



## **TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING**

RE: BALDON WIND FARM (SSD-40138508)

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

PANEL: JANETT MILLIGAN (CHAIR)  
DR SHERIDAN COAKES  
DR TURLOUGH GUERIN

SPEAKERS: MEDARD BOUTRY (Baldon Wind Farm Pty Ltd)  
NICOLE BREWER (Department of Planning,  
Housing and Infrastructure)  
GRANT PIPER (National Rational Energy Network  
Inc.)  
KATHRYN REYNOLDS  
IVAN KENNEDY (Quick Test Technologies)  
CAROL OATAWAY (Hay Shire Council)  
STUART BONDS (One Nation New South Wales)  
JACQUIE CRAWFORD  
LYNETTE LABLACK (Save Our Surroundings  
Riverina)  
ALAN MORAN  
ANN HARE  
ANNETTE SMITH  
JUDY JARRATT  
JEANINE BIRD

LOCATION: ONLINE

DATE & TIME: 1:00PM – 3:32PM  
THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2026

## <THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 **MS JANETT MILLIGAN:** Good afternoon and welcome to the Independent Planning Commission's public hearing into the Baldon Wind Farm, which is State Significant Development Number 40138508. I am speaking to you from Gadigal Land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the countries from which we meet today. I pay my respects to the Elders past and present and to the Elders who may be participating today.

10 I'm Janett Milligan, I'm the Chair of this panel and I'm joined on the panel by Dr Sheridan Coakes and Dr Turlough Guerin. A conflict of interest check has been undertaken for panel members on this project for any conflicts that may affect our judgement. The Commission Chair has determined that no actual perceived or  
15 potential conflicts have been raised that would prevent Commissioners from serving on this panel.

Our role is to decide whether this project should go ahead and if so, under what conditions. Our consideration will take into account the project application, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's assessment report, all written  
20 and verbal submissions and all relevant planning laws and policies. All the material before the Commission will be published on our website.

In making a decision, we must follow all the relevant laws and consider all the policies that apply to this application. Public input is an important part of this process and that's why we're here today. Thank you to everyone who has made a submission  
25 already. Each and every submission will be read by the Commission.

At this public hearing we want to hear about your thoughts on the Department's assessment and the Department's recommended conditions. If you oppose the project,  
30 please tell us also if your concerns could be addressed through conditions and we will consider all options.

Our aim is to stick to our schedule today and to make sure that we hear from everybody. I will introduce each speaker when it's their turn to speak and all speakers  
35 know how long they have to speak. A bell will sound when a speaker has one minute remaining and a second bell will sound when a speaker's time has expired. To make sure everyone has their time, I'll apply the timekeeping rules. More time may be given if time allows.

40 Any information given to the Commission may be made public. The Commission's privacy statement is available on our website. Today's event is also being filmed and it's being broadcast live on the Commission's YouTube page.

45 So today first we will hear from the applicant and then the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. We will then hear from community members who've registered to speak. Then at the end of the public hearing, the applicant may be asked to address questions that have arisen during today's hearing, if required.

So before we call up the first speaker, can I just say I know that many of you have strong views about the future of renewable energy in New South Wales. We're not deciding what the government's policy should be. We have no power over that and submissions to us today about what the government's policy should be cannot form part of our considerations. The government has already decided that renewable energy is a lawful use of land in particular zones in New South Wales. If that legislation is something you oppose, as is your right, you should take it up with your parliamentary representatives. All the Commission can do today is consider the impacts of this specific project. And having said that, we'll now hear from our first speaker, who is Mr Medard Boutry.

**MR MEDARD BOUTRY:** Thank you. Can you hear me there?

**MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, we can. Thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** Hello, my name is Medard Boutry, General Manager of Development for Goldwind and I've been involved in the Baldon Wind Farm project since 2021. I wanted to start by thanking the IPC Commissioners for the opportunity to speak today and also thanks to those that have registered to speak or attending this hearing today. I will provide a brief overview of the project, its main features and the key areas of the environmental assessment. Next slide, please.

Goldwind acknowledges the traditional owners of the land and waters on which we meet today and on which the Baldon Wind Farm is located. We thank the traditional owners who have contributed to the development of the Baldon Wind Farm and we hope that this project can benefit both people and country. Next slide, please.

The Baldon Wind Farm, the project overview is the wind farm will comprise of up to 175 wind turbines, which equates to approximately 1.4 gigawatts of wind generation, which also equates to approximately 600,000 homes per annum powered. The investment represents \$2.8 billion during construction and would involve the employment of approximately 400 construction jobs.

The project is located in the Hay Shire and the Murray River LGA. The project is located in the South West Renewable Energy Zone. The southern extent of the project is located approximately 13 kilometres north of the township of Moulamein, 65 kilometres southwest of Hay and 44 kilometres east of Balranald. The project land itself comprises of two landowners, of which the project area is 46,259 hectares. The area is used primarily for broadacre open grazing for sheep. There are four non-associated dwellings within 5.9 kilometres of a wind turbine.

The project is expected to be developed in two stages. The first stage comprising of 46 wind turbines, 368 megawatts, and that would connect into the existing transmission line, the 220 kV X5 line, for which the project has already obtained a 5.3.4 A and B letter from the transmission network provider, which basically means it's approval for the technical parameters for connecting the project into that line. The second stage would require a future augmentation to connect into because although the Project EnergyConnect line does transect the site, the project was unsuccessful in obtaining an access right.

On the map on the right, you can see where the transmission line traverses the site with the yellow hatched lines and the blue dots represent the stage one turbines. The site entrance would be up the north on the Sturt Highway with access through the site down to each stage of the project. The project also includes the development of battery storage units, which could be in the form of a standalone BESS or a decentralised BESS located on the hardstand at each of the wind turbines. This would comprise up to 200 megawatts of BESS capacity and 400 megawatt hours.

During construction, construction staff are anticipated to be housed in an accommodation camp. The application includes the installation of an accommodation camp on site just south of the Sturt Highway intersection. However, we are also considering the use of an existing accommodation camp at Balranald. The resources for the site, gravel would primarily be imported to site and water during construction would be a combination of potentially existing piped water, groundwater on site or other sources available from third parties, including council and other private operators. There will be very little water used once the project is operational.

The project area was selected due to its excellent wind resource, monitored since 2019, supportive landowners with large land holdings and with low dwelling density in the area. The transmission lines transect the site and the area is quite flat, which simplifies construction with a strong surrounding road network. Next slide, please.

The project would bring a number of social and economic benefits, including 400 construction jobs, 40 ongoing full-time operational jobs. The project has also prepared an Industry and Aboriginal Participation Plan, which includes targets for the uptake of learning workers, underrepresented groups and local content. The project would provide economic growth and benefits to the surrounding community at a hyper local scale and at a broader local scale at the state and national level, including local procurement of goods and services.

Community benefit sharing would also apply to the project with the establishment of voluntary planning agreements. These comprise a total of \$1,100 per megawatt per year of which 85% of that would be allocated to councils of which there's a further split which is 80:20 between Murray River and Hay Shire councils. And the residual 15% would be a dedicated fund managed through an independent dedicated committee. We're expecting the project to be operating for at least 35 years, which would represent a total of \$53.9 million towards community benefit sharing with the split there between stage one and stage two. Next slide, please.

There's been extensive community and stakeholder engagement throughout the planning process. It includes over 600 community and stakeholder interactions recorded. There have been community information and drop-in sessions in Moulamein, Balranald and Hay at different periods over the last few years as well as a number of other communication channels including phone, email, newsletters, public events and sponsorships and information available on the project website. There have been ongoing briefings and meetings with host and neighbouring councils and other stakeholders. Topics discussed and documented throughout the engagement include

project design, visual and noise impacts, transport and roads, workforce accommodation, jobs and community benefits.

During the exhibition period of the EIS, 77 unique submissions were received.

Seventy-three of those were objections, one in support and three comments. Of note is that 81% of the objections related to stakeholders that were greater than 50 kilometres from the project area and there were no objections from within 12 kilometres' distance of the project area. Next slide, please.

With regards to the key areas of the environmental assessment, the overarching principle undertaken throughout the project development has been firstly avoiding, then if impacts cannot be fully avoided, then minimising those impacts through micro-siting and subsequently detailed design. And then any residual impacts will be managed and monitored and where required, offsets provided.

Biodiversity was a key area of assessment. The indicative construction footprint includes an area of 795 hectares which represents approximately 1.7% of the project area. Plains-wanderers were identified during the assessment period, which warranted further investigation. The Independent Expert Panel for Renewables was involved as part of that assessment and they've provided a report. The project prioritised avoidance of the Plains-wanderer habitat and does not include any areas of key mapped areas for the Plains-wanderer, nor does it represent any of the known stronghold areas for the species. There will be specific management plans and a Plains-wanderer committee established to better understand and manage any potential impacts within the broader REZ as well regarding this species.

Natural grasslands, threatened grasslands, potential impacts limited to 1.12 hectares and there will be no clearing outside of the approved development corridor. Other management plans would be implemented to manage and adaptively manage residual potential impacts.

A number of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites were identified and a number of those have been avoided. There will be further test excavations of potential Aboriginal deposits and monitoring in high sensitive areas identified. A cultural heritage management plan will be prepared and implemented.

Visual, there are four receivers within 5.9 kilometres, two of those within 4 kilometres, of which visual screening will be offered and the nearest of those to a stage one turbine is approximately 6.5 kilometres. Noise, potential noise impacts were also assessed. Noise compliance will be achieved at all non-associated receivers. However, further compliance monitoring will be completed.

Traffic was a key area of consideration with transport deliveries coming from Adelaide to site. A number of site intersections will need to be upgraded of which Transport for New South Wales, New South Wales government has very recently announced they will be undertaking a number of those upgrades themselves. However, the project will be required to complete the site intersection as well as some upgrades within the project area of Baldon Road and Keri East Road. Dilapidation surveys will be

completed and regular inspections, maintenance and repair of construction related damage.

**MS MILLIGAN:** If I could just ask you to wind up?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, I will.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you.

**MR BOUTRY:** Flooding and emergency management is also a key area of which there will be further consultation as well as a traffic management plan, other management plans with council and other stakeholders. So in conclusion, yes, the next slide, please.

In conclusion, the project has a number of positive attributes and the draft conditions of consent provide a regime that minimises impacts and provides opportunities to further reduce impacts through micro-siting and thereby further improving environmental outcomes through the construction and operation of the project. Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. Thank you very much. Could we now move to our second speaker. Our second speaker is Nicole Brewer from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

**MS NICOLE BREWER:** Thank you, Chair and Commissioners. Good afternoon. My name is Nicole Brewer. I'm the Director for Energy Assessments at New South Wales Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a summary of the Department's assessment of the proposed Baldon Wind Farm. Next slide, please.

I'll give a short overview of the proposed wind farm. It's southwest of Hay and north of Moulamein, within the Murray River and Hay Shire local government areas. The project comprises up to 175 turbines and a 200 megawatt, 400 megawatt hour battery. While the project has not been granted access rights under the South West REZ access scheme, it may initially connect to the existing 220 kilovolt transmission line that crosses the site, subject to a connection agreement and may seek future connection opportunities as network capacity becomes available. The project site is predominantly used for agricultural grazing activities and is located within an area that's identified for renewable energy generation. Next slide, please.

The Department considers the project is consistent with relevant Commonwealth and state energy policies, which recognise the need to diversify electricity generation while maintaining reliability and security of supply. The project would have capacity to generate approximately 1,400 megawatts of renewable energy, enough to power around 640,000 homes annually. It would also avoid approximately 2.45 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. The inclusion of a battery storage component would support energy security by storing electricity for dispatch during peak demands or when wind generation is lower. The Department considers the project

would make a significant contribution towards New South Wales' transition to a cleaner energy system as coal fired generation retires. Next slide, please.

5 The Department has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the project. This included exhibition of the environmental impact statement, consideration of public submissions, requests for further information from the applicant, consultation with councils and government agencies, and independent expert review of key biodiversity issues. The project was amended during assessment, including the removal of five turbines and refinement of associated infrastructure to further minimise environmental impacts. Next slide, please.

10 The Department consulted with agencies, councils and the community throughout the assessment process and undertook a site inspection. The Department received advice from 16 government agencies, submissions from four councils and 77 public submissions. In this instance, the consent authority is the Independent Planning Commission because the applicant made a political donation. The Department also engaged the Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Energy Transition on the potential impacts of the project to the Plains-wanderer. Next slide, please.

20 Of the 73 objections received for the project, none resided within 5 kilometres of the project. Eight were within 15 kilometres and most, 88%, were from people residing more than 50 kilometres from the project site, including a number of interstate submissions. The most common issues raised related to socioeconomic impacts, biodiversity, soil and water resources, resource use and waste management, decommissioning and contamination. Next slide, please.

25 The Department undertook a detailed assessment of environmental, social and economic impacts. I'll focus today on two key assessment issues, biodiversity and transport. Next slide, please. The applicant demonstrated avoidance and minimisation of biodiversity impacts through the project design, with the project largely avoiding higher quality native vegetation, with 92% of the native vegetation being cleared being non-threatened vegetation. And this is primarily native grassland and shrubland that has been subject to long-term grazing activities. The Department is satisfied that the impacts to native vegetation, threatened ecological communities and threatened species habitat can be appropriately managed and offset in accordance with New South Wales biodiversity requirements. Next slide, please.

30 I'll now turn to the key biodiversity issue of the Plains-wanderer, which is a small ground dwelling bird. It is dealt with in a different way to most other species. During surveys conducted by the applicant on site, there were 21 sightings within the project area. No mapped important habitat for the species would be directly impacted by the project, which means no species credits would be generated. But the applicant did identify approximately 648 hectares of potential habitat that would be affected. There are specific requirements under the biodiversity conservation regulation where an impact is to be regarded as serious and irreversible impact, SAI or SAI, if it is likely to contribute significantly to the risk of extinction of a threatened species or ecological community. New South Wales DCCEW considered the project may result in a serious and irreversible impact.

Due to the complexity of the issue and differences in opinion, the Department referred the matter to the Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Energy Transition. The panel concluded that the site was outside the main stronghold for the species and while the species has experienced a significant decline, the scale of impacts from the project would not contribute significantly to the risk of extinction and therefore would not constitute a serious and irreversible impact. The Department reached the same conclusion. The Department has recommended conditions requiring a Plains-wanderer management plan and participation in a regional Plains-wanderer working group to coordinate regional monitoring and management across renewable energy projects. Next slide, please.

Construction of the project would generate substantial traffic movements including heavy vehicles and oversized and over mass or OSOM vehicle deliveries. A key benefit for the project is that the main site entrance is directly from the Sturt Highway. At peak construction, there would be up to four to five OSOM deliveries per working day. Wind turbine components would be transported from Port Adelaide via the Murray Valley Highway and Sturt Highway to the site. The applicant assessed the transport route based on a maximum blade length of 90.2 metres. The assessment identified the need for upgrades to three key intersections as well as sections of Baldon Road and Keri East Road, which sit within the boundary.

Following consultation with Transport for New South Wales and councils, the Department recommended conditions requiring all necessary road upgrades, maintenance and repair of project related damage for local roads and consultation with relevant roads authorities and preparation of a traffic management plan. The Department also recommended limiting blade lengths to 90.2 metres unless additional route assessments demonstrate longer blades can be safely accommodated. The Department considers traffic impacts can be appropriately managed through these measures. Next slide, please.

The project would deliver a range of economic and community benefits. It's expected to generate up to 400 construction jobs and around 35 operational jobs. The project represents approximately \$2.8 billion in capital investment. Goldwind has committed to a benefit sharing at a rate of \$1,100 per megawatt generated, which exceeds the current New South Wales benefit sharing guideline. 85% of those benefits would be provided to the host councils, Murray River and Hay Shire, through voluntary planning agreements, with the remaining 15% allocated to community and First Nations initiatives.

The applicant has proposed both onsite and offsite accommodation options to manage pressure on local housing and accommodation. The Department's recommended conditions require an accommodation and employment strategy and an accommodation camp management plan, prepared in consultation with councils and relevant agencies. Next slide, please.

In summary, the Department has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the Baldon Wind Farm. The project is strategically located within the South West Renewable Energy Zone in an area with strong wind resources and existing or potential future network opportunities. The project's been refined during assessment to

minimise impacts and key environmental impacts have largely been avoided through project design. The Department considers biodiversity, transport, visual, heritage and social impacts can be appropriately managed through the recommended mitigation measures, offsets and conditions of consent.

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The project would provide substantial renewable energy generation capacity, battery storage, regional employment opportunities and long-term community benefits. The Department considers the project achieves an appropriate balance between the benefits of renewable energy generation and the management of environmental and social impacts. Should the Commission determine to approve the project, the Department has provided a comprehensive suite of recommended conditions to effectively manage the residual impacts. Thank you. That concludes the Department's presentation.

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**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you very much. Thank you, Ms Brewer. So we now move to the first of 13 community members who have registered to speak to us today and the first of those speakers is Grant Piper.

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**MR GRANT PIPER:** Hello.

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**MS MILLIGAN:** Hello, we can hear you. Thank you.

**MR PIPER:** Good afternoon. And is the slide pack set up, ready to go, please?

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**MS MILLIGAN:** It is. We're looking at it now. Thank you.

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**MR PIPER:** Okay, thank you, Commissioners. Yes, my name is Grant Piper. I'm chair of the National Rational Energy Network and I've got a few slides to go through. But before that, I mean in response to some of Ms Brewer's comments about no opposition, opposing comments from within 5 kilometres of the project, it's obvious that it's a sparsely populated area. And when you've got the proponents themselves foreign and a lot of the pro-transition pundits and advocates live outside the area and obviously the Commissioners yourselves are outside the area and the Land and Environment Court and the minister is outside the area, it seems stretching credibility a bit to try and impose some 5 kilometre arbitrary limit on people able to comment on a project that affects the whole country through the cost and inefficiency. And affects the locals even more, like rural people like myself, who have to wear the cost of this in their face every day.

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To somehow say that we're not entitled to comment and I think that's derogatory and not equitable and offensive, frankly. And it just shows the selfish, blind attitude of the city folk is what we have to put up with in the bush. And I think that should be removed as a thought process. But it just comes out inherently without even realising I think how offensive it is to us.

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So the first slide, this is from Rainforest Reserves, who have since changed their website. I've got the connection for it in the next slide, but they mapped over 41,000 turbines across Australia from the known projects, plus solar plus BESS. And it's notable that no government or government agency or third party contractor has ever done this on behalf of the government to inform the public of what the true scale of

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these projects are when they're all put together and what the finish point is. And that's remiss of the government and they should be looking at the cumulative impact and they should be providing this information to everyone across the country so that we can make informed decisions on whether we want to actually pursue it or not. Next slide.

So the mapping is at that link if you want to have a look at that yourselves. Australianrenewables.app. Something not mentioned in any of the fire management plans with any of these projects that I have seen is bushfires and the fighting thereof and also it's never acknowledged that these projects themselves are a potential source of bushfire. There's been numerous turbine fires around the country, even with the number of turbines we have so far and obviously there's been in the news battery fires at Geelong and elsewhere which create toxic smoke, can't be put out and these are being scattered around the country everywhere. So they're all a potential fire hazard. Next slide.

There's another case, a local example in South Australia. Next slide. And another one in Portland, Victoria. Now, these are various aged turbines and all much smaller than what they're planning to build in this project and you've got to remember that these things are planned to be in position for 20, 25 years and the maintenance and the upkeep on these thousands of turbines will naturally diminish over time. The cost and working at altitude will prohibit regular maintenance and monitoring. So the risk of fire from mechanical failure will grow as these things age and they are all potential fire sources which cause a bushfire risk for the local inhabitants and this isn't addressed by the proponents about the fire risk of having all these ignition sources scattered around the country. The RFS, of which I'm a member, we're volunteers and we can't cover everything and we're not always available. Next slide.

If you click on the link here, these turbines are also an impediment to aerial firefighting. My background is an Air Force pilot flying C-130s, which is one of the fire bomber types that was used in Australia in 2019 and 2020 and one crashed in the Snowy Mountains. And this is a fire in early 24 and there's a 737 tanker coming in from the northwest over a pine paddock, this is being filmed from my property and you'll see the smoke over the fire. The aircraft almost disappears. He drops there and then he flies away. But you can see how stable he was on the approach lining up to do his drop and you can see how low he was doing the drop and working off fuselage length you can estimate he was 200 feet or below. So that's typical of what a large air tanker does to drop and there were no obstacles there.

If there were any turbines obscured by smoke or any other obstacles, they are not going to be able to fly a stable approach and they're not going to be able to descend to 200 feet, drop the retardant on the target. They're going to have to stay away from the area. Next slide. There was a case in 2023 where exactly that type of aircraft, a 737 tanker, crashed in West Australia, fighting a fire. Next slide. And there's an overall shot of the different positions and where it crashed and it's relatively flat terrain. Next slide. So it's not even hilly terrain. There's a small ridge, it was obscured by smoke and they clipped it and slid to a stop in the scrub, destroying the aircraft and the crew survived, which is rare. Most of these impacts of tankers with terrain result in the crew being killed. These guys were lucky and got away. Next slide.

So it was relatively flat terrain and it had a lead aircraft, so it had a small aircraft there guiding the tanker, the large tanker, and they still managed to hit the ground. The captain reported at the interviews, the second approach was conducted through drift smoke from the fire and they were unable to identify the target until they exited from the smoke. The copilot reported not being able to see the target on final. So it is unrealistic to avoid smoke while doing this job. It's incompatible.

Even though proponents and other people that should know better, aviation consultants say they're meant to maintain VMC, visual meteorological conditions, the tanker companies have exemptions from those regulations in the fire area. It's simply incompatible to remain clear of smoke and fulfill the task. So that is again a red herring of an argument that they're meant to maintain VMC and therefore they will see the turbines and avoid the turbines. The result will be that if there's any obscuration from smoke, they will simply avoid the area altogether if there's turbines that they can't see and they're not going to descend below turbine height and slalom between the turbines to drop. So you're going to lose the use of large air tankers. Next slide.

And that's the fire near us again in 2017 where we had large air tankers working and you can see the amount of smoke and the clouds formed by that fire. It's a hazardous environment and you're not going to go there if you think there's an obstacle in the way such as a 300 foot turbine. Next slide. And as I said, C-130 is the type used and crashed and this wasn't due to turbines, but it just shows it is a hazardous occupation and you either do the job or you try and minimise the risk. But if you've got a hazard in the way and obviously you just can't do the job safely. Next slide.

So it's hazardous activity, remaining clear of smoke is not compatible with the task and large tankers will be excluded from the area. And just to finish up, I think the capacity factor for these turbines is 30%. That's the Australian average of all turbines, which is equivalent to working at capacity for two days per week. And that's been logged and tracked by AEMO and also private people that follow the business. And overall, next slide, this means we'll have a massive overbuild of turbines, solar and BESS. We'll need all the extra turbine transmission lines. They'll need synchronous condensers to stabilise the grid. You'll still need gas, diesel or coal backup for when the wind stops and the sun sets.

Batteries are very energy intensive to build. They don't last very long and destroy any environmental credentials of wind or solar. The massive sunk energy and materials required in all these inefficient energy producers means that over the lifespan of a normal thermal station, you will consume more resources and end up with no net environmental benefits, just more consumption. So we argue it's actually counterproductive to the stated aim if you look at it from an engineering perspective and it certainly isn't for the greater good. It's an impost on us all. It's an overhead built into our energy structure for evermore and we'll never be efficient producers of anything if we're constrained by energy limitations and energy costs. So thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you very much. Can we now move to our next speaker who is Kathryn Reynolds. So Kathryn Reynolds is our next speaker. Thank you.

**MS KATHRYN REYNOLDS:** Thank you for the opportunity. I note the developer of this project is Goldwind, headquartered in China. There are approximately 1,137 turbines planned in this area over a 60 kilometre radius. This terrain is largely flat, so the visual and noise disturbance will be immense. Cumulative impacts plus the harms that are known are ignored. There is a total lack of investigation into the inspected harms. Will there be any lessons learned from the experience so far in the CWO REZ? Or are you going to repeat the same ones, make more and learn nothing?

Is there a comprehensive cumulative impact study? There has been no comprehensive cumulative impact study completed in the CWO REZ. Instead, they got a regional infrastructure study which was finalised leaving local communities and councils blindsided. Too many of the issues below are being left to management plans that will be divulged after approval and after construction. All management plans should be clearly documented prior to project approval.

Water. In the CWO REZ, they are already seeing issues with bore water supplies and few projects there are in the construction phase. Water trucks carting potable water are contributing to heavy vehicle traffic on local roads. Will water be prioritised for projects such as Baldon Wind over water for the local community? There is no transparency as to where much of the water is coming from in the CWO REZ. Likewise, it will probably be in this project as well.

Waste. Much of it will likely be transported from site, adding to the trucks on local roads. No details provided as there is no waste management plan. What about the damage to non-recyclable wind turbine blades? We have seen multiple wind turbine blades in New South Wales and Victoria discarded due to damage and fire. Where do they end up? What transparency regarding waste will the IPC put in place to safeguard this community?

Trucks and OSOM. How many drivers will be inexperienced drivers who have had their licences expedited? It appears all in the community have to wait for the management plan before they find out that they cannot get their stock to market or the processor, cannot transport wool or grain and feed stocks, all as a result of lack of trucks or an inability for trucks to access the roads. For example, in the CWO REZ, all intersections on the Golden Highway appear to have had their speed limit reduced permanently. On 100 kilometres of the Golden Highway stretch and a stretch of 100 kilometres, there is currently at least 15 roadworks, all because of the OSOM loads coming our way.

With multiple projects in this area, the South West REZ, how will local communities and agricultural transport trucks maintain their use of the local roads? Another example from the Central West Orana REZ, with one project currently under construction and another at least 51 to go, there is one turbine blade transported from Newcastle Port six days a week. It takes three days to get the blade to site as there are two overnight stops. Some days the blade cannot be transported as there is not enough to police to accompany the OSOM loads. This project underway in the CWO REZ is a much smaller project yet it will still take over 35 weeks to get the blades to site and there's already been a blade collision in the town of Merriwa.

Environmental shadow, flicker and noise. These turbines will change this environment to one of shadow flicker and noise pollution. The so-called South West REZ is inundated with wind turbines and transmission infrastructure. Wind proponents throwing money at the Plains-wanderer breeding program does not atone for them wrecking the environment. I guess after the recommended 10 years of monitoring, we'll all learn that we no longer have a Plains-wanderer population living outside Dubbo Zoo.

Bats, carcass counts do not save vulnerable, threatened and endangered populations. Eagles, to date 20 known deaths in Rye Park in the southern tablelands in 18 months. Wedge-tailed eagles are protected species until they strike the 1,137 turbines that are 300 metres high in this region. Contamination and biosecurity. The Meat and Livestock Association and Sustainable Grain Australia requires us to keep livestock and crops away from sources of contamination. MLA requires a declaration of wind, solar, BESS transmission on our land, given the contamination risk. But what are the risks of contamination from infrastructure within the Baldon Wind project? How far will this contamination spread?

Blade shedding, bisphenol A, contaminants from substations and electrical equipment within the project area, asbestos in the components. No investigation has been done and none planned. What compensation will be available to producers when they find they cannot sell their produce into their markets? It has been illegal to import asbestos into this country since 2003, yet wind turbine components imported to Australia in the last year by Goldwind and others contained asbestos. The area around this project and nearby projects produces fruit, vegetables, nuts, olives, grapes, grain, oilseeds, rice, cotton, pulses, beef, lamb and fine wool. With turbines that have 3,411 blades shedding in this area, how many people want BPA or asbestos with that?

Few transmission and RE contractors appear to follow the signed agreements, doing what they like regarding property access. All of this is encouraged and driven by our New South Wales government. Increasingly we hear of buyer's remorse from the land hosts as they discover that the land is not theirs. Recent New South Wales Land and Environment Court case regarding ACEN wind project at Coolah demonstrated many examples of the proponent downplaying the impacts. Where are the protections for the people and the environment in this community? Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Ivan Kennedy. Thank you. Ivan Kennedy is our next speaker. Thank you.

**MR IVAN KENNEDY:** Yes. Thank you very much, Commissioners. My first submission is on better zero carbon energy alternatives for the Australian environment. I have a concern there is a lack of independent ecological risk assessment for Baldon Wind Farm. In particular, wind turbine technology is being introduced nationwide in hot dry Australia, never on this scale before. More than 10,000 wind turbines the size of the Eiffel Tower are in prospect, like building 100 new cities each with 108 megawatt turbines. And this will affect the climate. I'll speak on that later.

In various select committees, we've provided hazard assessments that remain unanswered by authorities showing a lack of accountability. In the Senate

Disinformation and Misinformation Report, 2.26 quotes “Professor Ivan Kennedy, arguing that scientific information is a developing process of the latest research and is never settled nor determined by consensus. Professor Kennedy argued that despite common opinions that there is a scientific and thus political consensus, there can never be such uniformity in scientific viewpoints where more research is needed.” We certainly need it. “Indeed, current understanding of climate science and its rate of change does not dictate a way forward with any certainty.”

In pages 2 and 3 of my submission, you can click on various connections. In particular, at Quick Test Technologies, which I’m an executive chairman, we propose that 3 million hectares of zero carbon casuarinas harvested after three years’ growth nationwide would be ideal for use application in the Murray Riverlands, yielding 200 million tonnes of dry wood, able to replace the 130 million tonnes of coal used in our power stations. That would be 9 or 10 million hectares of land needed. You can get full details on this by clicking on download full text PDF.

Casuarina is a very fast growing species, sparing of needs for water. They’re Australian and fertilise, affixing their own atmospheric nitrogen. And thus their harvested foliage can be used as a sort of fertiliser or used in chemistry processes or the Haber reaction as a reversible source of hydrogen. Keith Lovegrove, working at the ANU, showed that in proof of concept, the Haber process itself to fix nitrogen as ammonia using hydrogen can also use solar energy in the day to split ammonia into hydrogen and nitrogen. This could be obtained from casuarinas. And then reverse reacted at night, sufficient to provide enough heat to drive solar collection mirror systems in the day, keeping steam turbines running continuously. The Lovegrove process could provide the basis for regional power generation and also allow a chemical industry for hydrogen to develop by the reversible Haber process, but using our own native species as inputs.

Australia has a world monopoly on casuarina species, providing nitrogen fertiliser. In page 5, I’m speaking now. In mangroves, as well as being the only tree near Uluru, the desert oak, fertilising desert soils. Casuarina workshops that you can consult from the documents, so how these trees can be bred for particular processes like poles and scaffolding in India.

There’s also no direct evidence that zero carbon policies will work. Our recent publications suggest that increased water is responsible for most of the warming, partly as some warming from carbon dioxide in the first place. It may be that the recent warming of the earth is causing thermal calcification of limestone, which acidifies the ocean and puts more CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. I think I pretty well got to the end of my first, but I do recommend that the Commissioners examine what we say and I’ll move on now to the second of my presentations.

So this is submission two and once again, thank you very much, Commissioners. I’m very pleased that we’re able to have this discussion. Most of my research students did risk research for agriculture or the environment. In this case, I want to talk about quantifiable scientific evidence on infrasound and ecological risk from wind turbine wake turbulence. I hope these documents will be available to everyone in the near future.

5 The Commissioners need real world or objective risk data, not desktop consultants. We have published in slide two, we've published a new method to calculate maximum wind turbine power, a function of pitch angle for rotating turbine blades, using the difference between blade wind torque and reverse blade torque by the angular blade velocity. In slide three, we can calculate the reverse pressure exerted along the blade, providing an impulse between the blade pressure during rotation and pressure exerted onto the wind tower as a function of wind speed and blade pitch.

10 In slide four, infrasound is in audible pulses of pressure with frequency less than 20 hertz. It travels at sound speed in air and is only absorbed by resonant structures such as buildings matching its wavelength. We are currently testing this approach, which is not covered in current law. In slide five, we've conducted field risk research at Bodangora Wind Farm near Wellington. Farmers there having found their rainfall has fallen since its operation from 2019 with rain from the southwest bifurcating around their cattle station. And we have published information on the likelihood of this because of increased wake turbulence, building up pressure in the wake of the turbine farm and also slower flow rate of air convection.

20 Our meteorological measurements using DJI Air 2 were taken with northeast winds early on June the 30th this year, as shown. In slide six, our data collection yielded visual evidence of turbulent wake one and wake two in U-tubes, compared to upstream laminar flow areas, as shown near Spicers Creek. You can use control click to view the video. Other people already have access to these results, showing strong swirling turbulence on grass and trees 3 kilometres from the axis of the wind farm. This is not seen in the laminar flow upstream air prior to Bodangora Wind Farm.

30 This data shows turbulent wake areas warmer and drier using our meteorological equipment from Vaisala in Finland and also from Kestrel. Many farmers are familiar with these when they consider things like spraying pesticides. Easily conducted research in slide seven is being neglected by planning authorities, whose desktop approach could be illegal. Does that finish me?

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** No, you have one minute to go. Thank you.

40 **MR KENNEDY:** Okay, that's good. So the turbulent wake area shown in this slide is an area of hazard of 300 or 2,000 square kilometre downstream. If we're looking at landscape north of Moulamein in the wind farm towards Balranald and Hay and the river lands towards Swan Hill, we have serious effects of drought in dry seasons. My other slides up to slide 10 give some other aspects of this, but I think it is up to the Commissioners to acquaint themselves with this new research. There is no consensus. There is a need for a moratorium until universities and others have done the research which has never been done in this case. Thank you very much.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you very much. Thank you, Professor Kennedy.

**MR KENNEDY:** Very good.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Our next speaker this afternoon is Councillor Carol Oataway from Hay Shire Council. Councillor Oataway, thank you.

**CR CAROL OATAWAY:** Thank you. All right, I'm ready to go.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. We're hearing you well.

**CR OATWAY:** Thank you. Chair, Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to speak. A detailed submission on conditions of consent will be lodged with Commission by council, so I won't use the time to go into that detail. Instead, I want to explain why this community is open to Baldon. Hay has been working to diversify its economy for a long time. For more than 150 years, wool, livestock and broadacre agriculture built our town. Today, primary production accounts for 33% of our employment and 40% of our economic output. Alongside it, our visitor economy is worth around 30 million a year, thanks to Hay's position at the junction of three highways. These are our two economic engines and both are priced somewhere else.

Decisions made a long way from Hay land here very quickly. In April, a global fuel price shock cut visitor spending in Hay by 25% in a single month. A quarter of the takings gone from our cafés, motels, service stations and museums. Nobody in Hay did anything wrong. A price moved on the other side of the world. Our farmers know the same story. Commodity prices are set offshore and seasons and water availability can make or break a year. When agriculture and tourism can both falter in the same season, our responsibility is to look for economic diversification.

Like many rural communities, our population has fallen from around 3,560 in 2001 to 2,882. Our median age is 48. That isn't a community failing to work hard. It's a structural challenge and it needs a structural response. That is why council and our community have taken a systems approach. We treat community, environment and economy as one interconnected system because in a place like Hay, that is what they are. Consider a producer with a reliable income floor, one that arrives whether or not it rains. In a dry year, they can reduce stocking rates and keep ground cover, which strengthens the environment. They can keep their staff, spend locally and keep their children at the local school, which strengthens the community. They can invest in their property rather than borrow against the next uncertain season, which strengthens the economy. One steady income supports all three.

Baldon Wind Farm could be part of that response. Hay is facing the most significant economic transition since settlement. Energy is also an industry with a long future. A holiday is something people cut back on when fuel is expensive. Energy isn't. Demand for it is inelastic. Households, farm and industry need it, whatever the price or the season. And it isn't growing in a straight line. With electrified transport and industry and new demand like data processing steepening the curve. Hosting an industry like that can bring benefits that last well beyond construction. For the town, that means skilled work for decades. Technicians, electricians, operations and maintenance specialists. These are well-paid long-term careers. Too many of our young people leave because the opportunities aren't here. These jobs give them a reason to stay or to come back. And they bring families who join our school, our clubs and our main street.

There's a wider opportunity as well. Hosting energy development gives Hay something it hasn't had before. A reason for capital to look at the region. Investment follows reliable competitively priced energy and energy intensive industries, including value added agricultural production, data processing and resource recovery tend to locate where it's available. Capital that arrives for energy can stay for other things, so each project makes the next investment easier to attract. That is the economic multiplier we are seeking. Not simply hosting infrastructure that generates electricity for distant markets, but using that energy and the investment it draws to diversify and strengthen the industries and communities within the renewable energy zone.

Hay can remain a strong agricultural community while also producing energy. That is not the abandonment of our identity. It is the next stage of it. Council has done the work to make sure projects like this leave a legacy. We have established the principles, policies and governance needed to pursue local business participation. Education pathways, community benefit and legacy housing. That includes the fundamental principles for successful renewable energy development in Hay, our renewable energy position statements, our community benefit framework, a benefit fund committee and a planning agreements policy.

The developers of Baldon Wind Farm have actively engaged with council and the community to identify these opportunities and support their progression towards practical, locally delivered outcomes. Council supports Baldon, but support does not mean accepting development on any terms. We continue to press strongly on roads, environmental protection and local procurement. Strong, enforceable conditions ensure the benefits remain in our community and costs are not borne by rate payer. Insisting on them is not opposition, it is responsible stewardship.

This project is not arriving over the top of us. Our landholders are willing participants and our community has largely supported it with its eyes open. The energy transition should happen with us, not to us. Given our location, Hay doesn't have the luxury of turning away a new industry and assuming another will take its place. That is not our economic reality. The decisions we make today are not for us, but for future generations and we ask the Commission to approve the Baldon Wind Farm, subject to the strengthened conditions council has put before you. With those protections, Baldon can provide the structural strength across Hay's environmental community and economic systems for the next 30 years. Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you, Councillor Oataway. Can we now move to our next speaker, please, who is Stuart Bonds.

**MR STUART BONDS:** Hello, can you hear me?

**MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, we can hear you well, thank you.

**MR BONDS:** Thank you very much. So look, I'm here speaking on behalf of One Nation New South Wales and just want to say that we are opposed to this wind project and in fact we're opposed to all wind projects. We don't think that they're necessary. These things are tearing our communities apart. They are divesting really necessary infrastructure money for roads that we require elsewhere in the state into upgrading

intersections for roads to nowhere. These things are unproductive. They cannot survive on their own two feet without substantial subsidies from the government. And to the communities that are pushing back against this, so I apologise that this is happening to you in your community and not just with this project, with all the projects that are going on across the state.

You know, these are on productive farmland. They're going through native forests. The transmission lines to link the projects up are going through farmland and forest. It's horrific, the damage that's being done to our environment. And I mean, who cleans up the mess? I mean, do these guys even intend on building the project? I guess that's a question for them to answer because we often find that what happens is these projects get approved and then they're often sold before even the spade meets the soil. You know, and so what happens and who cleans them up when we're finished? You know, people need to have a good hard look at their contracts that have been put in front of them and make sure that they're not going to be the bag holder at the end when these guys move on.

So these are unnecessary projects and we aim to build new, clean, coal-fired power stations in the state, which will completely flip the economics for these wind farms on their heads. So I just wanted to say hang tough to the people that this is affecting. My heart goes out to you and from the party, we're really sorry we couldn't get in and have a difference any earlier. Thank you very much for your time and thank you for hearing me out.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr Bonds. Our next speaker, please, is Jacquie Crawford. Okay, Jacquie Crawford is our next speaker. Okay, just some connection problems there. So what we will do, we're just about to take a break. So let's take a break for 10 minutes and Jacquie Crawford will be hopefully our first speaker after the break. So can we now take a 10 minute break? Thank you, everyone, and we'll see you back here promptly in 10 minutes.

#### >SHORT ADJOURNMENT

**MS MILLIGAN:** Welcome back, everyone, to the second half of this hearing on the Baldon Wind Farm project. Thank you very much for a very positive first half this afternoon. Before we go to our community speakers who are listed for the second half of the afternoon, a couple of things I thought I'd clarify from this morning. There was a comment about the location of people who'd made submissions. Can I just clarify, there's no geographic limit on people making a submission on a project and can I also just reassure people that the Commission reads all submissions. I think that's also important when we heard some of our speakers reference things that they had in their submissions and they referred to links to further information. All the submissions we receive will be available on our website. All right. So with those comments, let's move on to the second half of our public hearing and can we now have Jacquie Crawford as our next speaker? Thank you.

**MS JACQUIE CRAWFORD:** Good afternoon, panel and also to the support team and obviously anyone who is listening to this. Five minutes of my truth. Might be a little bit over, but anyway. It seems we as a nation are so loose with the truth, that

deceiving, lying and weak leadership seems to be the core values that are being promoted rather than integrity, honesty and transparency. I do hope the three of you on the panel have more of the latter than the former, especially I hope not in weak leadership.

5

I'm a person that if a business proposal is a good one with well managed plans, cost effective and has more positives than negatives, then you do not have to buy me. You do not even have to sell it to me. You provide the facts, the pros and the cons, and if it is a well rational, balanced, strong management project, then I'm in. See, I am the neighbour to part of the Baldon property. I have respect for the landholders. I work with them on livestock management and I know they are prosperous business people. I know that if this is – well, actually when because I'm hoping common sense, good logic and protection of our economy will refuse this project. I know that the landholders and their family will be absolutely fine.

15

My family had the multiple phone calls, actually quite harassing, years ago to take our beautiful agricultural landscape, trying to sell us the market ploy. Guess what the majority had as their main pull? That we would make a lot of money. As I said before, if a project is sold mainly on money, then it is weak. Stronger values and stronger foundations could not be deployed when these companies were trying to tell us how clean, how cheap and reliable renewables were. They just aren't. They are another form of energy, yes. But they are definitely not cheap, clean and reliable.

20

I don't agree with this decision to host a wind turbine industrial site on this beautiful country of ours in the South West REZ. I object not only to the impact to the environment and the flora and fauna, but also to the Australian taxpayer. See, this project is estimated to cost 2.7 billion and we know that this will blow out. But it is in the logistics of this project, i.e. the planning and development, that is so extraordinarily ludicrous that this is where the IPC should refuse this project.

30

I've briefly looked over all the hundreds of pages of reports, telling you how good this project and all the ticks of the boxes. But what about the vortexes that each turbine will create and then combine 170 vortexes. What impact to our birds and environment or our wedge-tailed eagle breeding environment that the Riverina creates? There is such more evidence coming out even to the health of humans, such as in the Crookwell area. The truth, I wish more people can see right through it all.

35

Now, other people that will speak today will give more expert evidence on the impact of wind turbines or that they're pro this project. But there's a negative impact such as the horrendous carbon footprint that these industrial sites create. Because let's be honest, the amount of minerals, resources, steel, concrete, oil, diesel, trucks and vehicles, human resources and water, which we are lacking on in this area anyway, are just related to just this project should already have the IPC on alert. Can I ask the panel, have you all been to the site out in Moulamein physically?

45

**MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, we have.

**MS CRAWFORD:** Okay. So are you truly absorbing the distance to not only build this, manage and then most importantly the decommission stage in 25 years? Break it

down just for one turbine and then turn it and then times it by 170 and think of all the logistics. I'm hoping I'm talking to people with integrity that can do the sums and see what I'm seeing.

5 I know IPC must consider the suitability of the site for development, the likely impacts that development and also the social and economic impacts in the environment, environmental and the intergenerational equity and the principles of the ecological sustainable development. On just those matters alone, the IPC is called upon to refuse this project approval by any Australian, just like me. However, sadly, I do not think  
10 you will. I have reviewed your cases. Since 2025, 12 renewable energy projects have come across the IPC panel and have been approved. Not one refused.

To the panel, have you looked at the planning and development, the financial costs, the carbon footprint to this project, to the 12 projects and also all the other projects that  
15 didn't come through the IPC panel? I perused through your latest meeting minutes of the four shire councils and your applicant and was quite disheartened. Four rural council roads are currently – I'm just about to finish, four rural council roads are currently not keeping up to standards. Now add this project, add the Pottinger Wind Farm, add on all the extra ones that I haven't mentioned. Adelaide is 551 kilometres  
20 away and Balranald is 75 kilometres away, the main collection of resources to build this project. I shake my head at the absolute wastage and poor project efficiency. How can this project be this far down?

Let's look at the transmission of electricity. At baseline production is max at 25% of  
25 this wind project. So yes, for \$2.7 billion for a 25% capacity run project, it still needs to be transformed and integrated. Dinawan substation is 150 kilometres away. I could go on. Please panel, due to time, I can't activate your curiosity anymore, but please do your numbers and logistics. I know you work for the government. I know this is already probably approved, but it's integrity, common sense and honour to true  
30 independence and to the holistic balanced project, then the Baldon Wind Farm would not be approved. Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you very much, Ms Crawford. Our next speaker is Lynette LaBlack, please. Ms LaBlack, can you hear us?  
35

**MS LYNETTE LABLACK:** Oh, yes, I can hear you.

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

40 **MS LABLACK:** Thank you very much. I'd like to begin by saying it's very strange that this hearing was planned at Balranald when this particular plan's not even in the Balranald Shire. But that aside, the New South Wales government is completely failing its first priority to protect its citizens. Instead, they're doing the complete opposite, as the renewable Trojan horse is socialism masquerading as environmentalism.  
45 Absolutely not for the greater good of New South Wales and Australia.

The deliberately harmful impacts for rural communities was made pretty clear by the sinister policies of the New South Wales government's authoritarian dictatorship, when the New South Wales premier told us on 22 July last year, the government could

not risk delaying its renewable energy transition, even if regional communities paid the sacrifice. Well, there you go. That's exactly what's happening. And we don't consent.

Where is the government's legislated policy to poison the people? By poisoning our life-sustaining soil and water with toxic renewables, the asbestos of the future, because that's exactly what they're doing and they know it. Where is their legislated target to deliberately turn our limited, irreplaceable agricultural land into toxic contaminated wasteland during operation from toxic contaminating turbines, bisphenol A shedding all over the place, PFAS, asbestos, and the extremely fire hazardous toxic lithium ion batteries with lethal hydrogen fluoride plumes that billow out all over the landscape. PFAS forever chemicals.

Goldwind's Baldon swindle factory is another treacherous part of China's energy dream and our national security and food security crisis. Three things are clear about the Climate Authority chair's diabolical New South Wales electricity infrastructure roadmap, which the present New South Wales government has adopted. Many landscapes will never be the same. Our life-sustaining soil and water will be contaminated. Electricity will become far more expensive and much less reliable. None of this will alter the climate and Australia's electricity grid will be under the control of our most hostile enemy, the Chinese Communist Party.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Ms LaBlack, can I just ask you to make your submission to us, perhaps, you know, respectfully?

**MS LABLACK:** Okay. The government has a fatal addiction in prioritising unethical CCP controlling electrical infrastructure, ensuring Australia becomes nothing but a widespread toxic contaminating pathetic power station and toxic mine pit as a vassal state for China. There are no benefits to the people or to the country. The Department and the IPC and in the past have failed to consider any of the detrimental impacts, which I will show now in a series of photos.

A prime example, actually, at the moment is the Wellington North solar fire, which occurred in December last year. Burnt panels still sitting there. No one does a thing about it. And these photos will show further damage, damage, toxic contaminating wind turbines and batteries. At no stage has the Department included any of these typical scenarios in their conditions of consent, instead pretending that the operational life will be uneventful and there'll be no problems whatsoever. So they're fairly self-explanatory, beginning with the first one, the toxic hazard warning, which the department consistently fails to acknowledge.

Secondly, wind turbine fire at Bulgana Green Power Hub in Victoria. This was 2025, 29 May. That only began full commercial operation in December 2021. So all of these photos show relatively newish wind turbines. The next one is the collapsed two year old Berrybank wind turbine. That happened in a windstorm. As I said, only two years old. Following that, next slide is Iberdrola's broken Flyers Creek wind turbine blade near Orange and Blayney. It was cracked before 10 August 2025. It was only energised in April that same year. So only a few months to failure. There's also been further damage to that this year in August and suspected to be at least five damaged blades in that particular swindle factory.

Following that, there are two photos of toxic bisphenol A, which is lethal to young children, as toxic as blue asbestos, shedding from wind turbine blades, which happens in only a few years as they soon suffer from leading edge erosion. The leading edge blade is actually only guaranteed for five years. And the fact is that wind turbine blades do shed material. Following that next slide is pictured a trained worker wearing respiratory gear to deal with the typical erosion and shed toxic material. But notably, there is no containment at all for any of these contaminated particles as they're sanded away, drifting off into the air over our life sustaining irreplaceable food growing land, vital water sources. And if there's some residents around, on the rooftops that feed into our drinking water.

Next slide is about banned asbestos because last year, 2025, banned asbestos was found in numerous lift brake pads and other parts of Chinese wind turbines, scattered all around the country, including this particular developer, Goldwind, Vestas, Squadron's turbines. And the imports of these turbines, solar panels and batteries are all coming in across the border unregulated. And that is according to Border Force, who have actually written a response in relation to that.

The toxic contaminating debris left by the – sorry, this is the next slide. The toxic contaminating debris left by the spontaneously exploding wind turbine at the Yendon section of the Lal Lal swindle factory, which was only commissioned in 2020. So this is near Ballarat in the Moorabool Shire. There'd previously been a lightning strike incident in September 2019. This particular turbine is located only 600 metres from the Bungal Dam, which feeds into the Ballarat water supply.

Now, following that photo, there's a series of seven, which you can go through, seven photos, which is showing all the bits and pieces from this exploding turbine. That was only commissioned in 2020. So and this has been left there. I'm not sure about today, but this happened in May and photos were taken in July. And in August, these fragments were still spread all over the land. So it's pretty obvious that these things do not get cleaned up, despite the company saying that there is no risk to the public at all. The facts are proving otherwise.

The next slide or the next couple of slides actually are of lithium ion batteries. The warehouse at Cheltenham, Melbourne, owned by Phoenix Technology Group, 3,000 highly toxic, extremely, extremely toxic, sorry, lithium ion batteries. That was 30 January 2025. There is no way that the Department can consider lithium batteries minimal risk and their lethal fires manageable. Even the New South Wales Fire and Rescue state that there is a general lack of guidance and provisions in building code standards and legislation in relation to safety to address the potential risks from these emerging technologies. Part of the problem is that we do not yet know enough about their probability of failure, their mechanisms of failure and potential consequences of failure.

Following that, there's some, well, you can obviously see bulldozing through the rural communities against our will with no consent and no social licence. And I've ended that series of photos with Bobby Gallagher's 1 megawatt Unity Nuclear microreactor because it just shows that there are other alternatives with minimal environmental

impact. And obviously coal fired power is far less impactful than these swindle factories.

5 And I would like to highlight also the response from Border Force, the environmental goods and product safety section within the Australian Border Force regarding importation of banned PFOS and asbestos, as well as toxic bisphenol A and various types of PFAS in wind, solar and BESS components, which will be provided to the Commissioner. It clearly states that there is no due diligence, no reputable independent risk research, no independent accreditation body for toxicology risk of renewable  
10 infrastructure, no lifecycle regulation of imports, use, disposal, no precautionary principle, despite PFAS being globally recognised as persistent bioaccumulative toxins and various types of PFAS being banned in Australia. There is no mandatory disclosure requirements for chemical composition of renewable components in Australia.

15 This system is built to facilitate rollout first and manage harm later, if ever. This response from the environmental goods and product safety section within the Australian Border Force documents official knowledge of risk, establishes foreseeability of harm, shows government awareness without enforcement, weakens  
20 any future claim of unanticipated consequences –

**MS MILLIGAN:** Excuse me, Ms LaBlack, but I'm asking you if you can wind up your presentation, please.

25 **MS LABLACK:** Yes, I am. Thank you. The Border Force response is substantively an admission of regulatory failure, not competence, not ignorance, but choice. Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. Our next speaker this afternoon is Alan Moran.

30 **MR ALAN MORAN:** Yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you.

**MR MORAN:** Hello.

35 **MS MILLIGAN:** Alan, can you hear us?

**MR MORAN:** I can hear you. Can you hear me?

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** We can hear you clearly. Thank you.

**MR MORAN:** Great.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Just go ahead when you're ready.

45 **MR MORAN:** Do you want me to proceed or – okay. Yes. All right. Thanks very much for hearing me. Look, I want to say the Baldon project is a major impost on the Australian taxpayer and the Australian energy consumer. The project will offer no value. In fact, it will offer negative value to the community as a whole, even though it

is expected to attract \$17.8 billion of investment in wind and solar. These are, in fact, negative investments in the South West Renewable Zone.

5 So it's not a commercial project. It depends entirely on government assistance, either directly or indirectly, through requirements for suppliers to increasingly include renewable energy in the aggregate supply of energy. The total cost of assistance of this kind is about \$20 billion a year in Australia and it comes in several forms, notably the LRET and the Capacity Investment Scheme. And the latter is Orwellian newspeak because the contracted wind facilities offer no real capacity. They are the opposite of  
10 capacity producing and require capacity from other sources to operate reliably, even in their high cost, inefficient form. In fact, we have Snowy 2 originally costing at \$2 billion to back these sorts of facilities up and that \$2 billion looks like it's going to reach \$40 billion.

15 So wind provides electricity, as we know, only when the wind is blowing. At other times it must be backed up by reliable, controllable generation. And because these facilities enjoy subsidies, they can bid into the supply system at negative prices, driving out more competitive energy sources, principally coal and gas. The batteries proposed to accompany the facility provide at best only about two hours of coverage,  
20 but wind droughts with hardly any wind can last for days.

We can readily see the effects of this in Australia's energy development. Electricity prices have doubled over the past eight to 10 years as a result of government interventions to subsidise wind and solar and indeed in New South Wales it was once  
25 claimed by the government that these facilities would cut bills by \$130 per year for the average household in New South Wales and 430 for the average small business. Of course, that hasn't taken place.

30 What we can see is that those countries who've done less of in terms of support for renewables in Australia, and we're talking about China and US, India and Korea, now enjoy prices about half of those of Australia. Some countries have done even more than Australia, UK, Germany, Spain, and their costs are higher than those of Australia.

35 The resultant loss of competitiveness of Australian suppliers has brought about additional costs from government bailouts and we've seen that in the aluminium industries, including in New South Wales. Generally, the higher the level of wind and solar, the greater risk of blackouts. We've already seen these blackouts in Australia with an extensive outage in South Australia and one on a smaller scale in Broken Hill. Europe, of course we've seen them in Spain and Portugal and southern France as a  
40 result of the failure of wind and solar, you know, and that fairly will inevitably occur unless we fully cover the cost of wind and solar with more dependable energy. Of course, to do that, you simply double your capital cost and incur additional costs of transmission, et cetera.

45 So the New South Wales Electricity Strategy is not meeting its stated objectives of reliability, affordability and sustainability. The commercial costs are compounded by other environmental costs entailed in additional transmission lines required to collect this highly dispersed form of energy and the death of wildlife from wind farms. The

nation's largest energy business, AGL, has actually warned about the cost increase, which are foisted on the consumer.

5 Finally, the rationale for providing the proposed source of energy is to achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases on a global scale. Of course, it's pointless for Australia, which only has about 1% of global emissions. And those countries with more than half the emissions, India, China and others are doing very little to actually replace coal with non-emitting sources. There's no possibility you can do anything about global warming, if in fact it's occurring, on its own. And the major hitters in terms of power supply and associated greenhouse gas emissions, which is China and India, and have been joined by the United States, which has pulled out of the Paris Agreement.

10 So what we have is measures foreshadowed, which have basically had the perverse effects on our energy supplies. And the panellists should be aware that the current position on the Paris Agreement, which underpins all of this legislation, is no longer a consensus to leading parties in the polls. The Coalition and One Nation have rejected the agreement's goal. One Nation has in fact pledged to actually leave the agreement. And the Liberal Party has said it will can the carbon taxes and the safeguard mechanism.

15 So let me just say that the nation has spent too much and caused too much grief in regulatory pursuit of renewable expenditures that are harming our wellbeing and undermining living standards. This panel should not be complicit in supporting the measures that are bringing about such dismal results, especially when the justification in terms of economic success and community support is patently not evident. I take it that bell means I've finished, is it?

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, your time is up.

25 **MR MORAN:** Okay. Thank you very much.

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** Just before you go, a couple of things. As you may have heard me say earlier, the government sort of sets renewable energy policy. But I did want to ask you, in relation to this project, did you have any specific comments for the panel on the economic analysis that's included in the application?

35 **MR MORAN:** I think the economic analysis basically – and it basically says of \$2 billion of costs and they're obviously going to be recouped. But the basic reason why they're recouped is because the government is subsidising those costs. I don't know what their situation is in terms of the contracts that the government might have under the CIS, but certainly about one third of the cost of the revenue or even half of the revenue from wind farms is from the subsidy. So in other words, they're only recovering half their costs. So it's no way a benefit to the community as a whole.

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** And do those comments relate specifically to this economic analysis or are you just making a general –

**MR MORAN:** It's general, but this one is very typical, similar to any of the others. It's quite clear that wind generally has the same sort of cost when it's onshore wind, offshore wind is even higher.

5 **MS MILLIGAN:** Right. Thank you very much.

**MR MORAN:** You're welcome.

10 **MS MILLIGAN:** So that brings us to our next community speaker, who is Ann Hare. So Ann Hare is our next speaker.

**MS ANN HARE:** Hello.

15 **MS MILLIGAN:** Hello.

**MS HARE:** Thank you. Can you hear me?

**MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, we can hear you clearly. Thank you.

20 **MS HARE:** Thank you. There is a bit of an echo, but we'll soldier through. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I strongly object to Baldon Wind and ask the committee to consider not only this project, but the culminative impacts of renewable energy development across southern New South Wales. Baldon is proposed to include up to 180 turbines, approximately 1,400 megawatts in generation, and 200 megawatts and 400 megawatt battery across approximately 64,000 hectares of agricultural land. The New South Wales Planning Portal estimates that Baldon could void approximately 2.54 million tonnes of CO2 emissions in its first year, about 9 million tonnes over 20 years. If this rate remains consistent, the committee should also consider the project's full lifecycle carbon footprint, including manufacturing, transport, concrete, batteries, infrastructure, as well as construction and the eventual decommissioning.

35 Using an illustrative sequential rate of 10 tonnes per CO2 emission per hectare per year, offsetting 49 million tonnes would require approximately 245,000 hectares of land. This demonstrates the scale of the issue, particularly when Baldon is considered alongside many other wind, solar, battery and turbine projects being developed across productive agricultural regions.

40 At the same time, new electricity demands are emerging. The proposed Gregadoo data centre in Wagga could require up to 1.4 gigawatts and continuous electricity, approximately 1.3 terawatts per year. In the illustrative emissions intensity of 1.64 tonnes, beg your pardon, 0.64 tonnes of CO2 per hour, that could represent approximately 7.85 million tonnes of CO2 eventually, if this is we are doing all this to reduce the CO2. That is 157 million tonnes over 20 years. That would mean offsetting with the same illustrative rate. That would require 750,000 hectares of land to be locked up, planted for trees, for 20 years.

45 This raises an important question. If Australia continues to create more new electricity demands, how much additional renewable electricity, battery storage, transmission infrastructure will be required and where will this be built? All on agricultural land?

Much of this infrastructure is being placed on farmland. Rural land is not an empty space on the map. It supports reproduction, exports, employment and regional communities. Industrial infrastructure, transmission corridors, substations, trees, roads, easements, all restrict agricultural land use and affect soil, water and long-term productivity.

The committee must also properly consider the PFAS, which has been spoken about in depth before, and other present chemicals. Australia's drinking water guidelines were substantially tightened in 2025. With the current PFAS guidelines, just 8 nanograms per litre. If persistent chemicals and contaminations of soil, groundwater, surface water enter the food chain, the consequences may continue long term after the project is finished operating. This raises the concerns, who carries the liability if contamination occurs? Who pays to remediate it? Who guarantees decommissioning and removal? How do we remove chemicals from the land and the groundwater? Are the financial bonds held today sufficient to restore land in decades from now? Do the bonds exist?

Australia is a food producing nation. We produce an enormous amount of food here at home while also supplying many overseas markets. Our agricultural land is not just an economic asset. It is part of Australia's food security. Food security walks hand in hand with national security. Once productive farmland is permanently lost or significantly restricted, we cannot replace it with other land. They are not making any more of it. Australia needs electricity, but it also needs food security. We cannot eat electricity.

I request the committee reject this installation for the cumulative effects, the intermittent electricity it may provide, the PFAS contamination, the decommissioning liability to council and ratepayers and the long-term consequences for agricultural and food security. I might pose a question. Why was this IPC hearing proposed to be held in Balranald, an hour and a half away, when the project was 15 kilometres out of Moulamein? Why wasn't it held in Moulamein? You would have got more people come. At the moment in farming in this area, we are preparing rice grounds, we are irrigating cereal crops and we are hay baling. So that means we're working about 20 hours a day. So, you know, to go an hour and a half away to a meeting when we could have had it in Moulamein and be 10 minutes away. So I just pose that question. Thank you very much.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. Just before you go, you made some comments about your concerns regarding chemical contaminants. They were general comments and I just wanted to ask you, were there specific concerns you had about this project, about specifically the Baldon project?

**MS HARE:** Yes, absolutely, because there is over 180 turbines. And then that would be the PFAS or you want to call it fibreglass or PFOS, that comes off leading edge erosion. So that's tiny microfibrils that are being pushed into the air, as I understand, in the third year of them existing. And every year after that, as they turn, as they stand there, as they get rained on, as the wind blows, it goes on the ground, it goes on the livestock and it goes in the water. Now, I haven't been able to find out, but the local LGA is asking if stock are grazed around renewable energy installations and I believe abattoirs are now requesting that too.

So if it's clean, if it's green, if it's great for everybody, I don't think so, because we're going to contaminate the land and how – how do we get rid of microscopic contaminations out of the land and groundwater? I might say, Oceans Integrity can do it in the ocean. They can remove at micrograms because they can put nets in the ocean. How can we do that here on our land and in our groundwater and in our livestock and for us, for people to breathe in?

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay. Thank you for clarifying that concern. Thank you very much.

**MS HARE:** Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** So we have our next speaker with us and that is Annette Smith. Thank you very much.

**MS ANNETTE SMITH:** Thank you. As I explained earlier, I might just go about 30 seconds, 40 seconds over time, if that's okay. I'm opposed to the construction of this project, covering over 46,000 hectares of agricultural land, leaving a legacy of environmental land and soil pollution. It will impact 15.6 hectares of Murray River endangered ecological community, including the Abercrombie Creek and its riparian areas. This development will not only desecrate huge tracts of habitat, but will threaten the survival of other local native species, including 11 different species of birds, various species of bats, which also play a valuable role in biodiversity.

Apparently, the potential impacts have been considered and mitigation measures are proposed and offsets will be generated. Offsets are really nothing more than environmental Bitcoin. There is no evidence that offsets have provided any long-term benefits to any native flora and fauna in previous projects.

There are 14 listed likely migratory species identified within the search area. Twelve of these birds utilise habitats found within this project and they will have their migratory pattern irrevocably disturbed. The direct consequence of not proceeding with the project would be to forego the supposed projected benefits of electricity reliability and cost. It has been forecast to have a saving of \$130 per annum of electricity cost to an average householder between 2023 and 2040, according to the electricity infrastructure roadmap, as the EIS claims. That statement does not correlate with the facts and the claim of a saving is a nonsense. As it stands, householders in New South Wales are already paying \$350 per householder over a three year period in levies to cover the monstrous blowout of \$1.5 billion building the Buronga transmission line.

It's estimated by the Policy Institute of Australia that the cost of transforming the electricity grid is set to add at least another \$600 a year to household energy bills. Transgrid is already seeking \$1.2 billion in additional CapEx for delivering the New South Wales component. This is in addition to the \$2.1 billion already approved in 2023. This new one will equate to an increase of \$78 per annum for five years for all residential customers in 2027 and 28, according to the Australian Energy Regulator.

Direct and indirect socioeconomic benefits. I note that in the EIS, the key aspects evaluated included many social features, but very little about the environment. I have seen no survey and I have not participated in any such survey. Impacts and risks from potential chemicals and contamination are played down and not portrayed to the community members as well as they should be. Most people are aware of the risk of PFAs in our environment, but the risks of PFAs associated with wind turbines through blade shedding are not. It is the same with blade flicker and infrasound. There are too many people currently affected for these issues to be constantly ignored.

The factor that garnered the most interest was the Community Benefit Fund, with 60% noted enthusiasm for the potential financial benefits the project may bring. Of course, the promises of money falling like confetti is going to excite every council and local organisation, relieving many from the obligation to fundraise in the traditional manner. And the promise of Community Benefit Fund will alleviate pressure in councils to exercise due caution in their budgets. Instead, they can be rewarded by diving into the trough, disregarding the consequences of damage to the environment.

The only people to benefit are the developers themselves, mostly offshore entities of which Goldwind is one, and hosts and neighbours within the REZ. There is no drought-proofing or resilience building for the rest of our agriculture community or the townspeople, despite futuristic claims of ongoing employment, [unintelligible 02:03:34] future trade training.

It's concerning that communities and councils are not putting as much consideration into directing Community Benefit Funds into a separate cache to secure the decommission and clean up of these projects. There is no guarantee that the original project developer will pass on the responsibility of clean up and decommission to future operators, as these projects change hands with alarming elasticity. It is also very concerning that wildlife and native bird rescues are also ignored for support through the Community Benefit Fund, as their costs are soaring with every development that is started.

The South West Renewable Energy Zone was [unintelligible] and I was dismayed that [unintelligible] by the Hay Shire Council to have full licence to support the introduction of wind turbines and solar farms into our landscape. Shire council and district media continue to announce these proposals as a fact accomplished, leaving myself and others in the community disappointed and angered that the views of some have transpired into a solid confirmation regarding the introduction of wind turbines and solar farms, despite our continued and sustained opposition. It will only take a tick at the ballot box to let councils and government know exactly what the community is feeling. Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. Thank you very much.

**MS SMITH:** Apologies for going over.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, so thank you very much, Ms Smith. So our next speaker is Judy Jarratt. Judy, are you on the line with us?

**MS JUDY JARRATT:** I am, if you can hear me clearly. I'm travelling at the moment, so I'm using a router. Anyway, hopefully.

**MS MILLIGAN:** We can hear you clearly, so over to you.

5

**MS JARRATT:** Thank you. Well, I'd like to raise some serious concerns about the environmental and health aspects of the project, concerns I've raised before with no one willing to answer. I'd like you to provide me the honest and transparent evidence that every additional stressor and cost to the environment has been considered for this project and that the benefits do actually outweigh the environmental cost, because I don't believe they do.

10

Every extra vehicle and machine on and off the roads, including their full running costs, every tonne of CO2 emissions produced and required to construct, transport and erect for every single element of this project accounted for, including the enormous concrete bases, which will be left behind when decommissioned. Has it been explained to you how a wind turbine renews itself? They are replaceable, not renewable and not recyclable. Therefore, they are an enormous burden to our environment.

15

Has it been disclosed to you exactly how the project will be decommissioned and where every part will be again transported to be disposed of? Has it been disclosed to you where the used lubricants and oils will be disposed of? Thousands upon thousands of litres of oil throughout the lifetime of this project. Has the shedding of PFAS been addressed as the enormous towers deteriorate around us? PFAS, a forever carcinogenic toxin, is now linked with testicular and kidney cancers. It's not one tower or 10 towers. There are literally hundreds of blades and towers and tens of thousands of hectares to be considered.

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Has there been testing of the soils in, on and around similar past and present turbine projects? And what are those results? Have the effects of seismic vibration been measured and monitored in all directions for the protection of our fauna? If any of these questions have not been honestly and transparently answered, then this project should not go ahead. We cannot forsake our environment for the sake of a dollar.

30

Making 1 kilogram of cement adds 1 kilogram of CO2 into the atmosphere. And whether it's in Australia or overseas, it doesn't matter. One turbine base requires approximately 700 cubic metres of concrete, which is equal to approximately 1,700 tonne in weight. Add in the emissions for the production of the steel, the fibreglass and the increased number of heavy vehicles, which also required, and there are emissions in overload. One tonne of fibreglass produces around 2 tonnes of CO2 emissions and there are 525 90 metre blades just for this project. I'm not sure the weight of fibreglass in just one blade, but I would appreciate an answer.

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How much total CO2 emissions will be admitted at the completion of this project, both here in Australia and overseas? Has consideration been given to the fact that our roundabouts and roads need to be redesigned for rerouting and reconstructed to accommodate the transport of 90 metre blades? The disruption to our highways as 100 metre long, over dimension loads with their prime movers and trailers travelling along them daily for months and months on end.

45

A full disclosure of the environmental cost is required. If these basic questions aren't being asked or answered fully, then this project should not go ahead. If our country was truly concerned about minimising CO2 emissions and saving our planet, then we would stop selling our resources to other countries, those who are making the components and who contribute so highly to world emissions.

This project is pollution and destruction on a grand unimaginable scale for little, if any, benefit. I was listening to a renewable projects engineer on a train recently in discussions about renewable projects and quote unquote he said, "They're not about saving the environment, they're about the money." So I ask you, can you in good conscience give an approval for something that will be a true and heavy burden to us, our environment and many future generations? Is that what you want for my family? It's not what I want for mine, nor for our community. If we don't know what we don't know until we look in a different space, have the courage to look and listen before you make your decision. The environment and our health depend on it. The money really isn't worth it. Thank you for hearing me.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you very much for presenting to us this afternoon. Okay, let's move on to our next speaker now and we have with us Jeanine Bird. Yes, Jeanine, can you hear us?

**MS JEANINE BIRD:** Hello, yes.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Yes, thank you. We're hearing you clearly. Over to you.

**MS BIRD:** Oh, thank you. Sorry, just bear with me. I've got a bit of a list because I've got Bell's palsy and I'm having trouble getting some words out.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, take your time.

**MS BIRD:** Thank you. How well was this meeting advertised? I'll bet all the people in its LGA and the neighbouring LGAs weren't letterboxed. As usual, it's secret energy business so that nobody knows. Likewise, no one knows what the toxins will do to the environment and the people's health in the future. Not only are renewables inefficient, the cost of it will likely double. Already renewable energy companies are asking governments or taxpayers to cough up for the extra cost. If granted, taxpayers pay and then pay again with higher power prices because of it. Interstate and overseas objections are already being restricted, yet the companies pushing this are mostly overseas owned and freely take taxpayers' money.

Toxic smoke from a wind tower or BESS fire does not respect borders. Wind can carry it from Victoria to Queensland in a heartbeat. Neither our concerns nor interstate ones should be silenced. Our health is at risk. Our soils are at risk. Our water is at risk, both above ground and aquifers. And once these toxins get into them and our food chain, it will not be able to be clawed back. The Baldon proposal brings a package of risks. Wind towers contain asbestos. It shouldn't be allowed to enter the company, yet materials can flake into soils and aquifers or leach into rivers and creeks. Towers also

shed bisphenol A, a substance the Swedish EPA has described as the most toxic they know. BPA particles break down and will work into soils and subsoil water tables.

5 Accompanying the turbines will be battery energy storage systems. Together they introduce PFAS and PFOS forever chemicals. And in the Wagga area, aquifers are already being diluted because of PFAS contamination. We're inviting the same problems here. Also, once the companies fold, sell or leave, the contamination remains. Other speakers put up photos of fires in Australia. Turbines and BESS units catch fire. In the Hay Plains region, a fire in a good year can travel for miles.  
10 Emergency services are usually prevented from fighting at the source, so toxic smoke spreads freely. We received smoke from the Canberra fires and even from Asia, so the health risk is national, yet projects continue to be approved.

15 A recent High Court decision on the Mount Pleasant coal mine is directly relevant. Three of the five judges confirmed that planning authorities must consider the full chain of causation, including downstream, offsite and long-term harms, when deciding whether to approve a project. Scope 3 emissions from coal burned overseas were held to cause local climate impacts that cannot be ignored. The same logic applies to the toxins released by wind turbines and BESS systems. Asbestos fires, BPA flakes,  
20 forever chemicals and toxic smoke from fires do not stay neatly inside the project boundary. They enter soils, aquifers, food chains and the lungs of people living many kilometres away.

25 Planning authorities now have a duty to assess and minimise these downstream toxic effects to the greatest practical extent. Approving Baldon without rigorous and forcible controls on these contaminants would ignore the principle the High Court has just affirmed. Furthermore, aside from blowing out costs, these companies ride into town, offering money that function as bribes and talk up reliability. That money has often been received from government as subsidies. In reality, power bills keep rising while  
30 projects overspend and taxpayers are expected to cover the shortfall. And at the end of the day, local councils and landholders will carry the clean-up cost, as has already been demonstrated in Australia.

35 Ownership changes hands repeatedly. Many go bust and original agreements are watered down. Landholders, not the energy corporates, will ultimately be left accountable. Insurance underwriters are already inserting exclusions for silica dust and similar risks. When PFOS and other forever chemicals appear in the Artesian Basin, soil and livestock, the liability will fall on farmers and shire councils. Neighbours for hundreds of miles could sue. Thus, small payments offered to local government will be  
40 chicken feed against those claims.

45 And turbines also act as bird blenders, killing protected species that anyone else would be heavily fined for harming. The carcasses attract feral pigs, foxes, dogs and cats, creating a cumulative threat to livestock and remaining wildlife. The agricultural land should be protected for food security and instead, we're industrialising productive country while China continues to build coal fire power – sorry, I'm only on about four minutes forty.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, well just keep going.

**MS BIRD:** Sorry, I haven't got very much to go.

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

5 **MS BIRD:** Okay. Where did I get up – yes. Equally, national security is at stake. A high proportion of wind and solar components come from China. Sensors capable of remote shutdown have already been reported in solar panels and transformers. The same risks exist for turbines. Foreign control of critical grid infrastructure combined  
10 with modern slave labour supply chain is unacceptable. The reliable, affordable coal fired generation remains the only technology that currently meets the national energy rules requirements of safety, reliability, security and affordability. Intermittent renewables do not.

15 The Baldon Wind Farm and a battery storage to follow threaten long term toxic contamination, fire risk, insurance exposure and foreign control of the grid. The High Court has just made clear that downstream harms must be considered. The toxic legacy of these installations is precisely such a harm. I urge the Commission to refuse the application. Thank you.

20 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you. Okay, thank you very much. Now, our next registered speakers, Darryl and Susan Pearse, are registered to speak but we're not able to contact them via phone. So we'll be emailing them and inviting them to make their submission to us in writing. So that brings us to the end of our registered speakers. But we would  
25 like to have a conversation now if we could with the applicant. Is Mr Boutry available? Okay.

**MR BOUTRY:** Hello, Commissioners. I'm here.

30 **MS MILLIGAN:** Look, thank you for coming back. Look, we just have heard a few issues during this afternoon, which we would like just to come back and talk to you about and see if you can give us some more information. So maybe, yes, I might just pass to Sherry Coakes and ask her to start the conversation.

35 **DR SHERIDAN COAKES:** Yes. Mr Boutry, just a couple of questions around the BESS. We've heard a number of speakers today talk about the BESS and we know that you're considering in terms of the project two options, the decentralised BESS versus the standalone BESS. I just wondered if you could just provide us with some further information in relation to your thinking of the application of those two options and also  
40 in reference to bushfire risk, please, given we've heard that quite consistently through the hearing today.

45 **MR BOUTRY:** Yes, sure. Thanks, Sherry. Sorry, I've got an echo as well. So the BESS, traditionally BESSs have more recently been co-located on wind farms or at least in their approvals and that's typically been a standalone BESS, which is included as a possibility for this project near, you know, adjacent to a substation. We also have included the ability for decentralised BESS, which is effectively the installation of BESS units at each of the turbine hardstands.

So the benefit of this approach is that you're actually installing, you're co-locating and using a lot of the infrastructure that the wind turbine is already – the wind farm is already building. So the underground cabling and the main step up substation and connecting the BESS into the wind turbine to minimise the amount of extra  
5 infrastructure that needs to be built to support the BESS. We've enabled or allowed flexibility for either of those to be included at Baldon and that's been covered off in the preliminary hazard assessment and that has considered the risk of fire.

10 The proposed draft mitigation measures do require further studies through a detailed fire safety study, as well as an emergency response plan to further cover off on those aspects around the risk of fire and how that will be managed. One of those is having centralised static water tanks available, 20,000 litres alongside access tracks.

15 And in my experience, and actually I'm a former member of the RFS as well and was actually on a strike team at the Sir Ivan fire in vicinity of Cassilis. But my experience is that the wind farms do create, you know, this is an area where the tracks, the access roads, the farm tracks there on site currently are often, yes, unpassable, especially if it has been a little bit wet. And the creation of new access tracks will create much greater access to the property and also provide containment lines in the unlikely event that a  
20 fire did happen either from any of the project infrastructure or even from outside of the project coming onto the project.

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

25 **MS MILLIGAN:** Can I just ask as a follow up question to that, your risk assessment for the integrated BESS or the distributed BESS, any difference in the fire risk?

**MR BOUTRY:** Not particularly, on the basis that the appropriate separation distances and buffers as well from the asset protection zone are implemented around each of the  
30 BESS units.

**DR COAKES:** And can I just add asking to that, Mr Boutry, just in terms of the asset protection zone, what sort of area is that?

35 **MR BOUTRY:** So it's typically a minimum of 10 metres from the border of a hardstand area and these were already been envisaged to be installed on the hardstand area, so it's ensuring that that is maintained.

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

40 **MS MILLIGAN:** Thank you.

**DR TURLOUGH GUERIN:** Yes, I've got a question to Mr Boutry. Regarding the Keri East and the Baldon Road, the local roads, local government roads, can you  
45 confirm that the local roads will or won't be used during the construction period?

**MR BOUTRY:** Yes, thank you. So during the construction period, only those section of those roads that are within the project area are proposed to be used and with the site entrance being directly off the Sturt Highway.

**DR GUERIN:** Okay. Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Does that address that one for you?

**DR GUERIN:** Yes. Thank you.

**MS MILLIGAN:** All right. Can I ask you, please, we heard from a number of people this afternoon concerns about contaminants, particularly from blade shedding and also a couple of submitters talked about their concerns about components containing asbestos. Just wondering if you would like to respond or if you're able to respond to those concerns at this point?

**MR BOUTRY:** Regarding the asbestos, Goldwind first identified this industry wide issue in 2025, where certain brake pad components inside enclosed parts had contained asbestos materials. Goldwind has worked with industry partners, regulators and specialist contractors to complete the remediation program and at this stage the remediation works are almost completed.

With regards to contamination, there is no evidence to suggest that renewable energy infrastructure, including wind turbine, poses contamination risks to livestock, crops or food production when co-located with agricultural land. Wind turbine blades are engineered for durability and undergo regular maintenance to minimise erosion. On average around 50 grams of protective coating is applied per blade each year, which represents the scale of material potentially lost. Blade materials are inert and non-toxic once cured and contain at most microscopic traces of BPA. For context, everyday products such as receipts, food packaging, tyres and textiles release vastly more BPA and microplastics than wind turbines ever could and I recommend listeners also look up the Clean Energy Council website for more information.

**MS MILLIGAN:** Okay, thank you. And there was one submitter who in passing talked about a concern about modern slavery. Just to confirm, I'm assuming your company has a modern slavery policy?

**MR BOUTRY:** We certainly do and we have a modern slavery statement that gets published every year and is available on that website.

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

**DR COAKES:** Yes, just one further question, Mr Boutry. We've heard a number and seen a number of images, I guess, of damaged infrastructure presented to us this afternoon. Just wondering what procedures does Goldwind have in place if turbine components are damaged?

**MR BOUTRY:** There's a regular monitoring program and maintenance program off the back of that. So whether it be leading edge damage from hail on a blade or any other aspect of the wind turbine or BESS itself, that would be part of the ongoing maintenance program. Obviously, we need and want the equipment to be up and online

when it's needed. And so, you know, there's every reason to ensure that's working well and efficiently and also for the project to last as long as possible.

5 **DR COAKES:** And that monitoring program is how frequent, I guess, just to give us a sense of how often is that monitoring undertaken?

10 **MR BOUTRY:** Yes, so it really does depend on a number of factors, particularly if there has been – also if there has been any extreme weather events. But my understanding is that turbines, at least on a monthly basis, get physically inspected. But there's also very sophisticated SCADA and monitoring systems that provide a lot of live information through the SCADA system, which can also initiate any further checks or maintenance. Drones are used to get really up close to blades to identify any potential damage happening earlier. That's the sort of activities.

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

**DR GUERIN:** Yes, another question for Mr Boutry. A number of speakers today talked about decommissioning and the concerns that that could be an issue. And can you briefly explain what the processes are for removing materials such as concrete that's in the pads and other old disused towers and blades, et cetera?

20 **MR BOUTRY:** Yes, so there will be a decommissioning plan prepared. The details, you know, we're talking 30, 35, 40 years from now. So we can't be totally specific as exact destinations. But overall speaking, as it currently stands, you know, up to 90% of wind turbine materials can be recycled. And the main components such as the towers, blades and the cell are predominantly made of recyclable materials like steel, aluminium composites. And the area where there still is work that's ongoing is indeed the blades, although we're involved in trials with universities, for example, to crush that material finally and include it as, for example, road based material or other concrete additives, as well as research happening in actually separating some of the fibres for reuse.

30 In terms of physically what happens when it's time to decommission a wind farm is effectively the reverse of the construction, regarding, you know, so crane will come, pull it down. Some of – a lot of the materials will be dismantled further so they can be carried, transported on, you know, without needing the full OSOM transport to exit the site. And they will be sent to the relevant recycling facilities. The concrete, typically we wouldn't remove all of the underground infrastructure because that would also just cause a lot of disturbance again to the land. But at least everything up to half a metre in depth would typically be removed from site.

40 **DR GUERIN:** Thank you.

45 **MS MILLIGAN:** So that's the end of our questions. Thank you very much, Mr Boutry. So in wrapping up, can I just say a couple of things. We've listened closely to all the submissions that you've made to us this afternoon. There have been a range of issues raised. Some of the common themes as we heard them related to fire risk, cumulative impacts, use of local roads and the impact on local roads and also the issue

of contaminants and pollution. But if I can just say again, we've heard all of your submissions and we've heard all of the issues that you've raised.

5 So that brings us to the end of the public hearing into the Baldon Wind Farm project, which is the State Significant Development Number 40138508. So I'd just like to thank everybody who has participated. And importantly, can I remind you that you may still make a written submission on this application. Please visit our website to make a written submission via the web form. And you need to make a submission to us before 11.59 pm next Wednesday, which is 14 October 2026.

10 So in the interests of openness and transparency, we'll be adding a full transcript of this public hearing to our website in the next few days. Once a decision is made about this application, the Commission will share a document explaining how we took the community's views into consideration as part of the decision-making process. Finally,  
15 can I just say a quick thank you to my fellow commissioners, Sheridan Coakes and Turlough Guerin. And from all of us here at the Commission, thank you. We wish you a safe and pleasant day. So good afternoon.

**>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**