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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

TRANSCRIPT IN CONFIDENCE

O/N H-1022141

INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING WITH APPLICANT

RE: RIX'S CREEK COAL MINE MOD 10

PANEL: **PROF MARY O'KANE**
ANDREW HUTTON
TONY PEARSON

ASSISTING PANEL: **DENNIS LEE**
DIANA MITCHELL

APPLICANT: **JOHN RICHARDS**
BRETT LEWIS
CHRIS KNIGHT
GEOFF MOORE
DIANNE MUNRO

LOCATION: **IPC OFFICES**
LEVEL 3, 201 ELIZABETH STREET
SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

DATE: **10.05 AM, FRIDAY, 10 MAY 2019**

- PROF M. O'KANE: I will read the opening statement and then we will get into it. So thank you very much for coming in. So before we begin I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that we're meeting on, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and to pay my respects to their elders past and present and to their emerging leaders. You, as the Bloomfield Group, are seeking approval to extend the approved period of coal extraction on Rix's Creek South which is due to expire – on the current approval it was due to expire on 24 June 2019 and you're seeking an extension of – by nine months.
- 10 The purpose of this modification is to allow mining of Rix's Creek South while the assessment of a new SSD application 6300, which would extend mining operations for 21 years, is finalised and determined. My name is Mary O'Kane. I chair this Commission panel. Joining me are my fellow Commissioners, Andrew Hutton and Tony Pearson. The other attendee from the Commission is Dennis Lee from the
- 15 Commission Secretariat. In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure full capture of information today's meeting is being recorded and a full transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website.
- 20 The meeting is one part of the Commission's decision-making process. It is taking place at the preliminary stage of this process and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its decision. It's important for us, as Commissioners, to ask questions and to clarify issues that we consider appropriate. If you're asked a question and are not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any written material to us on that
- 25 issue and we will then put that up on our website.
- Could you please introduce yourself before speaking for the first time and that will make it clear on the transcript who is saying what, so thank you. Did you want to make any sort of opening comments and then we can get into questions or we can hop straight into questions.
- 30
- MR J. RICHARDS: John Richards, Chairman of Bloomfield Group, for the record. Look, thank you for allowing us the opportunity just to talk. We thought it would be really good for us to explain what we're seeking the modification for. Although it is fairly straightforward we thought it was always good if we were asked to give you the opportunity to talk to us.
- 35
- Obviously we've prepared some information which Geoff might walk through and we have been, sort of, diligently working on other alternative plans if, you know, the modification isn't capable of being resolved and determined before the date of the expiry of our consent and, you know, Brett has been working on those. So I think it would be good if we could go through those couple of steps and you could ask questions if you've got - - -
- 40
- 45 PROF O'KANE: We would appreciate that; yes.

MR RICHARDS: Yes. All right. So perhaps with that I will pass over to Geoff and he can just run you through what we see as being the basic steps of the modification.

5 PROF O'KANE: Yes. I'm just going to dash out and get glasses so I can see properly.

MR G. MOORE: Geoff Moore, Chief Development Officer for the Bloomfield Group. Again, as John mentioned, thank you for the opportunity to present an overview of the modification that we're seeking. So the agenda will cover just brief
10 of the Rix's Creek mine overview, the existing Rix's Creek South and also the interaction and relationship with Rix's Creek North. The current status of the continuation project – the purpose of the MOD which I think you've generally addressed - - -

15 PROF O'KANE: Yes.

MR MOORE: - - - in your opening there. What the proposed MOD is – we talk about the submissions and issues raised in the submissions that objected to the project and a brief summary of our responses and deal with the benefits as we see
20 them from the MOD10 approval.

PROF O'KANE: And we will get a copy of the slides and put them on the website so they can be - - -

25 MR MOORE: Yes.

PROF O'KANE: Thank you.

MR MOORE: So with the Rix's Creek – I think I will use that as a pointer – so
30 Rix's Creek South is part of the Rix's Creek mine. This is the boundary of the Rix's Creek South. The green line there is our current approved development consent line. We're essentially with our nearest activities which are in this area here, about five kilometres from Singleton, and, as we know, it's owned and operated by Bloomfield and that has been the case since Rix's Creek South first commenced in 1990.

35 As you would be aware from the continuation project there is a fair bit of history in the area with mining starting in the 1880s. The majority of operations are located in this area – what is called the west pit. There are some limited dumping opportunities on this side, on the northern side of the New England Highway which bisects the
40 Rix's Creek South area. Rix's Creek North which was formally the Camberwell – the Campbell Coal Operation and also formally the Integra area and in particular the Integra Open Cut and I make a distinction with that. So Rix's Creek North was purchased by Bloomfield in 2015.

45 The sale of the Integra operation by Vale also included a sale of the underground operation that existed to Glencore so this is the outline of the Rix's Creek North operation and this is the Integra underground which is owned and operated by

Glencore. Essentially we integrated the operations of Rix's Creek South and Rix's Creek North in 2016 really when the open-cut area was taken essentially back out of care and maintenance. The predominant operation in Rix's Creek North is currently located in this area here which was – is – turns off the Camberwell pit and dumping operations are generally contained in this area here.

Coal that's mined by the Integra underground is processed in the Rix's Creek North preparation plant there and there's a contractual arrangement there for that. And coal that is produced by Rix's Creek North is hauled to the Rix's Creek South, washing down there where it's processed and also the loop that's in place actually feeds both washeries and the Rix's Creek North coal is loaded through the Rix's Creek South load-out point. There are infrastructure areas associated with Rix's Creek North and Rix's Creek South and the maintenance and general administration are managed using those two resources.

PROF O'KANE: Can I ask a question there. So that means that if, for some reason, the MOD10 didn't succeed that it would also affect Glencore's operations or would it?

MR MOORE: Well, the Rix's Creek North approval is to 2035?

PROF O'KANE: Of course it's – but – and – but the loop, doesn't the rail loop go up through – but I guess it's just transiting, isn't it? It's just - - -

MR MOORE: It's transiting, yes. Yes.

PROF O'KANE: Yes.

MR MOORE: So Rix's Creek South, it operates under DA49 of '94. It was modified. There was nine modifications over the various years and, as you mentioned, that's to 24 June this year. And we have the Rix's Creek continuation currently under assessment for 21 years which would take then the remaining of this area down here in particular in Rix's Creek South. So this is – you know, I guess while the presentation is about MOD10, it is very much interlinked with the current Rix's Creek continuation of approval project. And I guess really this just indicates the timeframe that the Rix's Creek continuation project has extended over.

So the preliminary EIS was done in November 2013 so obviously there's pre-work associated with that as well so, you know, it's five and half years and I guess, to be honest, I think it's probably fair to say no one would have expected that, you know, it would have taken that long. So – and even during the last six to nine months, you know, we've had discussions with the Department of Planning and probably in the latter half of last year there was still a confidence that we would still get through this process without having to look at any form of extension.

So really the timing of this was really couched around what we understood and what, I guess, indications we had in terms of how the process was going and when we

would see a determination at least. So, as you mentioned, the purpose of the MOD, it is a nine months extension and it really is about getting or allowing that due process to occur while we still run the operations at Rix's Creek South. And I guess, importantly, too it's approval of MOD10 before that timeframe will avoid a lot of disruption.

And I guess the difficulty we have is obviously knowing the timeframe and if there is a gap and obviously not knowing what the final outcome will be but, if there is a gap, what does that mean to the operations, as John mentioned, looking at various contingencies in that regard. One of the other points which I think is fairly important for us is that a continuation of the operations while the determination is being made will give some confidence obviously to our people, to the local community and, importantly, to our customers.

That's something we obviously don't want to get to the point where the customers are losing confidence with us. We've got long term customers and they're obviously looking for security of supply.

MR A. HUTTON: Andrew Hutton speaking. Selecting nine months, is there any – what's the basis of the nine months period?

MR MOORE: Yes. Look, thanks, Andrew. When we had the discussions with the Department in Planning in – it was mid-February – we were originally thinking two years, probably because that's generally maybe what extensions tend to be. And with what – really the focus of this is to allow the determination of the current project to happen and we're hoping that we've got the timing right. You know, we didn't want it, to be honest, to be seen that it's just an attempt to sort of continue mining for another couple of years but it's really about getting that determination made.

MR T. PEARSON: The third dot point you talk about disruption to the business, workforce, contractors, suppliers, etcetera. So I understand, obviously, if the extension isn't granted, there's a disruption issue in terms of your customers not receiving coal. In terms of your business, what's your expectation around how you respond to that issue? Would you lay off workers? Would you idle the operations or would you maintain the workforce until the SSD was determined? How would you respond to that?

MR MOORE: Our initial – our current communications with our workforce and also to the local community is – through the CCC – is that we will endeavour to do what we can to keep people and the people that support us in work. Now, the difficulty with that is knowing the timeframe – again, is it a one-month, is it a six-month? And the outcome of the actions that we need to take in that regard will be couched by that sort of time and also what other issues may come up in the meantime.

- MR B. LEWIS: If I may just jump in. I'm Brett Lewis, CEO of the Bloomfield Group. As Geoff said, we've been juggling this marshmallow of a position we find ourselves in and we have a plan known as plan D which we're endeavouring to maintain our people's employment and also our contractors that support us. But it's
- 5 – the plan, really, is a bunch of assumptions and those assumptions, depending on what outcomes happen, are going to be impacted. For example, we – to move to the Rix's Creek North with some of the equipment and people, we need to get a new MOP approved for Rix's Creek North which we are in the process of doing but we haven't got that yet.
- 10 We need to get approval from one of the neighbours to operate in an area that has not been approved before. We're well down the track. We've been doing a lot of work, really, since February to have this plan D develop, but as Geoff said, the plan D is different if it's a one-day delay. If we got approval on the 25th, that would be – and
- 15 we had one day to do training and look after – keep people – put people on leave for a day as opposed to if it was nine months – completely different scenarios. And then you've got factors like the market – what happens in that time, whether we can support some of the initiatives we've got in plan D.
- 20 So to answer your question, in the short-term we hope we can preserve the workforce, but it – there's a lot of variables that we've got no control over and as we get closer to the 24th, we will have a bit more understanding of whether we've got this approval or not. And I suppose out of today, it would be great if we could get some sense from you as to whether the 24th is achievable and under what conditions
- 25 and what we could do to help that process. Obviously we want a positive outcome, but what we really want is an outcome, and if possible, before the 24th. So it is going to be very disruptive.
- PROF O'KANE: Why don't I comment on that straight away. We saw the date and completely understand the need for certainty which is why the minute we got the
- 30 assessment, we put out the public meeting date which we decided to hold because of the number of comments, particularly the objections. But we're very, very conscious and working at full speed to try and get a determination as quickly as we can after the public meeting.
- 35 MR LEWIS: Well, we appreciate that and, as I said, if there's anything in the process going forward that you find we can assist in the timing of that, please don't hesitate to contact us.
- 40 PROF O'KANE: We really appreciate that and we appreciate also things like the comments like your response to submissions and things. So it has been good having the material then so we certainly will take you up on it. If there's anything we need, we will go through the department, obviously, but be in touch.
- 45 MR LEWIS: I have to say at this time, the workforce are very engaged in what's going on and we had the CFMEU in yesterday and talked them through some of the – you know, we've got options and some of them are more palatable than others and

they seem quite on-board with us so we're in a pretty positive state at the moment, but the more information we can get back and the sooner we can give certainty, the better it's going to be for everyone.

5 PROF O'KANE: No, we understand.

MR RICHARDS: There's no doubt that they don't like the idea of not having any overtime.

10 MR LEWIS: Yes, I mean - - -

MR RICHARDS: don't like the idea of us actually putting a cap on any non-absolutely essential spending because of the fact that we're not sure where we're going. So there are impacts out there that they don't like but they are, as Brett said,
15 because I think that Brett has done a pretty good job getting out there and talking to – with them, they are engaged and informed.

MR PEARSON: Chair, could I just ask, is the plan D in a form that you can share with the Commission?
20

MR LEWIS: Well, it – we can give you a summary. As I said, it's not a – it's known as plan D but it isn't a plan, it is a number of actions - - -

25 PROF O'KANE: A summary would be good.

MR LEWIS: - - - that we are working through. So Geoff – we can supply something after this, a summary of those actions.

MR PEARSON: But particularly, I guess, the bookend – you know, one-month
30 delay; nine-month and what you're looking at in terms of the economic costs to the project of those types of outages.

MR LEWIS: Yes. There's going to be economic and more social – and as Geoff said, what concerns us – Bloomfield is a very small producer in a very big market
35 with very big competitors and we've been around for 80 years in this market and we've developed very long-term relationships with very good customers and one of our greatest risks is – and we've maintained those contracts because of our security of supply and flexibility, etcetera. And we're really keen not to jeopardise that capacity because there's very large producers out there that can snap up our contracts
40 in a heartbeat and they would be impossible to regain. So in trying to quantify it in dollars, it's a - - -

MR PEARSON: Not just dollars, but again, things like, for instance, your ROM stockpile and how long – you know, how many months of supply you would have in
45 the ROM – all those sorts of things I think would be quite useful.

PROF O'KANE: But in summary, not a long - - -

MR RICHARDS: Would you put that up on the website?

PROF O’KANE: If there’s something commercial-in-confidence that you don’t want us to put up, we wouldn’t. So I think - - -

5 MR RICHARDS: Well, a lot of that I suspect is commercial-in-confidence.

PROF O’KANE: That’s fine. You can label it as such and it would not go up, but we would probably just note that we had a commercial – we had asked a question,

10 the answer was a commercial-in-confidence answer and we were not disclosing it for that reason.

MR LEWIS: I think that would be preferable because there’s a number of ideas and thought bubbles in there that until we – as the days go on, it’s a moving target and we

15 wouldn’t want our workforce to charge off on one direction - - -

PROF O’KANE: I think that’s totally reasonable.

MR LEWIS: - - - and when we get there, it’s different.

20 MR MOORE: Okay. So I guess the key points from the MOD 10 submission are it was done under section 4.55 (1A) and as you mentioned it’s for the nine months. All aspects other than the timeframe will – would remain the same as currently approved, including within the approved footprint. The current consent deals with

25 total movement as the criteria for the approval and certainly the total movement that would be extracted during the extended period will be within the volumes that were expected to be removed.

PROF O’KANE: Yes. You’ve made that very clear in your documents and it’s also in the assessment document.

30 MR MOORE: Operational activities are the same, so we’re not looking to modify what we do on the ground and they would all be consistent with the approval. So we believe there’s no requirement for further assessment of the impacts.

35 PROF O’KANE: And I’ve just got one question there on the first dot point. The – under 4.55(1A), the consent authority has to be satisfied that the proposed modification is of minimal environmental impact and I was just wondering if you could just make some comments on that clause.

40 MR MOORE: Right. Can I come back to that one?

PROF O’KANE: Sure. Absolutely.

45 MR MOORE: Yes, because I - - -

PROF O’KANE: Answer it later.

MR MOORE: Yes.

PROF O'KANE: Have you got any questions?

5 MR HUTTON: No, that's fine.

MR MOORE: So these plans weren't in our original submissions but they were in the response to the submissions.

10 PROF O'KANE: Yes.

MR MOORE: So it just identifies the areas that we will be working. So this is from a current plan. As I mentioned before, the majority of activities is in this area of the operation, the purple being the active mining areas; the orange colour being
15 dumping; and green, rehabilitation; and obviously the lighter green line there is the development consent of the disturbance approval on. By – within over a nine month period we would mine this part down to the base and be using that to store waste. We would continue filling waste into this area here. The – some areas of
20 rehabilitation would occur over those nine months as in our current approval and current MOP.

So the hatch there is essentially the differences. So on the submissions, on the registry side there were seven submissions received, none of which required any additional information. And I think it is probably noteworthy that New South Wales
25 Health stated that modification would have minimal impact on public health and the EPA also noted that given the environmental impacts will not be changed that you would be satisfied by the existing conditions. So really, I guess, in part answer to your question, the – because the total volume is still less than what was originally approved, all of the other impacts – the dust, noise impacts – sort of fall within the –
30 with the original envelope of what was approved.

So from private and special interest groups – 53 from the public and four special interest groups. One of those made a comment. There were 28 objections. So eight of the 28 were what we would consider to be local and that's probably in the Greater
35 Singleton area, not just in the very close location to the mine. And the remainder obviously further afield than that. The 24 submissions that support it – and I will say we – when we put this up and went through the process we kept it, on our side, a fairly low key application. So we sort of weren't out there communicating or canvassing support for it so I think it probably reflects in the numbers. We didn't
40 attempt to load that up, if you like.

Probably of interest, many of the submissions in both categories – both those that supported it and those who objected – had very similar key points. So let's work through the – I guess, those key points, the ones that were raised by those objecting
45 to the project. Greenhouse gas which is quite topical – again this comes back to the original approval and where we see that sitting so the total emissions including the nine month extension will still sit below what was originally assessed although the

assessments back in 1994 were probably fairly significantly different to expectations these days.

5 So Rix's Creek has mined at a lower annual rate than was approved and, as you can see there, we're – our total movement at 252 million over the full period will be less than the 275 that has been approved. We have done the calculation for what the emissions would be over that nine months and it's basically standard calculation methods. One thing that we didn't have in our responsive submissions is that last point but the contracts that we do deal with are to countries that – and all our coal is export – are to countries that are either signatories to the Paris Agreement or they have their own – such as Taiwan have their own targets which are similar if not even more.

15 One of the other significant ones was the mining outside the approved area and while that was – it's an issue that was raised during the process of giving the continuation project and the – Bloomfield's has progressed with that and we've entered into the enforceable undertaking under the Mining Act and there are a number of elements of that undertaking that we needed to comply with and they have been completed.

20 There was also under the Land and Environment Court – they also approved a consent order which provided that revised disturbance area and also required us to do relevant offsets and we're certainly committed to getting those in place. That has been probably a bit of a longer process than we anticipated. I think there has been a few changes in that area over the period as well with different methods of calculating offsets and assessments.

MR PEARSON: Brett, could I get you to go back one slide. In relation to the destination countries for your exports you mentioned Taiwan. Two questions – one is are there any others and then my second question is are those – is that coal over that nine month period contracted?

MR MOORE: I will get Brett to answer that one but, yes, I think, principally there's three countries that we deal with – Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

35 MR LEWIS: In that nine month period it will – probably three-quarters of the coal will go to Japan and a quarter to Taiwan; none to Korea; just those two countries. And it's all contract. It's all under – it's all – the – in Japan one contract is a seven year contract of which we're in, this year, the third year. The other contract is a three year contract and we're in the second year. Into Japan and Taiwan we commenced a new three year contract in April of this year.

MR PEARSON: Thank you.

45 MR MOORE: Some of the other issues that were raised – there was a view that we should be in the final stages of closure by 24 June. Actually that's not what the approval allows for. And rehabilitation – irrespective of the outcome of this, rehabilitation is an ongoing exercise. I guess under the continuation project we have

committed to updating our closure plan. The other points – exhibition during the New South Wales Government caretaker period – and this certainly wasn't planned and I guess, to be honest, the timing really was about the confidence about getting the continuation project finalised in time. And, to be honest, in retrospect we
5 probably should have put this in earlier.

On the issue of air quality, again the assessment was done on a 16 million PCM material movement. As we mentioned before, Rix's Creek is running at below approved levels and our annualised rate for the nine months would be 12 million
10 tons. There was speculations that we had pre-empted the outcome of the continuation project. It was far from that. In fact – and, as noticed in – noted in our purpose for putting this in, it was really to allow that process – due process to occur. So there was certainly no assumptions made there.

15 MR PEARSON: Well – sorry. Could I ask – will your SSD6300 be reduced by any modification period?

MR MOORE: That's probably a good question. I'm not sure how that will be - - -

20 MR PEARSON: If granted, I should say.

MR MOORE: If granted, yes. It's for – it was for a 21-year period so it may depend when it's granted. Can I perhaps put it in those terms. I think the thing about the continuation project is that there is a finite resource and that timeframe will
25 certainly allow us to extract that. The other one was sort of a grouping of different issues which weren't probably a major item in the submissions but – and, again, it's really about all these sitting within the current approvals in terms of volumes

MR HUTTON: Geoff, I note your comments around executing closure works post-mining but I'm interested to hear from you around closure planning, so planning for
30 closure. Can you give us a bit of a debrief on what closure planning you've been looking at or how that might be – given that the current approved life of the operation is this year. Can you just give us some feedback on closure planning.

MR MOORE: Look, I guess we've been tracking and involved in looking at what other operations have been undertaking – Westside at the Newcastle area in particular and they've done a lot of work and we've sort of recognised that there is a lot of work to do in that area. To be honest, it hasn't been at our forefront to get that
35 in place right now. We are hopeful that we will be able to continue on. I think certainly in our response to questions in the continuation project – I mean, the rehabilitation strategy sort of addresses some of that stuff albeit perhaps at a – at a high level.
40

MR HUTTON: Yes. Thank you.
45

MR MOORE: The Bloomfield Group consists principally of the Rix's Creek mine as well as the Bloomfield operation which is a much smaller operation at Maitland.

Bloomfield Group also has some engineering or has an engineering arm associated with it and that engineering group not only supports the mining operations but also does general engineering work in the community. So from a group perspective you can see there just under 600 direct employees. There are obviously a lot of

5 contractors associated with any operations and it takes the numbers up quite a bit. Net wages into the – under the Hunter Valley because it is a Hunter Valley-based operation both for – for a small engineering arm at Lithgow. It is a Hunter Valley-based mine and that is where our spend is principally covered.

10 We do support community initiatives through the Bloomfield Group Foundation. As you can see, the Hunter expenditure in total, 231 million. Some minor government rates. Certainly the major payments are to the federal and state governments in the order of 103 million per annum. So they're per annum costs. And the reason for presenting these is really that Rix's Creek South really makes up about 50 per cent of

15 the Bloomfield Group. Depending on the production levels from year to year, the actual revenue that comes from Rix's Creek South may be of a higher proportion than that. So for the benefits as we see for MOD10 and particularly MOD10 approved prior to 24 June and I will make mention that the numbers presented in here are where there – is we're dealing with Rix's Creek mine as a total now so

20 they've been proportioned on an appropriate measure across the two.

The 255 full time employees include not only the direct employees on site but also there are contributions from the remainder of the business for engineering support, management, administration – that sort of thing. So, as we've said, I guess, having

25 that determination before the 24th will at least give us some form of – well, whether that's security will depend on the outcome but certainly it will give a certain indication of where we're heading for those people and also for the contractors involved. So these are a nine month period costs so for wages we're looking at just under 16 million; the ongoing capacity to support the local and community activity

30 initiatives that we're doing through the Bloomfield Foundation.

Expenditure of \$70 million over that period – royalties and other taxes – and 37 million to the federal and state. Importantly, no need for the disruptive and fairly costly short term contingencies and that may have irrespective of what the outcome

35 of the continuation project determination is. And, as we mentioned before, the maintenance of that customer confidence and it reduces the risk to those from a long term perspective. In conclusion we've made note that our total movement will be within the – within that that's currently approved under DA49 of '94. Operational activities will remain the same, therefore, there's no change to the previously

40 assessed impacts.

The employment and economic benefits to the business and governments will be maintained. Customer confidence will be secured and no further need for disruptive and costly short term. Contingency plans will be eliminated. The seven regulators

45 that responded didn't require any additional information and I think in many ways the Department of Planning response probably sums up quite well our feelings and that the benefits of continuing with the operation while the determination of the main

continuation project occurs should outweigh any minor impacts of it continuing. And it's warranted to protect the workforce, contractors, suppliers, customers and owners from unnecessary disruption.

5 PROF O'KANE: Thanks, Geoff. That's fairly helpful.

MR MOORE: Thank you.

PROF O'KANE: Any questions?

10

MR HUTTON: Not from me.

MR PEARSON: No. I've asked my three, so thank you.

15 PROF O'KANE: I think I've covered mine, so I think we're actually done.

MR RICHARDS: Can I just seek a little bit of understanding of what your process will be following the public meeting so we - - -

20 PROF O'KANE: We will – we hope to have done as much work as we can to the public meeting beforehand, and then as soon as we can afterwards to finalise the determination. So I think we've – at the moment, we've gone – we asked the department some questions. They came back this morning. That will all be on the transcript and you can see. And I don't think there's anything much else. We're just
25 waiting, I think, for the public meeting which we felt we should hold from the number of objections – I think is the next big point. There could be a couple of other issues come up as we start to wrestle with it but we have been provided with pretty comprehensive information at this point.

30 MR RICHARDS: Yes. Do you anticipate asking us to respond to future submissions? Is that on the radar or - - -

PROF O'KANE: Well, I guess we have to see – we've got – as you know, we give seven days after the public meeting. It's just a pity – Easter was an unfortunate thing
35 – Easter/Anzac Day – because we couldn't advertise till the following day. So we lost, effectively, the best part of a week in advertising. But I guess we will have to wait and see if anyone raises submissions in that seven day period post the meeting but of course we would be getting them to you very quickly. We're very conscious
- - -

40

MR LEWIS: Is the format of the public meeting different to the public hearing or similar to what we - - -

PROF O'KANE: No, very, very similar. Yes. We will just make an opening
45 statement, invite the department and you to say something and, as I said at the Minerals Council meeting the other day, please use it as an opportunity to explain things so that that helps all of those present to understand what they're looking at.

And then we will hear from whoever asks to speak, so we get to have – hear the final request. The numbers – I think we’ve had one application at this point.

MR MOORE: Early days yet.

5

PROF O’KANE: Early days yet, yes.

MR RICHARDS: Well, look, I’ve got no more questions. Brett or Geoff?

10 MR LEWIS: No, I think our homework out of today is to provide a high-level plan D indication, but it - - -

PROF O’KANE: Plan D, yes. And we will, as I said, mark it commercial-in-confidence and we will treat it as such.

15

MR LEWIS: As we’ve stressed from this side, we might – we’ve got options but it’s not really where we want to go. It’s very costly, disruptive if we have to go there, but we’re getting organised if that’s necessary.

20 MR MOORE: And I think that, as Brett – the point Brett made is that plan D could shoot off in all sorts of different tangents, and it’s – while we have a high-level concept, it’s certainly not cast in stone by any means.

MR RICHARDS: But we can give you a bit of a summary of the work we’ve done and the headings that – the areas of work that we’ve done too is as important, I think, as what we’re actually trying to do but the various bits of stuff that we’ve tried to cover off in terms of getting approvals, talking to the workforce, talking to our contractors, talking to our major suppliers and talking to the unions and all that about what the options might be and doing some mine planning to see if we can squeeze all the excavators into Rix’s Creek North.

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PROF O’KANE: And, as I said before, we’re not proposing a site visit because of the very comprehensive one we had last year and we had several community groups with us on that, so we feel as the same three Commissioners we have a fairly good understanding of the operations. We would obviously contact you if we needed to understand something in more detail.

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MR RICHARDS: Well, Thank you very much for allowing us the opportunity to come and talk with you.

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PROF O’KANE: No, that was very helpful.

MR RICHARDS: We have appreciated it and I hope it has assisted to provide the information that you’re after and clarity about what we’re trying to do.

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PROF O’KANE: All right. We will see you on the 20th.

MR MOORE: I do apologise. I do have some hard copies of that if that's – yes.

PROF O'KANE: That would be lovely, yes, if you do. And it saves you having to come back, too.

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MR MOORE: Save – save somebody producing something. Sorry about that.

PROF O'KANE: That's lovely. Thank you.

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RECORDING CONCLUDED

[10.55 am]