



TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: BALDON WIND FARM (SSD-40138508)

MURRAY RIVER COUNCIL MEETING

PANEL:	MS JANETT MILLIGAN (Chair) DR SHERIDAN COAKES DR TURLOUGH GUERIN
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	KENDALL CLYDSDALE CALLUM FIRTH
MURRAY RIVER COUNCIL:	CHRISTOPHER O'BRIEN ETHAN KOSCHITZKE JOBIN PAUL
LOCATION:	ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE
DATE & TIME:	2:00PM – 2:53PM TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2026

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

MS JANETT MILLIGAN: Well, good afternoon and welcome to Murray River Council. 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.

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

The site is approximately 13 kilometres north of Moulamein. 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.

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

Hello, my name is Janett Milligan, I'm the Chair of the Commission Panel, and I am joined by my fellow commissioners, Dr Sheridan Coakes and Dr Turlough Guerin.

DR TURLOUGH GUERIN: Hi, everyone.

MS MILLIGAN: We're also joined by Kendall Clydsdale and Callum Firth (to my right) from the office of the Independent Planning Commission.

In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded, and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website. This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination.

It'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, that's fine, you may take the question on notice. And then following the meeting, we will advise you in writing of any questions taken on notice that the Panel consider requires a formal response. Any subsequent response or information provided to the Commission will then be published on our website.

I request lastly that all participants here today 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 ensure that we get an accurate transcript.

So, with those introductory comments, let's begin. And can I say again, welcome to Murray River Council. I am going to ask Christopher, perhaps, if you'd just like to introduce your team and then also tell me if you would like to make a presentation to us, or if you'd just like us to start working through the agenda.

MR CHRISTOPHER O'BRIEN: Yes, thank you, Commissioner. I think – can you hear me? I just had a bit of ...

MS MILLIGAN: Yes, very well, thank you.

MR O'BRIEN: Yes, some problems with the audio. No worries. Yes, thanks. So, yes, so I'm Chris O'Brien, I'm the Manager of Development Services at Murray River Council in the Southern Riverina where the development's located. Also on the call from Council, we have Ethan Koschitzke, which is our Renewable Energy Project Officer Lead, so who works closely with these applications. And also, Jobin Paul who is our Development Engineer, so he is involved in, like in similar applications of this nature.

MS MILLIGAN: Chris, can I just interrupt you for a second. Turlough left us briefly and he's back. Can I just say he is having some connectivity issues, so that's what's happening if he is missing briefly, he'll be back as soon as he can. So, sorry, Chris, carry on.

MR O'BRIEN: No worries. Yes, so in terms of, unfortunately today is also our ordinary council meeting so our elected councillors and executive team were unable to attend, so normally I suppose there would be extra people on the call. But yes, unfortunately there's a clash with the ordinary council meeting, so yes, I suppose just to let you know that.

In terms of, we don't really have a presentation as such, so yes, I guess we're happy to move onto the next part of it, yes. But yes, thanks for the opportunity.

MS MILLIGAN: No, look, that's fine. Look, we are getting pretty familiar with the information and we've seen, we've read the two submissions that Council made to the Department through this process. I think the initial one was in 2024 and you raised a very interesting list of, I suppose, principles and approach to renewable energy projects. And then you followed up in 2005 with some specific issues.

We've also had a look at how the Applicant responded to some of those issues in their Response to Submissions. But maybe if we can just go through the agenda and we're really interested to hear the key issues and particularly any issues that you feel haven't really been addressed in the Assessment Report or perhaps in the suggested conditions to be applied, if the project's approved.

So, can we start with traffic and transport. We understand that as the, I guess the southern host, the transport routes don't impact strongly on Council. But tell me if that's not true, and tell me about traffic and transport issues from Council's perspective.

5 **MR O'BRIEN:** Yes, I'm open to if Jobin has any particular comment on it. But yes, I suppose from our initial look at some of the recommended conditions of consent, yes, I think it has been addressed sufficiently in terms of some of those, I guess, ongoing conditions particularly.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm-hm.

10 **MR O'BRIEN:** And as well as the conditions before works commence. But yes, there's quite a level of requirements in those conditions from, like, looking through those.

15 **MR ETHAN KOSCHITZKE:** I'm happy to jump in here on this one, Chris. In terms of transport, for Murray River Council, with the OSOM route coming off the Sturt and then turning directly into site, there's no OSOM movement that's planned on any of our local council roads. And the two council roads within Murray's boundary that are involved are Baldon Road and Keri East Road. And those, we're pretty happy with what they've laid out in terms of the plan to upgrades that have made their way into the conditions.

20 In terms of transport, our stance is still pretty consistent with the submission that was made to the EIS in 2025, that second submission, that one is a bit more, as you mentioned, it was a bit more detailed in terms of the key kind of areas of concern for Council.

25 One point we did have was that in the Department's Assessment Report, there was a mention – and I think it is just a straight up error – but there's a mention of Baldon Road being used for OSOM movement. And I believe that's just a flat-out error that's made its way from project documentation now into this Department documentation. 30 Because it was raised with the Baldon Project Team previously and they said, "That's a mistake, that's a mistake," but it has just seemed, like, it has just carried through now into the Department's documentation. So, we would like to get that one clarified.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

40 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** But then in terms of roads and transport, like the things that we raised in our submission and then the submission to the draft conditions, there was, what Council wanted was dilapidation surveys carried out with Council, returning to the pre-existing conditions, ongoing maintenance throughout construction. And our view is that in the recommended conditions, like those things if they are carried out, that's to an acceptable level.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right. And you mentioned Keri Road, which is one of yours, and we met earlier today with the Applicant, and on another topic, we asked them about that road. They will not be using that road for any construction traffic.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Yes, okay.

MR KOSCHITZKE: There is, and that's just another thing, there is, well, I found it a little bit confusing in the documentation around the wording surrounding those two council roads. Particularly with that error to do with the OSOM wording, but also, like, they have the three – the project is proposing to have three emergency access sites down the south, and those involve Baldon and Keri East Road.

But then the wording to do with the use of Baldon Road in particular, it says, well it says the OSOM thing, and then it says, "light and heavy vehicles for emergency access," and then it says, "light for operational access." But there's just a little bit of confusion from our end on those three emergency access points and the anticipated use of those roads. So, if we get some clarity around that, that would be good as well.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm. Okay. Because I think the operational workforce is 35, and I guess it depends where those people are living, so there may be some access. But yes, certainly, we can try and clarify that. Okay. Are we happy now to talk about workforce accommodation and perhaps I can lead by saying the Applicant has told us that they anticipate using the worker accommodation facilities in Balranald. They have a reasonably high degree of confidence that that facility will be available for their use. However, the application does include the potential to have an on-site accommodation camp just off the northern entrance. So, let me ask you, you know, what you'd like to sort of tell us about the workforce accommodation issue in relation to your Council.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, so in our submissions we requested an accommodation strategy and a workforce development strategy, and it has made its way into the recommended conditions that there is that – I can't remember the exact name for it, but it was accommodation and workforce strategy combined. So, we're happy with that.

I guess to do with the potential for it still to be that on-site camp versus the use of the Balranald camp. Be great if we could get some more information in terms of the timing on when that final decision is actually made. Yes, just in terms of timing, like, does that, is there potential that that becomes after the project is potentially approved, like, it gets approved with that still, the flexibility of using the Balranald or the on-site one? Just because the earlier that we can understand if they are to progress with the on-site combination camp, the better for us.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm-hm. The determination, the Commission's determination is on a set timeframe. I'm not sure – I don't want to speak for the Applicant, but I'm not sure that there will be certainty at that point.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: So, I think probably we need to sort of assume that both options will remain on the table at the point if the project is approved.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Mm-hm.

MS MILLIGAN: When you listen to the transcript from the meeting we had earlier today with the Applicant, they talked about Phase 1/Stage 1 of the project potentially starting in the middle of next year.

5 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Mm-hm. Yes. And that's been communicated to us by the Proponent as well, that they're just keeping those two options there, but if they can use the Balranald one, they would like to.

10 **MS MILLIGAN:** Let's assume, if they're both on the table, let's assume that we do have an on-site accommodation camp as an option. Is there anything in particular that you'd like to raise with us about that?

MR JOBIN PAUL: We would like to take on notice the availability of water.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** Mm-hm.

MR PAUL: And we would like to see where that water can come from and whether our shire has the capacity to provide.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. So, the condition as you would have seen, that said before they start constructing the camp, they have to have a Camp Management Plan developed in consultation with the councils and NSW Health. And that includes issues about water, wastewater and waste. So, when you say take that on notice, Jobin, can you just say a little bit more about your concerns and what would allay those concerns.

25 **MR PAUL:** So, the concern is if water is required to be transported from Council's existing networks, just on the capacity of the supply. And when I say we'll take it on notice, it's just to run it past our Water and Sewer Team, as in certain times we do have issues with supply.

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right. So, you're saying that you would come back to us perhaps in the form of a submission if it's an issue.

MR PAUL: Yes.

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

DR SHERIDAN COAKES: Janett, can I just ask a question just of Council. Just in relation to the siting of an accommodation camp on site, I'm just interested in your comments around where workforce would most likely access services from that. So, we have, if the different accommodation camp was to be developed, that there would be some provision of, say, health services, which we're seeing quite commonly in other camp developments.

45 But I'm just interested in your views in relation to where you see the impacts. Because you've obviously highlighted in your submission quite significantly your concern around that flow-on impact to community from that workforce influx. I don't know who wants to take that one.

5 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** No, I'm happy to take that one. Sure. So, Moulamein is the closest town, it's relatively small, around 500 population. And then Balranald is a little bit further and it's about a 1,000 population. And then a little bit further again would be Hay, and that's twice as big again. So, with Moulamein being the closest, there would be concern that some of the resources are drained. Particularly – I'm not sure if it was this project, but we have other projects in a similar area, and they're proposing, you know, they've put into their documentation of wording to the effect of, you know, we might anticipate a little bit of demand or a little bit of taking up of the accommodation that's available in Moulamein. And there was one project that was
10 saying we're wanting to have about 35 beds taken up in Moulamein – 35 beds in Moulamein is huge. Okay. It's such a big, like, percentage of that tiny little town. And the projects, due to their size and the size of the workforce, is kind of like, that's just a number that they have to get to.

15 But with the on-site accommodation camp being located on the Sturt as well, I think we would expect that for certain services they would jump straight on the Sturt and just travel to Hay, considering it's a [cross-talk 00:17:14].

20 **DR COAKES:** Travel to Hay, yes. Because your other centre, Ethan, is Bahram, isn't it? Is that – I don't know if I pronounced it ...

MR KOSCHITZKE: Barham, yes, yes.

25 **DR COAKES:** That's Barham. But that's a bit further away, isn't it?

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, that's right, yes. Moulamein would be the closest. Balranald would be the second closest, and Hay would be the [cross-talk 00:17:29].

30 **DR COAKES:** Okay. So, you'd see that flow-on effect from a camp on that site to be more towards Hay, yes.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes. Whereas if the camp was in Balranald, they wouldn't – they'd be less likely to travel across to Hay.

35 **DR COAKES:** That's right, yes. No, thank you, thank you.

MS MILLIGAN: All right, okay. Is there anything else that you wanted to say to us about workforce accommodation? I think we're clear about what you're saying.

40 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** No, not about workforce, but if we are happy to talk about water now, considering we were just chatting about that, and that's on the agenda.

MS MILLIGAN: Let's talk about water.

45 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Yes, so water sourcing has been a concern for Council throughout, and it's something that we have tried to communicate to the Proponent that, you know, the existing infrastructure and services that we have particularly up north there, like in Moulamein area, they're quite small and they're quite restricted being in the township there.

And so, those infrastructure that we do have there is designed to service those communities, and it's not, it just doesn't have the size to facilitate developments of this scale. And so, that's something that we have tried to communicate to the Proponent within our submissions and within meetings with the Proponent. And so, we have requested in the past water sourcing plans or some sort of formal planning in terms of where they're going to source the water from, particularly for construction, both potable and non-potable water. And that's something that currently isn't in the conditions, like a water sourcing plan or the equivalent, as far as we can tell.

Just because the volume, like the amount of water required and the restrictions that we have on our Council facilities up that way are just, it is a concern for Council where they're going to get this water from and if they are going to have to truck the water in, the flow-on effects that that can have as well.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. So, at the moment the draft conditions say that the Applicant must ensure it has sufficient water for all stages of the development, and if necessary, adjust the project to meet its water supply. So, what would you want to see as a condition, if the project's approved, what would you expect to see in terms of water?

MR KOSCHITZKE: I guess some sort of formal documentation before – after approval, before construction, this is where we're going to get the volumes of water from, A, B, C, these are our sources, we can show that we have access to it and we can in, what is likely going to be the case, like, transport a lot of it to site as well. Because as we mentioned, we have communicated to them that our facilities just don't have the capacity to facilitate the size of that development yet. Through their documentation they have listed Murray River Council facilities as potential sources, so.

MS MILLIGAN: All right, okay, thank you for that comment. Happy to talk about visual impacts.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Anything you wanted to say about that topic?

MR KOSCHITZKE: Not particularly to do with visual. Note that Moulamein is about 13 to 15 kilometres away from the site, so we're not anticipating – I wouldn't anticipate that there's any visual impacts from the actual township.

There was something within the Department's Assessment Report to do with the landscape and visual impact assessment. They were referring to the cumulative impacts of the nearby projects, and they referred to Keri Keri Wind Farm and Junction Rivers, which are the two more progressed neighbouring projects. And then they referred to Wilan and Abercrombie. But Abercrombie wasn't taken into account in the landscape assessment of the cumulative – and I'm not sure if that's because it had popped up after the fact.

But within the report they're referring to, you know, these are our four neighbouring projects, this is what we're considering for cumulative impact. And then when you get

to the landscape and visual of it all, Abercrombie's not included and it's the largest potential project among the neighbours, so ...

MS MILLIGAN: Okay, all right, let us –

MR KOSCHITZKE: That's probably a timing thing, I understand, but it is, I think that's notable that it's not included in the assessment.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. And if it had been, is there anything that you would have anticipated to come out of that, or anything you'd want to say to us about that?

MR KOSCHITZKE: Potentially not in terms of Murray River Council townships, because that's kind of now spreading outside of our council boundary. Just to the effect that if there were two, three, four projects to pop up at the same time in the same area, the cumulative impacts would be immense, particularly to do with landscape and visual as well. But no specific concerns for Council, I say.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay, all right. Can I just, we talked about water and maybe it's sort of relevant if we can also at this point talk about waste. Because we noticed in your submission to the Department you were very clear about Council's position on accepting waste. The Applicant has said to us this morning that they have, I think, probably they said, well-advanced discussions with Hay Council about the receipt of waste.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: But I'm just wondering if there's anything else you wanted to say to us about waste.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Sure, and there was just one other thing I thought of, I've remembered to do with landscapes, so I'll just mention that first.

MS MILLIGAN: Yes, please.

MR KOSCHITZKE: I note that within the Department's report, it mentions the – within the conditions, sorry, it mentions the offer for non-associated residence within 5.9 kilometres to have this vegetation screening. And the conditions mention that there are four houses within 5.9 kilometres that this offer would be valid for.

My question to do with that for the Proponent, I guess, would be: do these properties, do these houses know about this offer, or is it on them to go out there and find the information and then contact the Proponent to get this potential screening options in place? That's more of a question for the Proponent, and I guess we can put that in our submission or contact them directly about it. I just thought it would be nice to know if that's an individual led thing or if the project's going to be doing, like, offering it to them as such.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. That's an interesting question, thank you.

MR KOSCHITZKE: And in terms of waste, that's another one where Council has tried to consistently communicate that the Council facilities, particularly up in that direction, are there to facilitate the small regional communities and that Council would not be accepting any major REZ or project related infrastructure and waste. That's not to say, that's not to rule out the day-to-day waste streams or waste types that the facilities would be receiving anyway, but yes, the major project waste that comes particularly at the end of construction and when we think towards the ending of decommissioning in particular, Council's stance has been that no, we don't want to accept those types of waste. And that's something that we have communicated in our discussions with the Proponent, within our submissions to the EIS and to the draft conditions.

And there was just a point that I think is worth mentioning to do with the recommended conditions of consent. In terms of waste, it refers back to the wording within the EIS. And the wording within the EIS at the time referred to Murray River Council facilities as potential disposal sites, even though we're saying no, no, no, we don't want to accept this, we don't want to accept this. And the project, the Proponent went on to acknowledge that, I believe it was in their Submissions Report, they acknowledged that, "We acknowledge that Murray River Council will not accept these waste streams."

But because the conditions refer back to the EIS, which is 2024, which does say that Murray River Council is a potential disposal site, I feel like that's a potential little loophole there that when it becomes, you know, 25/30 years down the track, look at the conditions, the conditions refer back to the EIS, the EIS refers to Murray River Council as potential disposal sites, where we as Council have said no, no, no, we don't want this, we don't want this.

MS MILLIGAN: The conditions also, as they're drafted, require the Applicant to prepare a Waste Management Plan in consultation with councils.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, yes. Which we are happy about. We requested within our submissions for the plan to be approved by Council, but we note that the wording in there is within consultation with council. And we know, look, we're in discussions with Hay Shire Council and we know that their appetite for accepting the waste streams is a lot higher and we know that the Proponent has been dealing with them in terms of solutions. So, we anticipate that that Waste Management Plan will be between multiple councils and particularly with Hay kind of taking the driver's seat in terms of waste disposal.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm, okay, all right. Thank you for those comments.

MR CALLUM FIRTH: And just on that definition of waste you brought up, the definition of the EIS will also encompass the additional material, including the Applicant's response. So, that should hopefully capture the updated sort of communication you had there and their commitment to not go with Murray River Shire Council.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Oh, okay, sure. So, as in when it refers to the EIS, it kind of refers to the EIS in the Submissions Report and the Amendment Report, there's like a package.

5 **MR KENDALL CLYDSDALE:** Yes, thanks Callum, for raising that. I'll share my screen. You took the words right out of my mouth. Yes, so this is from the recommended conditions of consent, and you'll see there the definition of an EIS includes all that subsequent documentation.

10 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Yes, I got you, thank you, that's helpful.

MR CLYDSDALE: So, then obviously one supersedes the other in terms of different project commitments then that's the one that needs to be taken.

15 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. So, thank you for raising that, which allowed us to clarify it. Thank you. Let's move on. I'm assuming that we've finished the discussion about waste. So, can we move on and talk about social and economic impacts, and also
20 maybe at the same time, you know, the Voluntary Planning Agreement. So, just talk to us about those sorts of things.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Sure. Yes, we're happy with how things have been playing out in terms of the Voluntary Planning Agreement in the discussions that we've had with
25 the Proponent, and they've been very forthcoming and very open about everything, as well as our interaction with Hay, who are also involved in the VPA, we have a very good relationship with them and the Proponent.

30 One thing I would note, this is a little bit of a tangent but it's wording within the report, just when it refers to the VPAs, it refers to the annual payments as linked to the megawatts generated rather than the megawatts of installed capacity or generation capacity, and that's, if we wanted to be more accurate, you would say the capacity rather than generated, because if we're considering the efficiencies of the wind farm.

35 But in terms of overall, in terms of the VPA, you know, Council is happy with how the process has played out so far in progressing towards getting the actual VPA agreed with the Proponent and Council.

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** The issue about the definition of capacity on which the payments are based, have you raised that with the Applicant in your discussions about the VPA?

MR KOSCHITZKE: I hadn't – and this may be semantics, I don't want to get off track too much, but I hadn't seen that until the Department's Report rather than the Proponent's documentation, and that was just a little definition thing.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right, thank you. I noticed in Council's earlier submissions, you sort of made the really good point about using community benefit money, well, the benefits that come from hosting a wind farm. The things that are substantial, you know, and things that are needed. So, we're interested just to hear you

talk a little bit about that and how you think that might be achieved or could be achieved.

5 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Sure. Yes, I think a big part of that is that the projects, or what we have in the agreement, is the willingness to be able to all funds between multiple projects is a big part of that, considering we have the other proposed projects nearby that maybe do go ahead and maybe they don't, but the ability to be able to pull from multiple projects to, you know, put that towards larger projects or initiatives that we wouldn't be able to, is a big deal there.

10 We haven't had too many discussions with the Proponent in terms of potential legacy infrastructure that could be involved with the project. Now, as I mentioned before, like water and waste are a couple of big ones that the potential I think for upgrading our facilities to then take on as legacy assets, not sure if it's they're considering how
15 remote the location is. For example, we have had discussions but I don't think it's realistic in terms of upgrading the water infrastructure or the waste infrastructure, if it then meant that Council has to take on those increased assets and the maintenance that comes with those after the project has moved on. So, yes, at this stage, I'd say we're not anticipating that there's going to be any sort of agreement between Council and the
20 Proponent in terms of legacy infrastructure.

DR COAKES: And Ethan, just to carry on from that, you're comfortable obviously the Proponent has also got a proportion of the monies to flow to community which will be administered by themselves as, in a fund, I think there's about 15% being
25 channelled that way, and you've been comfortable with that sort of discussion and approach?

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, we're comfortable with that, like in line with the Benefits Sharing Guidelines, the 15%, it's recurrent debts, we have the 85% between ourselves
30 and Hay as well. And we see it in the recommended condition has that the project will establish the consultative committee, the CCC.

DR COAKES: Yes, yes.

35 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Which we're happy with that as well.

DR COAKES: Yes. And I also just note that you really did emphasise, and importantly, you know, the importance of economic benefits flowing to community through training, employment and so forth. Again, are you comfortable with where the
40 conditions have landed around the development of a, you mentioned the workforce obviously, the accommodation strategy but also the Industry and Aboriginal Participation Plan which would focus very specifically on employment and business outcomes?

45 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Yes, happy with those, and we're happy that within the conditions, the accommodation and workforce development strategy, there were points about prioritising the potential for local employment and the use of local businesses. Yes, happy with that.

DR COAKES: Okay.

MS MILLIGAN: All right, thank you. Thank you very much. So, on our agenda, and there may be other items you want to raise, but we've got to the one that said are there any residual issues. So, you made some submissions over a couple of years. You've had some responses from the Department. You've had interaction with the Applicant. We're really keen to know what are the residual issues, what are the things that you really still have on your list that you feel haven't adequately addressed, or the issues that still concern Council.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Sure.

MS MILLIGAN: Do we have any?

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, we've kind of discussed them already, but I'd say the biggest ones would be waste, the waste disposal, where are the actual waste streams going to go, particularly to do with the end of construction and decommissioning as well.

MS MILLIGAN: Mm-hm.

MR KOSCHITZKE: The water sourcing, as I mentioned before, where is the actual volumes of water going to come from. And I guess acknowledgement from the Proponent that Council's stance is that we don't want to accept these waste streams that go beyond the day-to-day running of the services up that way. And that the water infrastructure that we do have is quite restricted and it's there to service the local communities and so it can't be relied upon to service the development, the scale of the development.

And I guess another one on top of waste and water would be a decommissioning as well. And that's something I'm not sure if we made it into our submission to the EIS but we did in the submission to the draft conditions. And that, I guess that's just more of like a general point in terms of Council's view is that, like, there's a lack of planning to do with the decommissioning come end of life or come when turbines stop spinning, as it says in the conditions. And as it stands, I think our understanding is that there's no requirement for any plan at the start of the project, it's just more towards the end of the project, end of life, end of 25/30 years.

And I guess, just big picture, that lack of kind of planning or foresight that comes at the start of the project in terms of what's going to actually happen when we do have to go and decommission this project. Where are the wind turbine blades going to end up? You know, like, what's ... And that problem, as far as I can tell, as far as we can understand, is just kicked down the road 25/30 years, we'll figure it out then. I think that is a little bit of an oversight.

MS MILLIGAN: So, let's just come back to those issues. So, you've talked very clearly about your position on waste. And my question is, are you saying to us that you don't think your concerns have been adequately addressed in those draft conditions? Having clarified that those discussions, your submissions, response to submissions

where you've said, 'no waste', that all forms part of the document on which any approval, if it's granted, refers. Do you feel as though it still hasn't been adequately addressed?

5 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** I would say, initially it was not addressed, but then within the Submissions Report it was formally acknowledged that, you know, the Proponent, we acknowledge that Council's stance is X.

10 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right, thank you.

MR KOSCHITZKE: So, it has been formally acknowledged. But there's – it's not formally captured within the conditions, other than saying the Waste Management Plan will be prepared in consultation with Council.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** Got it. Okay. And similarly, a similar question to you about water.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, water as well, that's something that we've tried to communicate from the start, is we would love to see some sort of formal planning, a Water Sourcing Plan, and the infrastructure that we have just isn't capable of servicing a development of that scale. And that's one that even still we would say not sure that's been adequately addressed by the Proponent or acknowledged that's Council's stance.

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25 What they are still putting out there is still referring to Council infrastructure as a potential source. And we're saying no, we don't want it to be, we don't want you to be relying on it. And so, yes, that has not been formally acknowledged, I would say.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. All right. So, they're the three. Waste. Water. Decommissioning. Thank you, that's really clear to us. It sounds as though we might almost have exhausted the list of things about which we need to speak. I should ask you that question; are there any other issues you'd like to raise before we finish, and I'll ask Sheri and Turlough if they have any issues to raise before we finish?

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35 **DR COAKES:** I think the only one for me, Janett, would be just around, we touched on it, the cumulative impacts. Ethan, just in terms of obviously from a community perspective there's a lot of development going on in and around your area. I'm just interested in Council's view on that and how, I guess, how community are accepting the sort of development proposals that are coming along in the area. Just a general comment, given your Council and you're hearing a lot of things on the ground.

40 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Sure. Yes, so Murray River Council doesn't have any approved projects yet, like the REZ projects are obviously out towards into the east. And so, I would say the view of the community is pretty typical, in that it's, you know, it's a pretty hot-button issue for a lot of people and there is a lot of chatter and particularly when it's combined in with transmission and mining and all of that as well.

45 We do have potential for the transmission line to be running up through Council if the VNI West Project is to actually proceed. But I'd say at the moment there's less community involvement than there are in those neighbouring councils that have the

projects. But obviously we're anticipating that that'll be coming to Murray within the next couple of years with Baldon and with other projects.

DR COAKES: Yes, okay, thanks.

DR GUERIN: Yes, Chair, just a question from me would be around, is the Council comfortable with how the peak workforce will be managed, given that it's sort of it's like a sugar hit, if I can use the crude analogy, it comes and then it goes, and I just wanted to make sure that Council felt as though it was prepared for that and sort of understood that that sort of impact.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, absolutely. That's a concern for Council, and we've heard that that's a concern for all the councils involved with the REZ access projects as well. The fact that, you know, they're talking 350/400 workers come in, they come in for maybe two years at the peak and then they leave. Yes, that is a concern for Council and I'm not sure we could say we're totally prepared for something of that scale yet.

DR GUERIN: Yes, yes. I mean, it's just that, knowing that it's coming and if everyone, well, if the businesses are prepared for that peak, you know, some will be able to take advantage of it, others may very well be impacted. But I guess it's just making sure that there's sufficient understanding that it's a different rhythm of business and service in general, service provision availability, yes.

MR KOSCHITZKE: And I guess it is notable as well that Baldon, this Baldon Project, given that it's not one of the access rights projects, has felt like it's been moving at the speed of light compared to those projects. As well as the councils that are involved with the four approved REZ projects in the South West REZ have had so much more time and preparation of getting their council and council laws and community to understand what's going on in this build up and build up and build up.

And comparatively, like, Baldon has kind of just come out of nowhere and it's like, oh, bang, this could actually be a realistic thing for Council. So, I'd say that Murray River Council compared to our neighbouring councils in the REZ, they're a little bit less prepared, particularly because of the speed that this development's been moving. So, yes, that is a concern for Council.

MS MILLIGAN: Am I right in saying, I mean, clearly the management of this peak workforce is an issue for this project. But listening to you speak earlier, am I right in kind of summarising that Murray River does not expect to be responding to, I guess, the biggest of those impacts, in that we're assuming that the workforce really to live in Balranald, largely, or on the northern border on the Sturt Highway, and we think that they will access their services either from Balranald, if that's where they are, or perhaps if they're on site they'll go to Hay. So, it remains a really important issue for the project, but am I right in thinking that it's probably not at the top of Council's list of issues?

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes. If we were to compare them, I'd say the other issues we raised earlier would be more pertinent to Council. Yes, as I said, I think it just depends on where they ultimately decide to put their camp. But if they do have the on-site camp

and the closest township is Moulamein, you know, even a small amount, a small percentage of those workforce going down there going to the pub, looking for accommodation, looking for any sort of services, like that can have a huge impact on the town there.

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DR COAKES: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Right, okay, no, good point.

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DR COAKES: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay, thank you. All right. So, they're the questions from the Panel. So, Ethan, Chris, Jobin, are there any last comments from Council, anything you'd like to leave us with?

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MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, I did have a couple of points to do with the draft conditions and the recommended conditions, more about, I guess, the process of that. The draft conditions document that we received, I think it might have been May or it was earlier in the year, within section B, the specific environmental conditions, a number of the sections were blank or incomplete. And I remember looking at that at the time and I just couldn't understand why that was the case. Maybe it was an error, maybe it was incomplete, maybe they were still working on it.

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But the document that we received and then responded to, the draft conditions, it was sectors such as air, landscape and visual, biodiversity, heritage, hazards, and maybe one more, like all of those sections where their conditions would actually be were just completely blank. So, now that we've gone and looked at the recommended conditions which we only, we hadn't seen before they were put on the website last week, that was our first time seeing those conditions in those sections.

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MS MILLIGAN: Okay, all right. Okay. So, you accessed those draft conditions through our website?

MR KOSCHITZKE: The draft conditions were emailed to us.

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MS MILLIGAN: Okay.

MR KOSCHITZKE: And that's the document we went off and that's the document we reviewed and responded to and made our submission to.

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MS MILLIGAN: Yes.

MR KOSCHITZKE: And then when we saw the recommended conditions for the first time last week, we saw that those errors had been populated. But there was within the draft document that we did have, you could tell that they were missing, because the number B, even though there were blanks at the start, it started with, you know, B18 or something like that, like there was 17 that were hidden or missing.

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MS MILLIGAN: Got it.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, but just process-wise, that hasn't – it's meant that we haven't been able to formally comment on those sections when we had the chance to make the, provide the feedback on the draft conditions.

MS MILLIGAN: Okay.

MR CLYDSDALE: Chair, if you don't mind me just jumping in really quickly. So, Ethan, yes, as you're aware, yes, the Department runs that consultation process. And as you mentioned, with those recommended conditions are now available to view through our website as well as the Department's, but submissions are open until the 14th in terms of making a submission to the Commission. So, more than welcome of course to make any additional comments that you might have about some of those matters where you didn't have the information. And yes, the Panel will take that on board.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, yes, understood, we will be putting that into a submission for this round, I'm sure.

MS MILLIGAN: All right. That's great.

MR KOSCHITZKE: And then the only other thing to do with the conditions was, I think it was worth noting that there were two things we spotted that were in draft conditions and then disappeared, weren't recommended or removed or changed. In the draft conditions, condition A8 to do with the decentralised batteries, there was a condition that was drafted to do with the overall size of a decentralised battery could not exceed 10 megawatt hours. And then when in the recommended document, that has since been removed.

So, I guess potentially if there was some sort of explanation as to why that decision was made, not to have the drafted condition and remove it, like, I don't want to speculate in terms of what that would mean for the actual design or potential design of the BESS that they're working on the site, but I guess some more explanation or clarity around that would be good.

And then the other one was within the draft conditions, there was a whole big condition to do with the intersection upgrade strategy within the intersections in Balranald Shire Council, Euston and Balranald. A great big kind of description about how the Proponent would have to approach those upgrades and how there was specific wording in there about how the cost, in particular the cost of the intersection upgrades would be shared between all relevant wind farm projects, like referring to Baldon and referring to potentially some of the South West REZ access projects.

And in the recommended conditions, that has been removed entirely. And I guess just for our understanding, like, an explanation as to why that was there and has since been removed, and the connection that this project plays with the REZ access projects and with the Transport for NSW upgrades that are anticipated as well. Any extra information that we as Council can receive, and that's outside of Murray River Council's boundary as well, so that'd be more relevant to Balranald Council, but I just think that was notable that that was in the drafted conditions and then it got chopped.

MS MILLIGAN: If you have a listen or a read of the transcript from this morning when we met with the Applicant, they talked about, we obviously talked about that intersection. They said that there was government funding, potentially government funding to undertake that work. If that didn't happen in time, the Applicant would be paying for the upgrade, is what I understood them to say.

So, it sounds as though things probably have moved on since you read those draft conditions about who pays for that intersection work. And that seems to be the current situation that there has, I'm looking at the other people on the call, but I think they said that that government funding had been secured.

DR COAKES: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: But there was a question about whether in fact the work through that stream would be done before they wanted to start.

DR COAKES: Yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Yes. And they thought that they would be needing to access that probably 12 months after they started work on site. So, it was a timing issue as to who pays, but there was no discussion about the cost being shared by proponents generally.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Yes, no, understood. That makes sense. It's just I can understand why that's, you can't really communicate that in the conditions document. I guess that's more of an explanation from the Proponent in communication with them, like that's helpful for our understanding.

MS MILLIGAN: But I do need to come back to your last point about the decentralised batteries, for want of a better description. What's your – is there a point that Council would like us to take on board? I can see that you've said, well, it was there and now it's not, but does Council want it to be there? Is there an impact from that treatment?

MR KOSCHITZKE: Not necessarily. I guess just an understanding of why it was and then wasn't. Like, why has the decision been made, does it provide the Proponent more flexibility in terms of what they ultimately, how they design their BESS unit. Because I know that's within the documentation, there's the potential for it to be a centralised unit or a bunch of decentralised units that are co-located with the wind turbines.

Yes, so I guess just an explanation as to why it was thought to be necessary and then has since been removed. Like, has something changed or does it just provide more flexibility for the Proponent?

MS MILLIGAN: Okay. They certainly advised us that both of those options are still on the table for them. But they did talk to us this morning about the decentralised option and locating those batteries on the same hardstand and what that would look like.

5 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Yes. And I guess, like, chopping out that wording, I guess I'm doing a bit of speculating here, but maybe that allows for more decentralised BESS units that are larger than just like the one per turbine, and now we're talking about now we've got multiple battery sites across the project. And I note that within the conditions there were, there are within the hazards section, requirements to do with fire management and flood management, so I'm sure that will be captured there. Yes, but I guess just an understanding if we're talking, is it meant to be, is the plan for one big battery, is it a bunch of small batteries, is it these potentially four quarter-sized batteries is what they're looking at? I guess, yes, it's just as much info there as we could get.

MS MILLIGAN: I understand is that they have the capacity to go back to an amalgamated battery or batteries allocated adjacent to each turbine.

15 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Mm-hm.

DR COAKES: And I think that was, Janett, wasn't it too what we heard this morning, was to maximise that shared infrastructure too, so, yes.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. But I guess, I don't want to labour the point, but I just want to be clear, so you're curious about that, and I understand that you're curious, but Council is not saying to us, we actually need it to be this way or that way. Is that correct?

25 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** Yes, correct, correct, it was just more of a curiosity thing for why it was drafted and then removed, yes.

MS MILLIGAN: Yes. I understand. All right. Is there anything else you'd like to speak to us about before we finish?

30 **MR KOSCHITZKE:** No, I don't believe so, not from my end, I think we've covered everything.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Well, listen, thank you very much for meeting with us today. Thank you particularly, if it's a council meeting day, we particularly appreciate the fact that you found time to talk to us. And thank you very much.

MR KOSCHITZKE: Thank you for your time.

40 **DR GUERIN:** Thank you, all. Much appreciated.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED