majority of the project is within the Murray River local government area with the 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: 46 turbines in Stage 1, and 129 turbines in Stage 2, with a maximum tip height of 300 metres. With a 200-megawatt battery energy storage system with 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'm joined by my fellow commissioners, Dr Sheridan Coakes.

DR SHERIDAN COAKES: Morning.

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** And Dr Turlough Guerin.

DR TURLOUGH GUERIN: Hi, everyone.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** We are also joined by Kendall Clydsdale from the office of the Independent Planning Commission.

40 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. The 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.

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 you're not in a position to answer, you may take the question on notice. And then following the meeting, the Commission will advise you in writing of any questions taken on notice that the Panel consider requires a formal response. Any subsequent response or information that you provide to us will then be published on our website.

So, I request that all of us here today introduce ourselves before we speak for the first time, and for all members to ensure that they don't speak over the top of each other, just to make sure that we get a good transcript.

5 So, let's begin. And may I first ask member joining from Council to please introduce yourself and, if applicable, give us a verbal declaration of any actual or perceived personal interests that you may have in the project. And I believe, Mayor, that you would like to open with a statement also?

10 **CR CAROL OATAWAY:** Yes, that's correct.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. So, why don't you do that, thank you very much.

15 **CR OATAWAY:** Okay. So, I'll do my introduction then. So, I'm Carol Oataway, Councillor Carol Oataway, the Mayor of Hay Shire Council. And I have no interests to declare. Did you want to introduce the other Council members here today or ...

MS MILLIGAN: Yes, let's do that now, and then you can speak to us, thank you. Thank you, Mayor.

20 **CR OATAWAY:** Okay. All right. So, I have joining me, David Webb, our General Manager, and also Alison McLean who is our Executive Manager, Tourism and Economic Development. So, they're our Council members who are here today.

25 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you.

CR OATAWAY: And I'll launch now into my opening statement, if that's okay.

MS MILLIGAN: Yes, please.

30 **CR OATAWAY:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak with the Commission today regarding the Baldon Wind Farm. Hay Shire Council is supportive of responsible renewable energy development and recognises the important role these projects will play in the South West Renewable Energy Zone and the broader energy transition.
35 Council has consistently sought to work constructively with proponents, the Department, Transport for NSW, and other agencies, to facilitate this investment.

40 Our position is not about opposing development. It is about making sure that development occurs responsibly, that its impacts are properly understood and managed, and importantly, that the costs of those impacts are not transferred to our council, our ratepayers or our community.

45 Council will provide a detailed written submission to the Commission, so today I would like to concentrate on several key matters. The first and probably most important is traffic and the impact on our road network. Much of the attention in renewable energy projects understandably focuses on over-size and over-mass vehicles. However, from Council's perspective, these are only part of the transport task. The much larger number of conventional heavy vehicles transporting quarry

materials, concrete products, construction equipment, and other materials can have significant cumulative impact on roads.

5 This is why Council is asking that the Traffic Management Plan consider all significant development related heavy vehicle movements, not simply vehicles requiring an escort. It should clearly identify the proposed haulage routes, the expected daily nature and type of heavy vehicles during both average and peak construction periods, and how those movements will interact with existing road users.

10 The Sturt Highway is not simply a project access route. It is a major interstate and regional freight corridor and is critically important to agriculture, tourism and our local communities. It is used every day by freight operators, farmers moving machinery, school transport, emergency services, tourists, and local residents. Baldon also needs to be considered alongside the other renewable energy and major infrastructure projects
15 that will use the same road network. Council therefore believes the conditions of consent need to provide a strong framework for monitoring and managing those impacts throughout construction.

20 The second issue is protecting Council's road assets. Council supports pre-imposed construction dilapidation surveys, but we do not believe that is sufficient for a construction program of this scale. We are seeking six-monthly road condition assessments during construction, so that deterioration can be identified and addressed earlier rather than waiting until the end of construction when significant damage may already have occurred.

25 Those assessments also need to include road structures such as culverts, drainage structures, pipes and stock grids. These assets can be just as vulnerable to repeated heavy vehicle loading as the pavement itself. Where project related damage occurs, Council's position is that it should be rectified promptly. Damage should not have to
30 reach the point where it creates an immediate road safety risk before action is required. Deterioration can reduce the condition and useful life of a road well before it becomes an immediate safety hazard.

35 Council is also seeking a formal Road Maintenance Agreement supported by appropriate financial security. Our written submission proposes a bank guarantee equivalent to 50% of the estimated project related road maintenance costs. The principle is straight forward. Council and its ratepayers should not carry the financial risk associated with deterioration caused by project construction traffic.

40 The third matter is cumulative impacts. This is becoming increasingly important for Hay Shire. Baldon cannot be considered entirely in isolation from the substantial renewable energy and infrastructure development occurring across the region. The cumulative impacts extend well beyond roads. They include workforce and accommodation, housing availability, health and emergency services, waste
45 management, water supply, telecommunications, and other Council and community infrastructure.

These impacts do not necessarily stop at local government boundaries either. Projects further east may still use the Sturt Highway, draw upon the same workforce and

accommodation market, or rely upon services and infrastructure within Hay. Council is therefore strongly advocating for greater coordination between proponents, Transport for NSW, the Department, councils and other agencies, particularly around construction scheduling, traffic management, workforce accommodation, and infrastructure investment.

There are three other matters I would like to briefly highlight. Firstly, Council supports the proposed restriction of Moulamein Road to emergency use. Any further proposal to use that route for construction heavy vehicles should require the approval of the relevant road authority and an appropriate assessment of its capacity.

Secondly, emergency management planning needs to involve councils and the relevant local emergency management committee. We have important statutory and operational responsibilities during emergencies, and local arrangements for communications, access, evacuation and emergency service capacity need to be properly integrated into project planning.

Thirdly, Council has waste and resource recovery facilities that may be able to support the project. We are willing to work with the Proponent on those opportunities. However, if Council facilities are to be used, there needs to be a Waste Management Agreement in place beforehand, so that waste volumes, material types, charges, transport arrangements, and facility capacity are understood and agreed.

In closing, Council's position is constructive and straight forward. We support responsible renewable energy development and the opportunities it can bring to our region. But regional communities should not be expected to absorb the infrastructure, financial and service impacts necessary to deliver projects of this scale.

For Baldon, Council is asking the Commission to ensure the conditions of consent provide for all significant heavy vehicle movements and haulage routes to be properly assessed and managed, regular road condition monitoring and timely rectification, road structures to be included in those protections, formal road maintenance agreements with appropriate financial security, effective Council involvement in traffic, emergency and waste management planning, appropriate management of workforce and accommodation impacts, and proper consideration of the cumulative impacts of the broader renewable energy development program.

These measures are not intended to prevent or unnecessarily delay the project; they are intended to provide clarity and accountability and to ensure that the project proceeds without transferring unreasonable costs or impacts to Council, existing road users or the Hay community. Subject to these matters being appropriately addressed through strengthened conditions of consent, Hay Shire Council remains supportive of the Baldon Wind Farm.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you. Thank you very much, Councillor Oatway. Thank you for that sort of very considered presentation of the issues that remain for Council. Can I suggest that we maybe just make our way through them, if that's all right with you.

There are a couple of your original list of submissions which we assume have been addressed by conditions, but we might just come back and check those at the end.

5 So, let's just start with the Traffic Management Plan. And you've given us a very good picture of the issues that concern Council. And you, I think, are saying to us that in the draft conditions, you think these things remain unaddressed. So, can we just get a bit of a sense of any conversations you've had with the Department and where you're up to, I suppose, with the points you've put forward, the response you've had, and what you see in the draft conditions as they exist at the moment.

10 **CR OATAWAY:** Okay. I might hand over to the General Manager who has had these discussions, and he's in a much better position than I am to answer that. So, if I could hand over now to David, who will answer that question. Thank you.

15 **MR DAVID WEBB:** Thanks, Madam Mayor. And I've got no interest to declare either, by the way.

20 So, we've had some discussions with the Department, mainly through submissions to the EIS's and to the draft conditions of consent, and while we support the project, we are concerned that the cumulative impacts particularly along the Sturt Highway have not been adequately addressed, particularly for the project further to the east. When you look at their recent submissions and their documents and the traffic impact assessment, it's all related around the location of the project, which is great, no problem at all, and the few projects there.

25 But there's a lot more projects to the east that we don't believe that they've incorporated into their transport numbers. So, the conclusion that there's no impact along the Sturt Highway, we don't agree with that conclusion, and we think there will be impacts particularly for the business-as-usual traffic along those things. And we're just asking for that they – further assessment of those, particularly, and that can be in with the Traffic Management Plan development, but look at how that is going to be managed, because there will be impacts.

30 There will be slow-moving vehicles. There's going to be a high number of heavy vehicles, and you're going to have heavy vehicles bringing gravels in that are going to come from the east through Hay to the project site, and they've acknowledged that, but we haven't got any quantity around those numbers and what that impact's going to be travelling through the township.

35 So, we're asking them, we're asking the Proponent through you and the Department to have a bit more robust numbers and discussion and thought put in to how that's going to be managed, and that's what our – our detailed submission will address that with some specific requirements with suggestions that we would like to see in the conditions of consent. It's not for today, but that'll be in our submission when you receive that.

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** All right, thank you. So, all the quarry materials are coming from east of Hay and through Hay?

MR WEBB: No, not all, most at this point in time, so about 90% of the quarry materials for Hay come from the east. But we suspect that's going to change and some are going to come from the south and southwest, which means that – and that could be in the order of 20–25% of that might come from that direction, because they're not going to be able to supply everything from the east at the moment, that mainly comes from that direction.

So, we suspect that we're going to have more movements coming up through Hay, where it's up through the Cobb and through that way, that's why we're worried about Moulamein Road being potentially used as a transport route, and we support the restrictions as emergency access only. However, we believe that there'll be raw materials coming from that direction or from the west as well.

MS MILLIGAN: All right, okay. So, can you talk to us a little bit about – and I thank you for your undertaking that you'll give us a detailed submission ...

MR WEBB: Mm-hm.

MS MILLIGAN: ... including with perhaps some suggested conditions.

MR WEBB: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: But can you just give us a little sense of that. So, you're talking about Sturt Highway in particular and you're talking about traffic flows. We'll get to road condition in a minute. Can you give us a sense of the sorts of things that Council think could address those issues to your satisfaction.

MR WEBB: So, we are looking for more detailed planning around where those heavy vehicles are coming from and the numbers, the quantities, the timing, and how they're going to move, whether it's along the Sturt or through the local road network, whether it's ours or another adjoining shire. So, we can understand and then we'd like consultation, more detailed consultation around that, because there's been some but it's been limited to date, so we'd like to see a bit more. So, that's what we're suggesting in the draft conditions of consent when you see our submission.

MS MILIGAN: Mm-hm. So, Council will then be prepared, with the information, of volumes of traffic and where they're going. And then do you feel as though Council will then have all it needs to manage that?

MR WEBB: No, well, it's up to the Proponent to manage that, it's more about how they're going to manage it. So, once we understand the volumes, then we can ask more questions about, right, well, how are we going to manage that, what's it going to look like coming through Hay.

And as the Mayor read out, we would like to see more dilapidation surveys every six months, because one at the start and one at the end of the project four years later is great, but it doesn't do anything in the middle of the project where we would like to see ... Because the deterioration is, the dilapidation survey will be pick it up, of course, but it's too late at the end of the project where you're going to have that fatigue

or destruction of the road pavement or reduction that's used for life. And we don't want to see that at the end of the project and work out then, oh, how are we going to fix that. We'd like to see some intermediate work and about how they're going to manage that through that.

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And if they can do more dilapidation surveys and there's more robust numbers and assessment of the heavy vehicle movements in particular, then that way we believe we can work with the Proponent and Transport, because it is a state highway, a lot of it is a state highway, how we're going to be able to manage the deterioration and any upgrades or rectification works that are going to be needed.

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MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Can I ask you if Council has had any other experience with projects where you've done more regular dilapidation surveys?

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MR WEBB: No, we've ... So, the only other project that's been conducted in this area that's had its construction completed is the Project EnergyConnect (or the PEC Project), and we found at the end of the day, there was some deterioration on our roads. Fortunately for Hay Shire, there wasn't a lot of impact on our roads, it's more for Edward River compared to us.

20

However, getting to the dilapidation survey, which they're just going through that process now and working with us at the end of the project, we're trying to tidy up and catch up at the end when, if we had this information or worked with them earlier on, we probably might be able to, could have then address some of these issues a bit earlier. And so, that's probably a lesson learnt from that project rather than a problem that's per se that's happened.

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MS MILLIGAN: I understand. Sherri, I'll throw to you.

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DR COAKES: Thanks, Janett, yes. David, you mentioned that from a cumulative perspective, you felt that there were maybe some of those projects to the east that haven't been considered. Were there any in particular that you felt really had been omitted in that cumulative assessment?

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MR WEBB: Pretty much all of them further to the east, from memory, when I read through it. So, you've got Yanco Delta, Dinawan, you've got Pottinger and Bullawah, and I don't believe that they adequately addressed the volumes of traffic that are going to need to be moved through the Sturt Highway. I acknowledge that those projects are still in development and they're changing their OSOM routes and everything. But in terms of the transport and everything, so what we're telling you regarding Baldon, we're telling the same story with all the developments and our same requirements. It's consistent and we're asking for the same information and for the same level of detail and the same commitment to the management of it.

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DR COAKES: Yes, okay, thank you.

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MS MILLIGAN: All right. Thank you for that discussion. So, we've talked about traffic and we've talked a little bit about road condition. Is there anything else we would like to talk about before we move onto the next topic?

MR WEBB: No, I think we've covered, and our submission will give you quite a lot more detail around that, and suggestions in the conditions of consent.

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right.

MS ALISON MCLEAN: Would I be able to just – sorry, am I able to say something? So, Alison McLean, Executive Manager, Economic Development, Tourism and Energy. Just to add to what David has said, one of our concerns is around the
10 management of the cumulative impacts as to who is responsible for any damage.

When you have multiple projects using the same transport route, how is responsibility allocated, how are costs allocated, how is management of that deterioration allocated, when we will have multiple heavy vehicles, multiple OSOM from multiple projects
15 using the same routes. So, that's something we'd like to see come out in the transport management plans as well, recognition that there are other projects using exactly the same transport routes.

MS MILLIGAN: Does Council have in its head an approach? Did you have any
20 advice for us, I suppose, on how you would like to see that managed?

MS MCLEAN: In an ideal world, it would be the responsibility of the projects to work together to work out what that looks like. In reality, there probably needs to be something within the conditions that states they need to speak to those other projects
25 that have planning approval that will be happening at exactly the same time. As to how they work out the allocation of that responsibility? There are ways and means now through AI, cameras, systems that Council use to do their own road management systems that could be used as well, but really that's another impost on Council to deliver that information.

30 So, it really should be up to the developers, we feel, to work together to access the information and then work out how they're going to pay that, how they're going to do that maintenance work as well. At the moment, the way that it is, the projects are being viewed in isolation, but they will be operating together. So, how do we make the two
35 come together? Probably not a solution for you, and maybe more of an expression of what we see as the issue that is coming, but it is somehow recognising in the conditions that those other projects will be occurring potentially at the same time.

DR COAKES: And Alison, just to follow that up, you're not seeing any of that
40 collaboration across proponents?

MS MCLEAN: There are some that are trying, but at the moment they're in such flux as to where their OSOM routes are coming from, they haven't bedded now yet for many of them. I mean, they're all on such a spectrum in terms of their development,
45 where their quarry materials are going to be coming from, where those heavy vehicles will be coming from.

But there does need to be a coordinated approach probably outside of Transport for NSW. Our understanding is that Transport for NSW will, understandably, be

concentrating on their network. But just in terms of their network, they'll be looking at the OSOM movements in particular, because the heavy vehicles are allowed to be on their state network, as it stands. So, how do we account for that, where you have cross-jurisdiction as well where council is the road authority for local roads, Transport for NSW for the state roads, and you have these multiple projects using it.

Ideally, EnergyCo would be great to be a coordinator in that. But the conversations that I know of that the developers are having, you know, where they are going to be using potentially the same roads, they're still at the stage where they want to keep their development information private at this stage until they all get to financial close. So, it will be a very short window, I think, to be able to deliver that.

DR COAKES: And just in terms of mechanism, following on from Janett's question. Am I right in saying, I thought I read somewhere that there is, the councils are – you, yourselves and the other councils, there is a forum by which councils are collaborating around these – is that a – is that forum is a way where councils are discussing some of the issues that are emerging with these projects?

MS MCLEAN: Yes, we work very closely with all of the councils in the South West REZ, particularly Edward River and Murrumbidgee because of the access right holders. And now Murray as well with Baldon coming on board, who potentially may be the first project to actually get up and going. So, yes, we work closely with all of the other councils and share information and, you know, look at the issues as a whole rather than what's just happening in our LGA.

DR COAKES: Yes, yes, okay. Thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: All right, can I ask –

MR WEBB: Madam Chair, sorry, Madam Chair, our submission, just following on from what Alison said, and it's a hundred per cent correct, is that our submission does talk about that developer-led coordination that we see to try and work together to resolve that. And when you get our submission, you'll see that we talk to that point exactly.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you. Thank you. Can I suggest we now have a conversation about waste. Now, would Council just like to sort of talk us through the key issues there. I guess we noted with interest your statement about waste and recovery. And interested to hear the role that you think you could play in that, while protecting, of course, Council's, I guess, limited resources. So, just talk to us about the waste issue, where it's at, at the moment, as you understand through conditions, and what's not there for you.

MR WEBB: So, the condition is pretty good. We're just suggesting an inclusion that if they're going to use Council's waste facility, that they're required to enter into a Waste Management Agreement just to strengthen that a little bit further. But we see waste as an opportunity. We have a resource recovery and eco park that's under development for Council and we're very innovative around circle economy initiatives and things that we like to achieve as an organisation as well as the community.

5 So, we see this as an opportunity to work with the South West REZ and all the
developments to do more resource recovery, reuse, repurpose the waste products into
something that we can reuse in construction. So, we're very supportive of that and we
just want – and we're happy to work with the proponents. We've spoken to EnergyCo
about this, we've spoken to proponents about this, and we're just, to see if we can
strengthen that a little bit in the conditions of consent, then we're happy to work with
these proponents to take their waste streams, and we're talking about pretty much all
their waste streams. And then work through to see how we can do resource recovery
10 and repurpose those and reprocess those into something, a useable product that we can
use in the local community in construction, not only Council's construction but any
other construction in the area.

15 So, that's pretty much where we'd like to see that head, if possible.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay, thank you. Any questions on that from – so, Turlough?

DR GUERIN: Yes. Thank you. That's great, a great initiative. What I'd be interested
to know, David, is there any limits to the types of waste which the Council –

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Is it just me who has Turlough frozen?

MR WEBB: No.

25 **CR OATAWAY:** No.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. So, Turlough, we ...

DR GUERIN: Sorry.

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** We lost you for a minute, so come back and ask that again.

DR GUERIN: How's – I'll just go without the video this time.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

DR GUERIN: Is there any red line on the types of waste you won't accept? And give
me a sense of the volumes that you could accept, just so I can get a sense of the size of
the waste challenge.

40 **MR WEBB:** Yes. So, in terms of the types of waste, there's no restrictions for us at
this point in time. We've worked closely with EnergyCo around their regional major
infrastructure project in terms of, and we'd like to develop the Stage 2, our resource
recovery park, and we're working with them on how that might be able to happen.
45 Which means we can take all the waste streams and repurpose most of those waste
streams into reusable prior to recyclable product. So, in terms of the types, we don't
see any issue there.

And in terms of the volumes, so our assessment based on the volumes provided through EnergyCo are based on the tonnes of waste and waste types produced per megawatt of construction, we would assume, we believe we can take most of the waste in our immediate footprint and the area of these projects, and we don't have to expand our licence for that. We're permitted to do that. It's just about – our restriction is around just the infrastructure to process it, which is what we're working through with EnergyCo in terms of what the opportunity might be.

I think hopefully that answers your question.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. It looks as though it does. Thank you, thank you. Can I suggest we talk about workforce. So, from the application we have before us, there are two possibilities for workforce accommodation, and so let's start with that issue. There is on the application an allocation of space for it to be on site, but we met with the Applicant recently and they are fairly confident that they can use the facilities in Balranald.

So, both options are still on the table, but it looks as though it may be in Balranald. Can I just ask the Council to talk about that whole workforce issue, broadly, not just in terms of accommodation and servicing that workforce, but opportunities it provides. I know Council has had views on that in the past.

MR WEBB: Absolutely. I think I'll defer to Alison there because this is something she's been working with all the proponents around this subject.

MS MILLIGAN: Thank you.

MS MCLEAN: In terms of the workforce accommodation, we've always been supportive of on-site accommodation. I'm aware of the Balranald option, it was used during the development of Project EnergyConnect, so it's an existing camp within the township, will provide quite good economic development or impacts for Balranald if it was to follow the same format that they had for Project EnergyConnect.

In terms of the opportunities, given the size, I think the footprint, total population for the whole of the South West REZ is 42,000 people. We have very high employment numbers, so I think last employment we're at 4.2%. We are a very tight workforce market. The reality is that probably around 9% of workforce for all of the projects will come locally, if we're talking about the traditional idea of someone in high-vis working on a project, that will be a good outcome for our community, to have those sorts of numbers.

The opportunity for us is really in the sort of plus one where we have our businesses supplying to the developments, and they're able to expand and offer long-term employment outcomes for the community. So, we know that the construction will be the sugar hit, it'll be two to three years, and then that construction workforce moves on. What we would like to see is that hyper local engagement of businesses who are able to expand, and then once construction has finished, they can move onto the next project, or within this area, or they can expand their business offering outside of this

region as well. So, we would rather see that sort of long-term economic outcome rather than workforce being taken from existing industry to work in those industries.

5 So, one of the things that is of concern to us is the cannibalisation of the workforce. These projects will offer better pay than what we can probably offer at the moment in this region. We don't want to see that workforce transport into a project and leave gaps within our existing workforce to be able to then fill that. So, yes, that cannibalisation of the workforce is of a concern for us. So, we need to deal with the reality of what that situation is in terms of the number of trainees and apprenticeships who might be able to be delivered out of the projects.

10 I think probably the reality is when you look at Year 12 this year for Hay High School, there were eight children finishing. We tend to have those very small numbers, The same for Balranald, Moulamein. I mean, Moama would be our biggest populace outside of Deniliquin probably, but we're talking about small numbers of trainees and apprentices that will come out of these projects.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** Mm. So, do you have views on how the approach you've just described could be systematised? Or is it always going to have to rely on, I suppose, consultation, attitude, relationship with the individual developments?

20 **MS MCLEAN:** I mean, it would be fantastic to be able to systematise it and to make that a condition that there must be a certain percentage. I mean, there are percentages that are in their contracts with EnergyCo and with the Australian Government as to how they deliver this. But even the definition of what local content is, local content is Australia and New Zealand, it's not local to our area.

25 So, to be able to put that hyper local in there ... There is also the financial reality that if our businesses within the REZ can't service the projects, then commercially it makes sense that they won't engage with those. But it's probably looking a little bit further out, so we're not just talking about construction workforce, we're talking about hospitality, and we're talking about education and we're talking about childcare and health. There are other ways to look at this outside of just that construction workforce. So, how do we embed that economic development.

30 In terms of systematising that, it is about – there is no way that we have come across yet, given the way that traineeships and apprenticeships are set up in NSW, it's very hard for them to be enormously flexible in small communities where you don't have so many businesses who can take on apprentices over the course of their apprenticeships. It is about building relationships. It's about building trust with the developers to actually deliver that hyper local. And I don't know where the stick comes out for that. So, how do we actually make them deliver hyper local? There's nothing that we found yet besides that relationship building that does that.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Mm-mm. Can I ask you, in terms of the apprenticeships and traineeships, I understand exactly the point you're making about scale. Are there training organisations locally who could [cross-talk 00:39:04] –

MS MCLEAN: There are training organisations that service Hay but not locally, yes. So, we have a TAFE, we have a connected learning centre, but nearly all of the apprenticeships that they offer outside of early childhood, I believe, the students have to travel to other areas to do that apprenticeship. So, they travel to Wagga or they travel to Griffith. So, there is an impost on the employer and an impost on the student to be able to access that.

Ideally, what we'd like to be able to see is the practical components of those apprenticeships delivered during this construction phase. That would be a terrific outcome for our community.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm-mm. I guess I was thinking of the concept where an organisation is actually the employer of the apprenticeships and the trainees and they can sort of call on, potentially, a number of different projects in the area for the placements, you know, as they come and go. Okay, all right.

MS MCLEAN: That is exactly the problem that we have here. Is that we don't have enough business – we don't have the wealth of numbers in the businesses for the training organisations to be able to deliver those apprenticeships. So, yes, ideally, to be able to use multiple projects that are going to be delivered in this area, to do that would be great, but how that coordination happens between the developers and the training organisations, we are – we're yet to see that connection through EnergyCo, who would naturally have been in that position.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Thank you for that conversation, that was very interesting. Anything else we want to talk to about workforce? Answering my own question. Let's assume that there is an on-site accommodation option, which looks as though is not all that likely, would you expect people then to call on services in Hay? I know it's further than Balranald but presumably has things to offer that Balranald doesn't.

MS MCLEAN: Yes, we would. We had the experience of Project EnergyConnect where we actually saw a lot of the workforce, they were at a camp 45 minutes to the south of Hay, and they would come to town to socialise, to be part of community events, use the supermarkets. So, we did see an uptick in economic activity while that was happening, and that's something that we would welcome.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And is there a downside of note that you'd mention, or not so much?

MS MCLEAN: We don't have experience of large-scale infrastructure or multiple work camps being in the area at the same time. Probably if all of the projects were to happen at the same, you know, concurrently, then there would be a pull on our services just in terms of retail. Then you're starting to look at – we didn't have the experience with Project EnergyConnect where our health services were impacted.

But potentially if you're looking at, you know, if you have Pottinger and BayWa happening at the same time, we're talking about 900 at peak workforce, 900 workers within 40 minutes of Hay, and then you would have Baldon on top of that even for that first stage that they're delivering, which I know is a lot smaller. So, potentially that's a

lot of people coming and using our services, which is why we were – we preferred the workforce accommodation where some of those services were actually delivered on site, so that we didn't then have that major sort of influx into the community. But it also presents an opportunity for businesses as well to meet that demand.

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MS MILLIGAN: Mm, okay. Let me just pause. Turlough?

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DR GUERIN: Yes. Is there a particular pressure from the Proponent from the development on the system, the services, what the Council needs to deliver? Is there anything particular or is it the cumulative effect of all those aspects and pressures from the development?

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MS MCLEAN: The development in isolation we can deal with. The cumulative impact of multiple projects happening over multiple years, you know, if you ... If everything started on time, we're looking at a five to six-year construction phase as these projects roll out. So, there's probably a level of exhaustion on services that would happen. And then it's just the sheer number that we, you know, we're 2,900 people and we adequately service that now. But you put another 900 people on top of that and then there definitely would be some pressure. Not that 900 people would all be using those services at the same time.

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There's probably, you know, in terms of water, which I think we'll get to later unless you want to discuss it now, that's another impact where we as Council would potentially service that demand for water for the camps. That's something we'd like to see a legacy project come out of that for the community, but that's also something that we need to consider as the water utility manager as well.

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MR WEBB: And probably just further to that, housing would be the other thing. Not all workers are going to be on site camp, whether it's on site or Balranald, there's going to be an ancillary construction force with specialists and that, or the operational staff that'll need housing. And we see that as the pressure point, again, cumulative of all the projects thrown together.

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And Ali's been working on some legacy projects, and she might be able to speak to that a bit further. But in terms of, yes, so there's water, waste we've already covered off on, but water, wastewater, we see, and medical services, emergency management, it's all those things that we see as the – that could be pressure point once you throw all the projects in together, not just in isolation.

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MS MILLIGAN: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

DR GUERIN: Yes, thank you. It's untested, what you're saying.

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MS MCLEAN: Correct.

MS MILLIGAN: So, let's talk about water. Alison, did you want to talk to us about water or is that David?

MS MCLEAN: No, I'll throw that one to David.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay.

5 **MR WEBB:** So, we're quite happy to supply water to the projects, either potable or we have non-potable water, we have a dual water system in Hay, so we have potable, we call it 'filtered' here, and non-potable which we call 'raw'. We only want to use raw water for construction activities, and we want to keep our potable water for human consumption or human needs.

10 So, we're happy to, and we've got the allocation and the treatment capacity to supply a lot of the projects and their demands. However, we don't have the storage capacity, so we would struggle to – while we can make enough water, we can't store enough water for them to come and get it in their demand quantities at the supply time that they require. And that's where, as Ali mentioned, that we're looking at some, talking to
15 them about some legacy projects, and we've got those discussions happening with EnergyCo as well about increased storage capacity to supply the projects which they could use, have direct use of that during the construction period and then it's left as storage capacity for us as a legacy for the community post construction.

20 And we see that as an opportunity, and we're happy to work with EnergyCo and the Department and the developers for that. These things, like our waste, we don't need any approvals for those, where we can detail them up and deliver those in relatively short timeframe compared to other things. What we can't, we don't have a recycle water system in Hay, unfortunately. Our plant – our sewage treatment plant is fairly
25 new, it's only seven years old, however, it didn't have a reclaim water system attached to it. It's a plug-and-go system, however, and we'd love to be able to do that as well, however, there is approvals required for that and some detail in that, so the delivery timeframe for that is a lot longer than it would be just for water storage.

30 So, we're happy to supply water. We will need some help to do that, however, and we're talking to the proponents around those things individually, and we are trying to work with EnergyCo as well, who have been great in these discussions.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, thank you, thank you for that. All right, Let's just go back to our list and there are a couple of issues here which might be secondary ones, but can we just sort of mention them. We've got on our agenda, visual impacts. Is there anything you wanted to say about that? No? Okay. All right. We understand that.

40 We've talked about social and economic impacts fairly thoroughly. Is there anything else on that topic?

45 **MS MCLEAN:** Oh, just in terms of probably for accommodation, as David mentioned before, tourism is a really important economic driver for us, and becoming more so. On top of tourism, we also have a really important, what we call a 'through economy', so the actual transport route along the Sturt Highway is particularly important for us. Those impacts need to be managed.

We wouldn't want to see the ramp-up and ramp-down workforce taking up our tourism accommodation, because it displaces our what you would think of as like traditional

tourists, traditional visitors. It's really hard to get them to come back, if they've had the experience of driving along the Hay Plains, they can't get accommodation, they go to the next town, that becomes their memory, so it's hard to bring them back in. Really important part of our economy. We need to keep those accommodation options available and open.

And then in terms of that through transport, that economy, which is really important to us, I think it's about a million dollars a month in fuel expenditure for this community, which you can understand is an important driver for us. Also, everything that comes into Hay and goes out of Hay goes on a truck, so all of our livestock, our grain, everything that's coming in to support our agricultural industry, that's the impact that also really needs to be considered in terms of that Sturt Highway traffic impact.

If you're looking at it from a systems approach, what we're talking about, you know, the visitor economy, the visitor economy actually includes this whole other part which is transport, and that transport has an impact because it's connected to the projects' transport route and then that has an impact because of the social impact that has for our community. So, it's not easy to look at either of those or any of those issues in isolation when they're so well connected and so closely connected in an economy of our size.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm-mm. Thank you for that.

DR COAKES: Janett, can I just ask a question there. Alison, just on that, so in terms of, you know, in relation to the road aspect you've talked about monitoring regularly. Do you see a role for greater monitoring around those sort of impacts that you're talking about, those social impacts, impacts on other sectors, and so forth? We know there's obviously a condition around the development of a, well, I think you suggested Council as an industry participation plan, a workforce management plan.

I'm just interested in your thoughts around that monitoring piece and whether you feel there's anything more that needs to be done in strengthening that monitoring of social impacts, social economic impact.

MS MCLEAN: It's untested, so it's hard for us to, hard for us to say, and not really having seen the sort of – the volume of traffic that we are expecting out of these projects, particularly how those OSOM movements will happen with delays. But even just looking at the heavy vehicle numbers, the delays or the additional traffic that'll be on that Sturt Highway, does that start to impact – we've got two of the largest feed lots in NSW who have an enormous amount of traffic movements every day. Does that start to impact them? Is that something that's considered in the Traffic Management Plan, those other industries that are current users but will also be users post construction as well. So, we wouldn't want to see those industries impacted.

I think I've just highlighted the problem again with no solution for you, Sheri, but I might – I'll defer to David on that, he's on the Sturt Highway Taskforce, who are working on a broader sort of approach.

MR WEBB: I don't know if I can add too much more to that, from what Ali said, that was quite comprehensive. So, we are, we've got the Sturt Highway Taskforce, the Mayor's on that with myself and all the eight councils in NSW that are on the Sturt Highway. And we're looking at that whole corridor approach about how the Sturt Highway's managed, and when you look at the traffic numbers and the heavy vehicle numbers and the movements of the criticality along the network, and it's got so many pinch-points and areas where the corridor can be disrupted or delayed for a number of reasons. And now we're going to throw in such a large volume of traffic.

You know, the developers have all looked at it from desktop point of view and said, "Well, it's a two-lane road that's got three-and-a-half-metre wide carriageway with shoulders and theoretically it can cope with the traffic." That might be from a theoretical point of view, but a practicality point of view when you get out here and you look at what can happen, where the delays could be, and there's no alternative routes really, if you look between Balranald and Hay, if the highway's closed or if it gets flooded, which it did in '22 and it got closed, there's no real viable alternative route without a massive delay or extension of time, and then you're going onto local roads which won't be able to carry that volume or that load in the traffic.

So, it's a huge concern for us, about how that's going to be managed. And I know we keep going back to it, but it is a – we are worried about it and we're worried about how that can be managed, and we just want more involvement in how that's going to be managed. And like Alison said, we don't necessarily have all the answers at this point in time, but we have a concern, I think we can manage it, but it needs a really strong coordinated approach. And as Ali mentioned, it is about who is taking the lead on that and looking after that, because it's not going to be one development in isolation that's going to be impacted, it's going to be all these developments, and who's responsible and how it's all going to be pulled together is probably where ...

And our submission talks to that, when you get to see that, about that issue and concern we have.

MS MILLIGAN: Is the taskforce the obvious coordination and consultation point? Or would individual councils be reluctant to hand over ...

MR WEBB: So, the taskforce is a good point to coordinate and talk to. But it's – I think it's even bigger than that. It's higher than the taskforce. It's really got to be government led, in my personal view anyway, rather than the taskforce. Because otherwise you are putting the impost back onto council, because the taskforce is run by – is chaired by Balranald now, and it's run by councils, so you're only pushing that back onto councils.

Where this really should be government led, in my personal view, to coordinate and monitor and look at all that, and not just councils. Councils need to be involved, because they've got the local knowledge and they've got the understanding of how it all works. However, it should probably – the taskforce is definitely a conduit and a mechanism to use, and we would support that, and but however I think it's really got to be led by developers and the government.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, David. Can I just ask you, on my list here, the issues that you raised initially in the consultation process with the Department about air services and the aerodrome, have they been adequately addressed in the draft conditions – anything residual?

MR WEBB: The concern we had around that was more about the lighting of the wind turbines or the WTGs and they've addressed that, it looks like they've got some advice from Air Service and the aviation projects, I think who did the report, I think they've done the report for nearly every developer in the region, who are very good, by the way. They've seemed to address and covered off on that in terms of ... And then consulting with the users in terms of any flight plan mitigation.

So, the project's probably far enough away that it's not going to impact our aerodrome. The concern was there were a couple of projects a bit closer that were proposed that were going to have impact, and we were going to have to change our take-off and landing flight paths, so it was a lot more impact. Whereas, I believe, to answer your question in short, yes, I believe they've been addressed with the updated thing, and we haven't made any comment on that in our submission.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay, thank you. And we understand that there's a VPA in place with Council. Is there any comments you'd like to make about that?

MR WEBB: That's probably an Alison one.

MS MCLEAN: No, we as a group, we've been working together on the planning agreements as a group with councils, so we have negotiated based around the Community Benefit Guidelines that the Department put out in November '24, I think it was, which have been helpful. And we've been able to secure a percentage of those benefits based on impact rather than the location of the turbines, which we welcome.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. Thank you. And running on from that, any other residual issues in the proposed conditions for the project? I know that you're giving us a submission that addresses them in much more detail, but at this point in our conversation is there anything you'd like to add?

MR WEBB: The only other one I've got, Madam Chair, is around emergency management. Now, the State Government in all its wisdom has now decided to make pretty much the whole LGA bushfire prone mapped, which was a change to how it used to be. So, in terms of – and this project's not only got the construction risk but it's also got a BESS. So, it's about emergency management, so we'd like to be a bit more involved in how they're going to plan any emergency management for during construction and then post construction.

And we've asked, in our submission you'll see that we're asking that they need to engage with councils. I mean, they talk about the RFS and Fire and Rescue, but end of the day, council's the one that has the statutory obligation to manage emergencies in their region. They're the combat agencies. At the end of the day, emergency management falls back on councils. And we want them to engage with councils and our local emergency management committees which are chaired by council, run and

chaired by councils. So, just so we can get an understanding and a level of comfort that they've got this under control, not only during construction but also during post construction.

5 We spoke about, and Ali spoke about before, about medical services, what are they going to have on site in terms of their own medical services, which, if they've got an on-site camp, we assume they'd probably have a nurse practitioner and all sorts of things. If there's a serious incident, they will bypass Hay Hospital and go straight to Griffith or Deni or somewhere else. But we'd just still like to understand how they're
10 going to manage that process as well. So, our submission will talk about emergency management and strengthen a couple of the conditions in there regarding that.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm, all right, thank you, thank you very much. I'm just going to ask Sheri and Turlough if they have any other last questions or comments, because
15 we're getting to the end of the conversation, I think.

DR COAKES: Yes. Just one from me. I did notice in your submission that you raised opportunities, community BESS opportunities. I'm just interested in your comments around that. Obviously, for this project they're looking at a sort of a decentralised or a
20 concentrated/consolidated BESS. Those options are both open at this stage, I think. But yes, just interested when you popped that in your submission, what your thinking was.

MS MCLEAN: I think with, when we were originally talking to Baldon, given that they are Goldwind, they have access to technology probably more so than any of the
25 other developers. And even the way that they've now got the new technology for their turbines where the BESS is actually connected directly to their turbine, that presents a whole new opportunity as well in terms of energy sovereignty for this community.

It's probably something in terms of the community BESS that we would look at doing through planning agreements. One of the great benefits though for us in this
30 community, having these developers here is actually their knowledge and their connections to be able to deliver those sorts of projects. So, it's about us being able to maximise that relationship to deliver something into the community because they have that level of knowledge and access to that technology, which sort of changes the
35 conversation for our community.

Baldon were, yes, and again, untested at this point, but that long-term relationship that we're interested in entering into, you know, these developers will be here for 30 years, that provides a lot of opportunity outside of just what we think of as a traditional
40 community benefit in terms of money. There are community benefits that we would like to see and that we will develop with them afterwards, and a community BESS being something that we would pursue with someone like a Goldwind, if they are still about.

45 **DR COAKES:** Okay, great. Thanks, Alison.

MS MILLIGAN: And a question, maybe it's to David. We look forward to receiving your more detailed submission. Now, submissions don't close until I think the 14th of

October, but we're keen to see that submission. Do you know when it'll come to us, roughly?

5 **MR WEBB:** Thanks, Madam Chair. It's been drafted. It's pretty close. But with the Mayor and Alison are going to the public hearing in Balranald next week, and so we will include the Mayor's address from that public hearing in the submission, and then it'll just be the final review and then submit. So, I'd suspect it'll be very shortly after the public hearing, you'll receive that, but it's drafted, it's pretty much – it's pretty close.

10 **MS MILLIGAN:** That's great, thank you very much. And I can just at this point refer to the Mayor, Councillor Oataway, is there anything you'd like to say to us before we conclude?

15 **CR OATAWAY:** No, I think everything's been fully covered off, and all of our concerns have been raised, and I'm happy with all that's been covered today, it's been great. Thank you.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Well, can I just finish by thanking you all very much for giving us the time, and the very useful conversation. So, thank you and good morning.

MS MCLEAN: Thank you.

25 **DR GUERIN:** And thank you very much for the opportunity too, thanks. All the best.

MR WEBB: Thanks.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED