



## **TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING**

RE: BALDON WIND FARM (SSD-40138508)

### **BALRANALD SHIRE COUNCIL MEETING**

|                             |                                                                        |
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| PANEL:                      | MS JANETT MILLIGAN (Chair)<br>DR SHERIDAN COAKES<br>DR TURLOUGH GUERIN |
| OFFICE OF THE IPC:          | KENDALL CLYDSDALE                                                      |
| BALRANALD SHIRE<br>COUNCIL: | TERRY DODDS<br>CATHY BRADY-OVERINGTON                                  |
| LOCATION:                   | ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE                                                   |
| DATE & TIME:                | 3:00PM – 3:55PM<br>TUESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2026                          |

## <THE MEETING COMMENCED

**MS JANETT MILLIGAN:** Well, good afternoon, everyone, good afternoon and welcome. 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.

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

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.

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 for the project.

So, hello, my name's Janett Milligan and I'm the Chair of the Commission Panel, and I'm joined here by my fellow commissioners, Dr Sheridan Coakes and Dr Turlough Guerin. We're also joined by Kendall Clydsdale who is from the office of the Independent Planning Commission.

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

It's important for the commissioners to ask questions of attendees if they need something clarified. 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 of those questions you've taken on notice require a formal response from you. Any information or response you did give us, we will then publish on our website.

So, lastly, I request 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, so we get an accurate transcript.

So, with that, let's begin. Thank you very much for meeting with us. We know that your council is not a host council for this project, but it is involved in a number of

important ways, potentially. And so, can I first – maybe if I throw to Terry and just ask you to introduce yourself and formally to introduce us to Cathy. Thanks.

5 **MR TERRY DODDS:** Hello, everybody. Look, thanks for taking the time to talk to us. My name is Terry Dodds, I've been the CEO at Balranald Shire Council for 12 months, and I've got Cathy Brady-Overington here who's our Manager of Planning and Environment, and Cathy's been at the Council a little bit longer than 12 months. Over to you, Cathy.

10 **MS CATHY BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Yes, good afternoon, Panel members. So, yes, Cathy Brady-Overington, Manager of Planning and Environment, and as Terry said, I think the two of us arrived within a month of each other. Importantly, as far as today goes, any previous submissions or submission that you've had from Council pre-  
15 dated our arrival at Council. Noting that the submissions for this appear to have taken place somewhere between August to September of 2024, at which point in time the previous director, we believe, Dave McKinley, probably made a submission. Thank you.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Thank you very much for those introductory comments. So, our understanding is that there wasn't, I suppose, a formal submission in terms of a letter to the Department, but there were clearly conversations and I think there were a number of meetings between Council and the Department. And the comments have been captured and they're reflected in the Assessment Report.

25 So, look, we've put together a very rough agenda to guide the conversation this afternoon. Please use it as just a very rough guide to the conversation. The purpose of course is to hear from you about issues that you think are significance to your council, and to tell us what you think about it. And from the original submission, which as Cathy said is two years ago, and from what we understand of the project, we've started  
30 there with a discussion of traffic and transport. So, can we ask you just to talk about that topic. I know you have some interest in over-size/over-mass routes to get things to and from site, as well as sort of local traffic issues. So, we can talk about traffic and transport.

35 **MR DODDS:** Oh, well, I probably should start off. Terry here. Council's been very, very actively engaged with Transport for NSW, through the Sturt Highway Action Group as well. So, all the councils that are along the Sturt Highway formed the Sturt Highway Action Group, and Transport for NSW has presented to the Sturt Highway Action Group as well as individual councils along the route, along the Sturt Highway.

40 We're quite happy with the over-length load designs. There's only one intersection that is adversely affected at Balranald, and Transport for NSW listened intently to our criticism over their initial design. They've since redesigned it and instead of taking all the trees out but one, they're leaving all the trees in but one. So, it was basically a 180-  
45 degree about face. It took some doing.

Our biggest challenge isn't with the blades, it is with the towers, if the towers go through Balranald from Euston across the Murray River from between Robinvale and Euston and then east along the Sturt Highway through Balranald and out towards

Moulamein. The challenge with the over-height and over-width towers, from what we've experienced in talking with Transport for NSW, is some of the larger pieces are 6.5 metres wide. The highway lane widths are only 3.5 metres. And to get through the centre of Balranald, there's two 3.5-metre lanes with traffic islands in the middle which when the trucks are traversing, they've got to go down the centre of the road, which means our pedestrian-friendly traffic islands designed for people to walk across the road in two goes, will have to be taken out. That's going to leave the centre of Balranald looking pretty ordinary for up to two years with the loads that are going through to another wind farm further east of Hay.

So, if the same thing happens with this wind farm, and there's 1,664 loads for the towers expected to go through Balranald for another wind farm, and that's going to take two years and there could be five trucks to six trucks a day every day for two years. That is going to create a fair bit of disruption if it's not staged that the trucks go through pre-CBD activity in the morning or post-CBD activity in the afternoon.

Balranald Council has a very fragile economy. There's four businesses for sale at the moment; there was five, the butcher's just changed hands. There's quite a few empty shops and there's quite a few businesses that have been for sale for some time. It's my personal view that if someone were to walk into any of the for-sale businesses and offer them within 10% of what they wanted, they'd have a new business.

The other thing, apart from disruption at the wrong time, what we're concerned about is if the over-width/over-height loads go through at the wrong time and the caravaning traffic finds out about it and starts complaining on Facebook and places like that, that the caravaners will circumvent Hay and Balranald and Euston altogether and traverse down to the south around us down the Murray Valley Highway.

Hay Council in particular has done some economic predictions about this, and with 54% of their caravan parks and rooms being from people travelling through, if those travellers were to start thinking that the Sturt Highway was a slow point and something to avoid, that would adversely affect not on Balranald's economy but Hay's economy.

In a town with 50,000 people and travellers as a much smaller percentage of external income, that disruption probably wouldn't make a lot of difference. But in Balranald, a lot of our CBD relies on travellers, and that is easily represented any night someone decides to eat at the RSL and looks around the room and realises that more than half the people sitting there having Chinese at the RSL aren't locals.

We get an enormous amount of caravaners come through, most of them stop at either Hay or Balranald. Because when you look at the distance from Sydney to Wagga, Wagga to Balranald or Euston, and Euston to Adelaide, it's one-third, one-third, one-third. And most caravaners, the 480 k's from Sydney to Wagga, the 480 k's from Wagga to Euston, 480 k's from Euston to Adelaide.

There isn't a caravan park available at Euston, there's one across the river at Robinvale in Victoria. But a lot of the caravaners stop at Wagga, stop at Balranald, and then make it through to the eastern side of Adelaide. A lot of them use the Sturt, some of them go through straight ahead at Euston and go through Mildura to Adelaide if they're going

to the northeast or northern side of Adelaide. If they're going to the southern or southeastern side of Adelaide, they'll cross the river here and go down Yanga Way to Ouyen, and from Ouyen across to Adelaide, which gets them in at Mount Barker versus the Northern Vineyards side of Adelaide.

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So, what appears at face value as something that can be easily manipulated and managed, it's not only the physical management of it, it's the Chinese whispers and the grey nomads communication that needs to be managed. And if the OSOM loads mean that the grey nomads – and they're mainly grey nomads, I'm not being facetious – the grey nomads find out that the Sturt is avoidable, Hay and Balranald will lose a lot of throughput. That's our major, or that's one of the concerns.

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The long waits that's not a problem. It's the wide loads that are the problem.

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**MS MILLIGAN:** So, can we just talk about those wide loads for a minute. You've described a load, the width of which can't be really accommodated comfortably in your main streets.

**MR DODDS:** That's right.

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**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. So, what conversations have you had, say, with Transport for NSW? You sort of reflected quite a responsive discussion on another topic. What are people saying, what's the reception?

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**MR DODDS:** Transport for NSW is currently doing a safety case for Balranald township and they're looking at it. I haven't seen the end result. They've got to raise well over a hundred lights and powerlines to get the loads underneath them, because they're almost 7 metres high. And they need a certain amount of clearance for the electricity lines. I think 6.8 metres, from memory, but don't – I'm not a hundred per cent sure on that.

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The width, because most of the Sturt is only 7.5 metres wide, and there's not a single overtaking lane on the whole Sturt until you get to South Australia, not one, Transport for NSW have designed 26 laybys where the heavy vehicles, particularly the ones that are going slow, can pull over and stop and let other vehicles past.

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Now, if they traverse the Sturt mainly at night, those other vehicles won't be caravaners, they're few and far between, they're mainly other heavy transport operators. So, on an average of 12 to 15 kilometres, there'll be a small layby and it's not an overtaking lane, it's only somewhere where they can pull over to the edge of the road. Because as well as having no overtaking lanes on the Sturt, there's very, very few wide shoulders where a heavy load can pull over without tipping over.

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So, there's actually, there's quite a long section of the Sturt, I'd estimate there'd be probably only 15% of it where a heavy vehicle could pull over without risk of toppling over. And that's mainly between Balranald and Hay, not between Balranald and Euston. So –

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**MS MILLIGAN:** So, the plan to put these laybys in is in train, what's the timing, what's the status?

5 **MR DODDS:** Yes, very much. They're in train and they have to be finished by the 30th of June next year. And look, it's not Transport for NSW's fault that all this happened; they are working very collaboratively – I hate using that word because it's a weasel word for State Government – but they are, they're working very collaboratively, they're communicating with us, they're trying their little hearts out to recover from what is a difficult set of circumstances they've been given.

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

15 **MR DODDS:** So, to build 26 of these in basically less than seven months, they've got to cut a lot of corners, which is why they didn't design overtaking lanes, they only designed laybys.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** So, let's assume that they do what they're planning to do, and those 26 laybys are in action. To what extent does that allay some of your very real concerns?

25 **MR DODDS:** Okay.

**MS MILLIGAN:** A couple of questions I'm going to ask at the same time.

30 **MR DODDS:** Yes. This is quite straight forward. The laybys are designed to get vehicles to overtake them and they're between towns. That doesn't worry me too much if the heavy transport operators decide not to go through the CBD at Balranald at night because there's no shops open anyway.

35 It's the timing of the over-width and over-height vehicles going through Balranald that is the key issue. If they go through at the wrong time, meaning daytime for the caravaners and for the locals, they are the time from when the bakery opens in the morning until the butcher and IGA and FoodWorks shut in the afternoon. So, that will affect locals and it will adversely – it'll send the wrong message to the caravaners if they're held up on the Sturt.

40 So, night-time is a different circumstance. They're going to hold up the people who probably should be having a rest and not driving all night. But they're going to hold up the heavy vehicles. The heavy vehicles will have an opportunity to overtake the slower wider vehicles about every 12 to 15 k's though, from my understanding. These laybys have been designed for the blades, not for the OSOM loads. So, the OSOM loads will be a lot shorter than what the long loads will be. So, I think except for one which is a changeover point just east of Euston, most of the laybys are only going to be 150 metres to 200 metres long, which is perfect for a blade and heaps long enough for 45 the over-width and over-height loads.

So, if the heavy vehicle, the OSOMs are managed such that they go through Balranald at night, and preferably like a caterpillar – meaning the five or six loads that go

together per transmission tower, all bunch up on one side of Balranald so when they go through it's just one swift movement – that would make a big difference for us as well.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

**MR DODDS:** I don't know if that's technically possible. But the quicker they get through, the less disruption that would be.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. All right. So, one other question. Is the caravaners seasonal?

**MR DODDS:** Yes and no, it depends on where you live in the country. The people that are trying to escape the humidity from Sydney in the summer leave in summer, and the people that are trying to escape the cold are leaving winter. And there's really no rhyme to reason for it. There is some seasonality though in relation to what's on weekends and big events like the Mundi Mundi Big Bash, the Pooncarie Races, the Mildura Cup, the Balranald Cup, the Hay Cup. There's a lot of people that go to the large country events.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. All right.

**MR DODDS:** Including people from Hay coming to Balranald and vice versa. The horse racing fraternity. We've actually got more than one caravan park as well. We've got – we're a RV-friendly town. We've got points where you can discharge your grey waste and we've got another area where you can park your caravans and RVs behind our tourist information centre in a car park there, and another one near the pool. And for example, when the Mundi Mundi Big Bash was on, they were all full, the whole lot.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Right. Okay. All right. So, you've described really well to us that particular issue. Is that the extent of the traffic and transport concerns from Council's point of view?

**MR DODDS:** Yes, at face value I think so. We've tried really hard to think about this. And we've had to put our grey nomads hat on and think, right-o, what if I'm in Wagga and ... Look, the rot starts in Wagga because I don't know whether the Commission understands that the Sturt Highway starts in Wagga and they're doing major bridge works right in the centre of town, which means a really, really difficult to traverse bypass. And that's going to take about 18 months, from what I understand. So, someone turning off the Hume Highway going into Wagga is already going to be cranky by the time they get through the town there.

So, we've put our grey nomads hats on to try and think what they're going to think, like the caravaners. Mind you, there is a few caravaners that go at night. I travel backwards and forwards from the airport at Mildura quite regularly, you see one or two, but not as many as what you do during the day.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Mm, mm. So, your last comment about what's happening in Wagga, it just sort of underlines the importance of the timing ...

**MR DODDS:** Yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** ... of projects generally, and this one. So, for example, if this project's approved, by the time it starts, the Wagga Bridge might be finished. So, you know, there are lots of unknowns in terms of the ...

**MR DODDS:** There is, yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** But we understand the point you're making, which is very well made, so thank you for that. Do we want to keep talking about traffic and transport or can we talk about workforce accommodation, because that's also a very important one for town, as I understand it.

**MR DODDS:** Yes, I'd like Cathy to talk about that if she wishes, she's our planner and knows a little bit more about what's going on here with our transient workforce accommodation village.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right. And just by way of introduction, Cathy, when we met with the Applicant maybe a week ago, and you would know this, there are two options for the accommodation. One is on site at the top end of the site right adjacent to the highway, and the other one is in town. The Applicant said to us they felt – I don't know if they used the word "confident" – but they are thinking that the in-town accommodation is the more likely option to be used. But officially they're both still in the application. So, tell us what you'd like us to know about that issue.

**MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Yes, okay, thank you. Look, we note that through the previous investigations, the project assessment identified a potential 400-bed workforce accommodation camp. We also note that Balranald was specifically targeted there, and indeed the workers camp in Balranald has a capacity of 400 beds at the moment.

It's also worth noting that under the existing planning permit, there is the ability to increase that capacity further, which we're looking at, at the moment, as part of our general approach to workers accommodation, which is sitting under our current housing and settlement strategy that's been developed. So, that particular site in Balranald, we're looking at the uplift of the capacity within the current permit and it might be 50, it might 100, it might be 150 beds, that is yet to be determined, that's something that we're going to work through, through a feasibility study.

There is also the option, there's a piece of crown land next to that workers camp and there's also the option to look at the feasibility of using that as a potential workers camp.

The problem, if you like, or the disbenefit that we currently have with the existing workers camp, it is a privately owned camp, but the actual cabins are not new. And we were recently out at another mining site out at Iluka, and their workers had used this camp previously and there would be the need probably to upgrade some of those cabins that are in the existing camp.

So, as I've alluded to, we are going through feasibility studies at the moment to look at workers accommodation, not just for Balranald, but also for Euston. Certainly, that workers camp, we're looking at it either to uplift the capacity, renew the cabins or indeed use the site next door as a potential workers camp. So, those feasibility studies will be commencing probably I would guess in the next four to six weeks. We've procured a consultant and they're working through the tail end of the housing strategy. But what we're doing is we're running a concurrent accommodation feasibility, if you like, implementation strategy that runs with the housing strategy. So, that consultant is procuring those two streams of work and we're looking at the feasibility there.

The other thing we would note here is looking at the background reports to date, certainly if you're talking secondary consents, pardon me, I'm a Victorian planner, so you will hear me use some Victorian terminology. If you're talking secondary consents attached to your construction certificate or issuance of, we note that the principle of retaining flexibility. And we note that given that the timing of this particular wind farm indeed sounds like it could have a number of iterations, that that flexibility would need to be built in, whether it's Stage 1, Stage 2, when it actually does really commence, we would note that in that management plan space, and in that secondary consent space, and in the principles space, that that flexibility should be allowed for.

So, using the Balranald camp or an updated version of it, if possible, using or utilising possibly an expanded workers camp, so a separate site but the abutting site. And we think because the timing of this, as I understand it, is so rubbery, it's got a number of contingent factors before there's more certainty about how this particular project will move forward post planning consent, then we think that that flexibility framing of the flexibility needs to be quite robust in any management plan or consents.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Thank you, Cathy. Now, can you just clarify something for me. So, you talked about, at the moment there's an approval for 400 (could be increased), you then said it's privately owned, but Council is doing a feasibility study for what might happen next.

**MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Correct. So, we're trying to facilitate accommodation more generally, not just workers. There's a number of sectors that we need to support, and very much the focus of these feasibility studies is looking at different sectors that need accommodation. So, aged care would be one, government workers would be one, service industries. There is a difference between, say, the pickers, the seasonal pickers versus, say, the mining sector.

There's also the need for classically a different offer, so instead of your three-bedroom, four-bedroom homes, that's the usual thing, we need studio apartments, we need one-bedroom apartments, should be replaced by the term "cabin" in this instance. But we're looking at those sort of parts of the market that definitely need support and they definitely – from Council what they need is not so much a housing strategy, they need an implementation strategy.

And so, that really then focus on what's out there at the moment that can be used, reused or developed, at what dollar value, at what timeline, and what does it mean in terms of an investment position, and possible investors. So, it's a very high level

business case, if you like, that we are looking at, but not just for the mining sector workers.

5 But certainly picking up on the EIS Report, noting that Balranald has already been earmarked, it is within an easy 35-minute drive from the site, and given that the workers camp has got the capacity, it's got the capacity for additional cabins, and it's potentially got the capacity to have a completely new workers camp right next to it, they're the things that we will be pursuing.

10 **MS MILLIGAN:** So, with the existing camp, I can see that Council's doing the feasibility study.

**MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Yes.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** But any investment, upgrade, decisions to make it available to this project would sit entirely with the private owner?

20 **MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Possibly. It really depends – we haven't commenced our discussion with the owner yet; there were previous discussions. It's possible that one of the scenarios we might look at is varying the consent to uplift the capacity, but possibly looking at a lease arrangement, not necessarily by Council but allowing for that, by another, if you like, user. That's one of the things that we can do.

25 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right, thank you. And the study in dealing with the crown land that's next door, again, would just provide information about what's possible, what Council could support, and then that would be out for private investment.

30 **MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Possibly. I imagine private investment and/or something that's facilitated by Council. Because again, the principle here is that we need to be seen and acting as facilitators. And it really depends on what sort of footprint we can adopt within our resourcing.

35 **DR SHERIDAN COAKES:** Janett, can I just jump in, just a minute? Cathy, just in relation to the camp, which was obviously developed, was it for the Project EnergyConnect, what's been the experience of having that camp on the edge of town there – has that been a good experience?

40 **MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Look, I would have to take that one on notice. I'm too new at Council. I have heard staff mention things in passing but I would not want to typify that as being a catchall sentiment of residents of Balranald. I would have to take it on notice in order to give an accurate and fair summary.

45 **DR COAKES:** But am I correct in just understanding that Council is, you know, there is a desire to have that workforce, to have workforce in that camp on the edge of town for this project, and for potentially other projects, obviously?

**MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Well, yes, I mean, that particular workers camp was a pilot program when it was first developed. It's deemed to be a successful pilot. But Terry himself may have some further thoughts on that too.

**MR DODDS:** Yes, the PEC, when it through, which took a little bit – took about four years, tipped \$11.4 million into the local economy.

5 **DR COAKES:** Wow. Gosh.

**MR DODDS:** Now, when the PEC went through, because they were wonderful communicators, in the four-and-half years they built the high-transmission lines through the whole of Balranald Shire, we didn't get one complaint. But mind you, the  
10 PEC was next to an existing 220-kV line. A lot of the money was through contractors, not necessarily through those who were living in the, I call them dongers, because I'm from – I worked in Western Australia.

**DR COAKES:** Yes.

15 **MR DODDS:** So, in talking to the councillors that have lived here all their life, there were a few minor issues, but compared to the economic benefit, the councillors seemed happy.

20 **DR COAKES:** Yes, okay.

**MS MILLIGAN:** All right, okay. So, that's a good discussion on that topic of workforce accommodation, which we might leave and move on, if everyone's happy with that. So, I mean, we've already started talking about that social and economic  
25 impact, particularly as it relates to people in town. Is there anything else to add to that one?

**MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** I think one of the things that we pick up is that with the Voluntary Planning Agreement and the directing of benefits to Murray River Council and Hay Shire Council, Balranald might want to put forward the argument particularly if the workers at Balranald becomes the central if not the key consideration for where these workers will be housed, that if that were to eventuate, we would think that that should be acknowledged in any future planning and economic benefit discussions. And that's an example of what I mean about the flexibility.

35 I mean, you've sort of said that it looks like the Proponent is looking at a workers camp in town, presumably that's probably Balranald, if my reading of the EIS so far is correct, but that will have both benefits and disbenefits in order to set it up. And so, the question to the Panel for their consideration is, you know, whether that then, whether  
40 Balranald should be considered for some sort of community benefits as part of that funding stream.

**MS MILLIGAN:** So, our understanding – oh, sorry, Sheri, would you like to speak?

45 **DR COAKES:** Yes, no, I was just going to say, yes, our understanding is that there is obviously the VPA agreements potentially between Hay and Murray River, and that there's a broader fund that the Applicant is proposing, Cathy, as well, which, from our reading and understanding, is that that would be open for yourselves in Balranald Shire and potentially I think Edward River to also apply to for funds from that ... I think the

company would be, or the Applicant would be administering that fund themselves. So, were you aware of that, yourself or Terry?

5       **MR DODDS:** Sheri, is that ... So, there's – I'm a little bit confused. There's the 60 million to be shared between the seven councils, that's the plug-in money which the government has brought forward because they haven't actually received any income yet.

10       **DR COAKES:** Yes, I think that's EnergyCo's funding, isn't it?

**MR DODDS:** EnergyCo's money, so that's different to this – you're talking about ...

**DR COAKES:** Yes.

15       **MR DODDS:** ... the individual company's money.

**DR COAKES:** Yes. So, there's, it's proposed that a VPA would be developed between the Applicant and Hay and the Applicant and Murray River Council, and that there is a separate bucket of funding which the Applicant would administer more regionally.

**MR DODDS:** Right.

25       **DR COAKES:** That's our understanding.

**MR DODDS:** I wasn't aware of that.

**DR COAKES:** Yes.

30       **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

**MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** I wasn't a hundred per cent clear on that one myself. I knew that there were different streams of funding, but for the purposes of today, that's as far as I had got into this particular wind farm, so I thank you.

35       **DR COAKES:** Yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** All right, okay. The next item that we had on our agenda was cumulative impacts, and we've already talked a bit about those. But I'm wondering if Council would like to say anything else to us about the cumulative impact of projects in the region.

**MR DODDS:** Yes –

45       **MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Sorry, Terry.

**MR DODDS:** I don't know how much of a cumulative impact it would be, but our water filtration plant and our raw water system here is basically almost at maximum production. If the company needs water, we might be able to supply a little bit of raw

water, but highly unlikely. They'd have to set up their own filtration system and buy high-security water to do that, because our town water is our town water and during drought time, we go into water rations anyway.

5 Whether or not there's any cumulative impact for anything else, we don't know. Sometimes, if the company's subcontractors slip through the cracks and they end up competing for housing and rentals here, and we have a two-stage economy, that's always a problem when there's a boom-and-bust cycle. I've witnessed that with the iron ore and coal towns.

10 So, I'd be concerned that the sheet or the umbrella, if you like, that's cast over the whole job not only covers company personnel and main contractors but subbies and people working for subbies as well, because often they slip through the cracks and they'll put pressure on the local housing. And then what happens then, because it's a race to the bottom, the people that can least afford the higher rents are the ones that are first affected.

15 **DR COAKES:** Janett, can I jump in there? Terry, just on water. It was, just again, from our reading, has Council the capacity – I thought I'd read somewhere that Council have the capacity to treat the wastewater generated by the accommodation camp. Is that correct, at present capacity?

**MR DODDS:** Yes. The wastewater's a bit different to potable water.

25 **DR COAKES:** Yes.

**MR DODDS:** We could treat some wastewater, depending on the total quantity.

30 **DR COAKES:** Yes.

**MR DODDS:** But yes, it's a lot less onerous on us. Our problem with our water filtration plant is the time it takes to make enough water for a day, takes a day. So, during summertime, sometimes it takes more than half the day to make one day's supply of water. Meaning that if we have a problem with our water filtration plant, we've got 48 hours to fix it. In Euston, it's less, it takes us sometimes 20 hours to make a day's water supply in Euston. We're running right on the ragged edge with our water filtration plants.

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, yes. Look, water is clearly an important issue in this project, we've heard from a number of people. We've talked to a number of councils, and councils are very clear running from a position where they cannot provide any water to a position where they would be happy to enter into water provision arrangements. So, clearly, it's something that really needs to be specified and pinned down, so that everybody knows where they stand and what the expectations are. So, yes, we've heard that one clearly, thank you, thank you, a really important one.

45 Okay. So, I'm going to now move to the residual issues. So, we know that your original submission that neither of you sort of were personally involved with, it is two years old, but from that or from anything else, are there residual issues apart from the

ones we've just talked about, that Council feels have not been aired or have been aired and haven't been responded to in terms of your discussions with the Department. And it really moves onto that next question that we have, having seen the Assessment Report and the draft conditions that the Department is suggesting, should the project be approved, is there anything you wanted to say about those in addition to the points you've already made to us?

**MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Terry, one of the things I might mention here, and it does take a step back to cumulative impacts, and we have raised it more recently with other proposals, is the issue of the network modelling and particularly transport. So, we're talking about probably almost, not a state level but probably a western regional level, transport model which would have to pick up on South Australian and Victorian transport modelling which we imagine might be difficult, noting that I previously worked for both state road authorities, and getting that sort of integrated modelling and statistics or data to support it can be problematic.

So, the issue that we were discussing was going back to what Terry said before, is if the grey nomads get wind of the fact that there's a part of their journey east or west that they would want to avoid and they decide, okay, we're at Mildura now, we're going to go along the Victorian side of the border and not the New South Wales side.

Our question here is, has the transport modelling picked up those what-if scenarios. There's what-if scenarios in terms of the movement of over-size trucks, whether it's length, width, height, and whether it's five a day, six a day or whatever compared to however many vehicle movements are going through Balranald east and west.

But there's also the impacts on drivers, and as Terry's alluded to, the caravan fraternity, the grey nomads, and a very small and fragile economy like Balranald, if they do decide to turn off at Mildura, what will that do? Because we've spoken about the logical turnoff points and in traffic modelling, that's exactly what they would normally do at those big macro models, where they'll say we're going to assume that all the traffic's going to go through Balranald or we're going to assume that 25 or 30 or 50% is going to go through on the Victorian side of the border to avoid what they would deem to be undesirable driving conditions, potholes, or whatever it is, big trucks which might, you know, put off some drivers.

So, that's the question. We raised it previously. We're raising it again now. Has the cumulative impacts on modelling at the macro level, the transport network, done enough what-if modelling?

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Thank you for that. All right. Okay. So, we've traversed some really interesting ground. Thank you very much. Let me just check with Sheri and Turlough. Is there anything else for you to question or raise before we finish?

**DR COAKES:** No, I think I'm okay.

**DR TURLOUGH GUERIN:** Yes, look, it's just, it's really whether, Cathy, I see the points you're raising, they're very pertinent. But could you, would you say that you're satisfied, that Council's satisfied that the proposed transport arrangements through

Balranald are going to, well, have been adequately conditioned in the current version of the consent?

5 **MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** I haven't looked at the conditions yet, so I'll have to take that on notice. What I'm alluding to is that it is an ongoing concern. You've heard Terry talk to that today, I've talked to it from a slightly different perspective. I understand there'll need to be a series of management plans done, and this came up with another wind farm, and it was through the management plan process that this additional modelling was actually required, in essence, the equivalent of a traffic impact assessment. But at this point, instead of being a fairly local micro level traffic model, it's a macro level traffic model, and it's saying have we quite got this understood and tweaked appropriately before we settle on a management plan.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** Cathy, can I ask you, the management plan you're referring to in a different project, can I just ask you, that was in your local government area?

**MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** Yes, it's the Yanco, what is it, Yanco-Delta, is it, Terry?

20 **MR DODDS:** Yes.

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

25 **MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** We had a meeting on this about, oh, a week ago, maybe two weeks where we were talking about this very issue. They also were up to their management plan phase, and I think Transport for NSW had the traffic counters out. And, you know, you might argue that a TIA (or a traffic impact assessment) or something of that type, I mean, there are many different micro and macro transport models or traffic models, but that was going on for that exact project at that time. 30 Because they were trying to get a refined, a more granular model, so they could settle on what would be the final Traffic Management Plans etc.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Look, that's fine. Turlough, I think I cut you off. Was there anything else you wanted to raise before we finish?

35 **DR GUERIN:** No, it's all good, thanks Chair.

**MS MILLIGAN:** And Sheri?

40 **DR COAKES:** No. Just one really quick one, just in terms of the sort of, there's been a, there's a propose to develop a sort of industry, an Aboriginal Participation Plan. Balranald does have a trade training centre. Is that correct, Cathy?

45 **MS BRADY-OVERINGTON:** That's probably one for Terry. I'm not across that one, Terry.

**MR DODDS:** No, we haven't got any training centre. We do have companies come and go through Balranald, and we do send people to Mildura and Swan Hill for training as well.

**DR COAKES:** Yes.

5       **MR DODDS:** I can't comment on the local Indigenous training. At the moment, there's a company called ESI from Mildura that's training seven Indigenous rangers in Balranald. They won the contract over the top of the existing Balranald Indigenous Corporation here.

10       **DR COAKES:** Yes.

15       **MR DODDS:** Because they were a little bit dishevelled at the time and didn't have a CEO and didn't put an application in. Needless to say, and it's got nothing to do with this, but it's caused a lot of troubles. The Indigenous are quite parochial in this area. But no, we definitely haven't got any TAFE or further education of any description in this area.

**DR COAKES:** Okay, yes, thanks, Terry.

20       **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. And then just one last point from me. We talked earlier about social impact of having the workers in town and, you know, Cathy referred to the benefits and the disbenefits. I then heard you talk about the evaluation of the PEC, and somebody worked out the economic impact on the town. I just wondered if that evaluation is available, because I suspect it might have actually had a go at sort of measuring and modelling the benefits and the costs. Is that report sort of out or is it formal or ...

**MR DODDS:** It was formal. It was actually given as a presentation to our councillors some months ago.

30       **MS MILLIGAN:** Mm-hm, okay, well, we'll chase it up. Done by EnergyCo?

**MR DODDS:** No, it wasn't EnergyCo, it was someone else.

35       **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

**MR DODDS:** It was the energy company itself, I think.

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

40       **MR DODDS:** Look, they were exemplary citizens, which is quite unusual. And they really tried to use a lot of local contractors as well, a lot of local civil engineering contractors, and there's only really two big ones here, and they used both for an extended period of time.

45       **MS MILLIGAN:** Right. So, the energy company itself came and presented to Council?

**MR DODDS:** I think it was Ergon Energy that gave the presentation. Hang on a minute and I'll just read their framed photo that they gave us, and I'll tell you who it is.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay.

5 **MR DODDS:** It was EnergyConnect 2022 to 2026 with Transgrid and Elecnor (E-L-E-C-N-O-R) Australia.

10 **MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, all right. Look, we'll have a look at that. It sounds as though it may not have been independently done, but that doesn't mean that it's not useful to us, so we'll have a look. All right. So, look, that was my last comment too. So, if none of us have any further questions or comments, I'm going to say thank you both very much for making the time available this afternoon, very useful conversation, so thank you. And have a good afternoon.

15 **MR DODDS:** Thank you very much, everyone, I appreciate you keeping Balranald at the front and centre.

[Multiple people say thank you]

**>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**