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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

TRANSCRIPT IN CONFIDENCE

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INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING

RE: JINDERA SOLAR FARM PROJECT

SSD 9549

COMMISSION: **ANDREW HUTTON (CHAIR)**
 ZADA LIPMAN

LOCATION: **VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE**

DATE: **10.11 AM, FRIDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2020**

THIS PROCEEDING WAS CONDUCTED BY VIDEO CONFERENCE

MR A. HUTTON: Good morning and welcome to the Independent Planning
5 Commission's electronic public meeting on the state development application for the
Jindera Solar Farm. Thank you for your patience in relation to the delayed start. My
name is Andrew Hutton. I'm the chair of this IPC panel. Joining me is my fellow
commissioner, Professor Zada Lipman. Before we begin, I would like to
10 acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and pay my
respects to elders past, present and emerging. Jindera Solar Farm Proprietary
Limited proposes to develop a 120 megawatt solar farm approximately four
kilometres north of Jindera in the Greater Hume Shire Local Government Area.

Commissioners make an annual declaration of interest identifying potential conflicts
15 with their appointed role. For the record, no conflicts of interest have been identified
in relation to our determination of this SSD application. You can find additional
information on the way we manage potential conflicts on the Commission's website.
In line with the regulations introduced in response to the ongoing COVID-19
20 pandemic, the Commission has moved to public online meetings with registered
speakers provided the opportunity to present to the panel by telephone or video
conference. In the interests of openness and transparency we're livestreaming this
public meeting via our website. As always, the public meeting will be recorded and
we'll make full transcripts available on the Commission's website.

25 A little bit about the role of the Commission in this determination. The Independent
Planning Commission was established by the New South Wales Government on the
1st of March 2018 as an independent statutory body operating separately from the
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and other agencies. The
Commission plays an important role in strengthening transparency and independence
30 in the decision-making processes for major development and land use planning in
New South Wales. The key functions of the Commission include: determining state
significant development applications, conducting public hearings for development
applications and other matters and providing independent expert advice on other
planning and development matters when requested by the Minister of Planning or the
35 planning secretary.

The Commission is the consent authority for state significant development
applications in circumstances where there are 50 or more unique public objections to
the SSD application where the application has been – has made a reportable or sorry
40 the applicant has made a reportable political donation disclosure and/or the local
council has objected to the state significant development application and has not
rescinded that objection following the exhibition. The Commission is not involved
in the Department's assessment of the project or the preparation of the assessment
report. In terms of where we are in the process this is a public meeting and it forms
45 one part of the Commission's process. We have also met with the Department and
the applicant and the Greater Hume Council and transcripts of all these meetings are

published on the Commission's website. Myself and Zada have also visited the site. We completed a site inspection.

5 We may reconvene with relevant stakeholders in clarification or where additional information is required on matters that are raised today. Importantly, the Commission will be accepting written comments from the public up until 5 pm on Friday the 4th of December. That's 5 pm next Friday. So you're able to make written submissions. In terms of the next step, following today's meeting we'll endeavour to determine the development application as soon as possible, noting that
10 there may be delays if we find that additional information is needed as part of our decision. The purpose of this meeting. The Commission invites interested parties including stakeholders and members of the public to make submissions they consider appropriate.

15 The Commission is particularly assisted, however, if submissions are in response to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's assessment report and the recommended conditions of consent. The Commission has available to us all submissions already made to the Department during the exhibition of the EIS and members of the public are encouraged to avoid duplication of submissions that
20 they've already made on the application. The Commission also notes that there are factors that by law it is not permitted to take into account in making determination and submissions on such topics cannot be taken into – and, sorry, and submissions on such topics cannot be taken into consideration. These factors include the reputation of the applicant and any past planning law breaches by the applicant.

25 So before we proceed I'd just like to run through how the meeting's going to run today. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will present the findings of their whole of government assessment on the application and then we'll ask the applicant to present to the panel. I will then proceed by hearing from all the
30 registered speakers in the order set out in the public – the published schedule. I will introduce each speaker when it's their turn to present to the panel and all speakers will be advised of their speaker time ahead of the meeting. It is important that everyone registered to speak receives a fair share of time. As such, I'll enforce timekeeping rules and as the chair I reserve the right to allow additional time where it
35 is needed to present new material. If you have a copy of your speaking notes or any additional material to support your presentation, it would be appreciated if you could provide a copy to the Commission.

40 Please do note, however, that any information given to us will be made public. The Commission's privacy statement governs our approach to your information and our privacy statement is available on our website. Thank you very much. It is now time to call the first speaker this morning and I would like to call Nicole Brewer from the Department who has 45 minutes. Thank you, Nicole.

45 MS N. BREWER: Thank you, Commissioners, and good morning. My name is Nicole Brewer and I'm the director for energy assessments in New South Wales. I'm supported by members of my team involved in the project: Iwan Davies, team leader

and Natasha Homsey, senior environmental assessment officer. I have a presentation to summarise the Department's assessment. Perhaps we can put that up.

5 MR HUTTON: Yes. I – Nicole, we can see the presentation on our screen.

MS BREWER: Okay. I don't have visibility of what you can see then.

MR HUTTON: At this point it's just the cover sheet.

10 MS BREWER: Sure. Okay. I will just assume that we start from there then.

MR HUTTON: Yes. We'll let you know if there's any issues at this end. Thanks, Nicole.

15 MS BREWER: Thank you. This is a state significant development project being assessed under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Perhaps if we jump to the second slide which - - -

MR HUTTON: We can see that. Sorry, Nicole. We can see that.
20

MS BREWER: Thank you.

MR HUTTON: Thank you. Just confirming.

25 MS BREWER: So that's the planning legislation that all developments in New South Wales are assessed under, whether they're state, regional or local. We have undertaken a comprehensive whole of government assessment of the application and by that I mean we've included and consulted with key agencies and Greater Hume Shire Council in preparing our assessment. The Independent Planning Commission
30 is the consent authority for this application for two reasons. The first is that there were more than 50 objections to the application and the second reason is that the Greater Hume Shire Council has objected to the project. So we're now in the final stage of the process and I do want to note that through the process shown there on the flowchart there have been a number of formal informal opportunities for the
35 community and other stakeholders to provide input into the process and we're now at the determination stage where the final decision will be made on the merits of the application. Next slide, please.

40 Thank you. I've got visibility to the slides as well now. So the project is located north of the town of Jindera and the project is 120 megawatts generation. So it's a large scale energy project with around 390,000 solar panels at around three metres high. The project also includes 30 megawatts, 60 megawatt hours of battery energy storage. The transmission connection is via a new 600 metre transmission line connecting to the Jindera substation and the site itself will have a substation. You
45 can see from the figure that in the regional context there's also the Walla Walla and Culcairn projects and the closest being the Glenellen solar project to the east and all

these projects are at various stages of the assessment process but none have been approved.

5 The company has said that the project will operate for around 30 years but the proposed conditions allow that as long as the development envelope remains the same infrastructure could be replaced or upgraded to take account of more efficient technology and in this case the development envelope or – and development footprint is 337 hectares. The investment is almost \$170 million and the company, Jindera Solar Farm, has offered to pay community contributions to the Greater Hume
10 Shire Council of \$1.7 million. There are also employment opportunities during construction and operation. In construction around 200 jobs and in operation five jobs and access for the project is from the Hume Highway. Next slide, please.

15 So we exhibited the EIS and received 109 public submissions, which is a relatively large number for a solar project. We would typically get substantially less community submissions on solar projects around New South Wales, although I do note that the other projects in the region have also had significant interest from the community. In this case almost all, around 90 per cent of the community's
20 submissions, were objections. We consulted a range of government agencies including DPI Agriculture, Transport for New South Wales, the Biodiversity Conversation Division, Rural Fire Service and the EPA and none of those agencies raised any objections. But as you would be aware, the Greater Hume Shire Council has objected to this project.

25 The Department held a public meeting in Jindera and also undertook a site visit in November last year. The site visit included inspecting the site in order to understand the layout of the project and also met with landowners in proximity to the site so that we could understand the potential impacts of the project and their concerns. Next
30 slide, please. So the key issues raised in submissions included visual impacts, concerns about the loss of agricultural land and amenity impacts on local residents such as noise and dust, biodiversity impacts associated with clearing onsite and cumulative impacts with the other proposed solar projects in the region was also a key issue that was raised. Next slide, please.

35 On visual impacts there are 25 residences within one kilometre of the project with a number of clusters of residences, you can see, around the project and, in particular, there are seven residences to the north of the site along Glenellen Road, four residences around Ortlipp Road, seven south of the site around Klinberg Road and three around the west of the site. Next slide, please. Through the assessment process
40 and following exhibit of the EIS the company has responded to community concerns with changes that are in the documentation available on the Department's website. Those changes have included increasing the setback to 120 metres from Glenellen Road, increasing the depth of vegetation screening along Glenellen Road and moving the substation further to the west. Next slide, please.

45 So focusing on the residences along Glenellen Road, I think it's important to note that there is that setback from the road of 120 metres and this means that residences

such as R16 to R20 to the east are between 155 metres and 245 metres from the development footprint. There's a vegetation buffer that is 50 metres deep and I note that there's also existing vegetation surrounding these residences. Next slide, please. Moving to Ortlipp Road in the south east corner of the site, the panels are set back
5 from the boundary, as you can see from the figure there, so residents R34 and R10 are around 150 to 160 metres and R09 is around 350 metres from the footprint. There's also a vegetation buffer that you can see in green there of 15 metres and there's also existing vegetation in the road reserve. Another one of the changes made by the company that I mentioned earlier was to move the onsite substation about 120
10 metres to the west so that R09 is located approximately 370 metres from the onsite substation and battery energy storage system. Next slide, please.

In other areas of the site further west there are vegetation buffers shown in green on this figure. You can see along the middle portion of the site to the north Klinberg
15 Road and also vegetation buffers around the western areas – the western edge of the site. There are also areas of vegetation within the site that will be retained and I think this figure also shows the way that the design of the site has avoided creeks, particularly to the west of the site, and the areas of vegetation onsite are shown in yellow hatching. In particular, I wanted to draw your attention to the area through
20 the centre of the western portion that's been retained to highlight that there were changes through the assessment process to retain an additional area of around four hectares of native vegetation to the north of that larger section of vegetation in order to improve the biodiversity connectivity of the site and Department, in our assessment, has also imposed a range of conditions to put in place measures to
25 improve that vegetation that is being retained onsite. Next slide, please.

In regard to agricultural productivity, the Department recognises that there is community concern around this issue and that there are concerns of the council about the impacts of solar projects on prime agricultural land we understand that this issue
30 needs to be balanced in the decision making both for this project and, more broadly, for renewable projects across New South Wales. The site's currently largely used for grazing and the agricultural land mapping shows that the majority of the site is class 3. The development – sorry – the Department is aware about concerns around the mapping and the status of that new agricultural mapping project, but I note that on
35 this site there were additional soil assessments undertaken and they found that the class 3 land was more likely to be class 4 and that DPI Agriculture accepted that assessment.

The Department does recognise that the land is important and productive and grazing
40 would continue on around 35 per cent or 120 hectares of the project site and there are also requirements in our recommended conditions to manage ground cover during operations and also to restore the land capability to agriculture following any decommissioning. The Department's also considered the cumulative impact of the solar projects that are proposed in the regional and as a whole in the LGA if all four
45 proposed SSD solar projects are approved, they would have a combined development footprint of around 2300 hectares which is less than one per cent of the 335,000 hectares of land that is being used for agricultural output in the LGA and I note that

there would be projects within that where there would be a level of agricultural operation that is maintained. The next slide, please.

5 So this slide shows the mapping which, as I said, although it predominantly shows characterisation as class 3 in that pink/purple colour, the soil assessment has found this to be more likely to be class 4. Next slide. The key amenity impacts in relation to the project around traffic, noise and dust will really happen during construction. So that construction for this period for this project is around 18 months and I note that within that there'll be more intensive times of works and, importantly, our
10 conditions require that all construction is undertaken between 7 to 6 Monday to Friday and 8 to 1 on Saturdays and these are standard construction hours that are imposed under the recommended guidelines from the EPA and are typical of construction projects more generally. The noise assessment has shown that construction can generally apply with the EPA noise criteria, but there would be
15 some exceedances such as 12 resident – some exceedances for 12 residences and they're mostly around the east of the project and that would be for around a three-week period within the construction schedule.

20 In relation to dust impacts, that was also a concern of the community, there would obviously be disturbance of the site. Our conditions include a requirement to use standard mitigation measures to minimise that dust generation and that's things like water trucks and also to establish ground cover as quickly as possible over those disturbed areas following construction. We've considered the cumulative impacts of the project in the region and it's unlikely there would be cumulative noise or dust
25 impacts from the Walla Walla and Culcairn projects as they're more than 15 kilometres away, but there may be a cumulative noise impact at one residence, R10, which would take place intermittently over a six-week period and that would occur if the activities occur concurrently at both projects in that location near to the residence. Next slide, please.

30 So access for the project is from the Hume Highway and then along a route along Thurgoona Road, Catherine Crescent, Dallinger Road, Union Road, Wagga Road and then onto Urana Road and Walla Walla-Jindera Road and these roads are all designated for use by heavy vehicles. There are three main access points to the site
35 off Urana Road and two that are opposite each other on Walla Walla-Jindera Road. There would be limited use of Ortlipp and Klinberg Road. Our conditions include requirements for road maintenance of local roads and a traffic management plan to be prepared. We've also considered the cumulative impacts and there is potential for this project and the Glenellen project that would have a section of common haulage
40 route along Urana Road and Walla Walla-Jindera Road. So our conditions include a traffic management plan which would scheduling construction activities and deliveries to minimise road transport movements, to avoid conflict school buses and other road uses and including consideration of the other solar farms in the Greater Hume area should they be approved.

45 In regard to biodiversity, as we saw on the figure earlier, there's the retention of around 57 hectares of vegetation onsite around 20 hectares of which around 3.2

- hectares of woodland would be cleared and that would be offset in accordance with the biodiversity offset scheme. So I've focused today on the key issues that the Department's assessed. Perhaps if we jump to the next slide. Thank you. But the Department has assessed other issues including Aboriginal cultural heritage, water
- 5 supply, bushfire risks, land management, decommissioning, rehabilitation, workforce accommodation and the heat island effect and we've developed conditions in consultation with the government agencies and council and they include a range of management plans including landscaping, traffic, biodiversity and heritage.
- 10 In regard to bushfire risk, we've consulted with Fire and Rescue New South Wales and the Rural Fire Service and there are requirements in our conditions that we developed with them that also include an emergency management plan. There's also a requirement for an accommodation strategy to ensure that there's sufficient
- 15 accommodation to house construction workers and to prioritise employment of local workers. Our conditions also include strict outcomes for the decommissioning and rehabilitation of the site and the end of the project life and that includes removing all of the project infrastructure from the site within 18 months of ceasing operations and then to restore the land to the pre-existing agricultural capability. I do want to
- 20 highlight also that the Department has a compliance unit that's responsible for monitoring and enforcing these conditions of consent should the project be approved and they also investigate any complaints and undertake site inspections particularly during construction. Next slide, please.
- 25 So our assessment has also considered the benefits of the project and that includes employment, a significant capital investment, \$1.7 million in contributions to council. The project would also assist in transitioning the electricity sector from gas and coal fire power stations to low emissions sources and solar projects and other renewable projects also support a range of state and Commonwealth renewable
- 30 energy policies and the project provides 120 megawatts of renewable energy which can power over 44,000 homes. The battery energy storage would also allow the project to store solar energy for dispatch to the grid outside of daylight hours and during periods of peak demand which can contribute to grid stability and energy security. Next slide, please.
- 35 So finally, I think, just to summarise our evaluation of the project, the Department's completed a comprehensive assessment of the project in accordance with the requirements of the planning legislation. That's included community consultation and detailed advice from government agencies. We do acknowledge that some
- 40 members of the community remain strongly opposed to the project and that there are concerns about environmental and amenity impacts on the local community. The Department does consider that the changes made to the project through the assessment process have significantly reduced the residual impacts of the project, particularly on visual impacts, on nearby receivers and also maintaining agricultural productivity onsite and we note that council has confirmed that these changes have
- 45 addressed several of its concerns but that council maintains its objection to the project.

We consider with these changes that – and the implementation of the recommended conditions that the environmental and amenity impacts of the project would achieve a – can be managed such to achieve acceptable outcomes. The Department also considers that the project would provide significant economic and social benefits to the region and it would contribute to the transition of the New South Wales economy away from a reliance on fossil fuels in accordance with the New South Wales Government policy. So overall we consider that the project achieves a reasonable balance that’s appropriate between maximising solar resources and the benefits of the project and also minimising on land uses, local residences and the environment. So we’ve recommended that project is approvable subject to the recommended conditions and that’s it for my presentation. Happy to take questions.

MR HUTTON: Thank you, Nicole. Just a quick question for me in relation to the cumulative impacts. The Glenellen proposal, whereabouts is that in the planning approval process currently?

MS BREWER: So that EIS has been lodged and is currently on exhibition until the 30th of November.

MR HUTTON: Okay. All right. Thank you. Zada do you have any - - -

PROF Z. LIPMAN: No.

MR HUTTON: - - - further questions?

PROF LIPMAN: No questions. Thank you.

MR HUTTON: No. I think there’s no further questions from the panel, Nicole, I think, at this point so thank you for your presentation this morning. It’s appreciated. In that case, I think we’ll conclude that and thank you for your presentation. Thank you. Okay. We’re going to move over to the applicant. I understand the applicant is online and able to commence their presentation and the applicant has 20 minutes. I have Alex Godina one the line. Are you there, Alex?

MR A. GODINA: Yes, thanks, Andrew. Yes. My name’s Alex Godina. I am the project development for Hanwha Energy Australia. Hanwha Energy Australia’s the proposed owner and operator of Jindera Solar Farm. We’d like to thank DPIE for their detailed presentation there and assessment. Obviously, they’ve covered off a lot of the background information of the site. So for our presentation today we plan to kind of – we’ll skip over all the nitty gritty that DPIE have done a great job of presenting and we’ll focus on the community consultation process and the amendments that have arisen through that process. So thank you to IPC for this opportunity to present and I’ll now throw to Simon Grasby who’s director of Green Switch Australia, our development partner.

MR S. GRASBY: Thank you, Alex, and good morning, everybody. Jin, could get our presentation up, please. Okay. Thank you, Jin, and we’ll go straight to the

second slide, please. Right. So our presentation this morning is going to focus on the changes that have been made to the project most recently. So that's really from the period beginning when the public exhibition closed and these changes have come out of continued community consultation and also consultation with other

5 organisations. Okay. Thank you, Jin. If we could go to the next slide. Thank you. So the first changes we have made relate to landscaping principally. Over the period of this round of consultation we've actually added about one kilometre of additional landscape screening.

10 We've also thickened – made wider some of that screen to improve the job of screening that it can do. In our original proposal we had a 50 metre wide screen along Glenellen Road. We have obviously retained that but we've now also introduced a setback from Glenellen Road to create further distance between the road and the solar panels. Jin, if we could have the next slide, please. These cross-
15 sections illustrate both the setback and the landscaping area. You can see that we now have a minimum distance of 120 metres from the south side of Glenellen Road to the nearest solar infrastructure. Jin, if we could go on again, please. Thank you.

We – our original application included a large areas of retained mature woodland.
20 It's effectively the square in the centre of the oval that I've used there just to illustrate on the screen. As mentioned by the Department in their presentation, since earmarking the retention of that square area we have actually added further areas of mature vegetation to be retained. These then allow connectivity from the south and from the north into that area of high quality mature vegetation. By creating this
25 connectivity we actually make the retained area more effective in terms of its long-term development and use and protection of the habitat. Also, it improves the position more generally for all flora and fauna, including squirrel gliders. Jin, if we could move on again, please. Thank you.

30 We have now agreed a voluntary planning agreement with Greater Hume Shire Council. We are limited to having a VPA in our original application but at that time those discussions were not developed far enough to have anything clear to put forward. However, we now do. The VPA will deliver \$1.7 million worth of additional funding into Greater Hume Shire Council but for us, more importantly, to
35 the local community. Our VPA is divided into two parts. So the first part will provide \$950,000 by way of capital sum payments to the council and then the council will use those for projects throughout the borough. The first payment to the council is made at the point at which the becomes operational. Thereafter there are five further capital payments over the next five years such that they all add up to an
40 aggregate 950,000.

More significantly for us – more interesting for us, is the idea of a community fund. So what we're proposing there is that we will provide \$25,000 each year which can be used to support community projects and community groups. Anyone from within
45 Greater Hume can apply for a share of the community fund, however, what we've tried to do is ensure that any applications from within five kilometres of the proposed project site will get priority. The annual payments will be index linked to ensure that

that 25,000 doesn't get eroded by inflation over time. So over the 30-year lifespan of the site those payments will be – will total 750,000 of support for the community. Kyungjin, could we move on again. Thank you.

5 While we were undertaking the design work to incorporate the additional areas of retained mature vegetation we also took the chance to undertake several other pieces of redesign. We have relocated and we propose now fewer inverters. They're effectively moved further away from site boundaries. Also, as the Department's presentation mentioned earlier, we reconfigured and moved the onsite substation
10 location. Both of these initiatives were to try and ensure that we minimise the potential for noise from the site during operations. At the same time we also made sure that we maintain a minimum 30 metre setback from all neighbouring properties. So that's 30 metres between any solar infrastructure, solar panels, and land owned by any of our neighbours. Okay. Thank you, Jin. We'll move on.

15 During the consultation process we put forward the idea of a local sourcing plan. That idea has now been augmented and moved further by the Department's requirement a requirement under the draft planning conditions, that we have an accommodation and employment plan. The purpose of the local sourcing plan was
20 to drive our – if you like, our network, our communication with – and engagement with local enterprise. We want to find the businesses, the suppliers, the contractors who will be able to build long-term partnerships with us and help us both in the construction but more importantly during the operation of the solar farm. The local sourcing plan is an initiative that will help us build long-term commercial partnership
25 and ensure that as much of our spend as possible is spent within Greater Hume and within the local area. Okay. Thank you, Jin. We'll move on again.

We've continued to develop our proposals in relation to our original idea of ensuring that we continue agricultural activity on the project land whilst also operating the
30 solar farm. We've been working on this idea for a long time. Our landowners are firmly committed to working on this with us and continuing that agricultural activity on their land. We undertook an environmental impact assessment which was required – came out of the consultation process – was required by the Department. That report was to focus on any potential for economic loss as a result of any
35 agricultural – any loss in agricultural activity, but we actually extended the scope of that report to look at what is the current best practice for agrivoltaics and also what practices would best work with the Jindera setting, that is to say, with the climate and particularly with the soil characteristics that we've got. The report actually concluded that the best outcomes we could achieve at Jindera was to continue with
40 stock management, with sheep grazing alongside the solar activity. That conclusion's not that surprising given that most of the land included within the proposed scheme is currently grazed by sheep, that being the best agricultural activity for that land. Okay. Jin, if we could move on again, please.

45 We have also made some further commitments and given further undertakings as part of the consultation process. So we've adopted the recommendations from what was RMS in terms of the junction – geometry junction layouts both into and exiting

from the proposed site. We removed our original proposal to have an operation and maintenance access gate on Klingberg Road. We can see now that we don't need that and it's a great way of just reducing the potential for dust from our vehicles by basically not using that road. We've also agreed to minor changes to the traffic management plan which will improve vehicle routing. As I think the Department mentioned in their presentation, we have also made clear commitments in terms of how we decommission the site at the end of its life and we've also made commitments on recycling as much of the material as we can from that decommissioning process. Okay, Jin. Thank you.

Just to sum up then, we can see particularly from recent announcements from the New South Wales Government that they are now very committed to transitioning from fossil fuel based sources of electricity generation to renewable green power sources. Jindera can play its part in that. The site is ideally placed with a good solar resource and we have that all important access to the transmission grid. Community consultation and involvement has created a project and a design that is both sympathetic to its setting and is a project that can be delivered and operated without disruption to the community. We would also like to thank everyone in the community for taking part in that consultation process. The project can support and enhance the local economy.

We can get our spend into the local economy and the two-part VPA will bring wider economic and social benefits to the community. If our application is successful, then that community consultation that we've undertaken, it won't come to an end. It actually enters another phase. We want to use further community consultation to work with the community, to work with our neighbours to deliver our construction and operational activity in a responsible manner and as a good neighbour. Okay. Thank you.

MR HUTTON: Thank you, Simon. One question, if I may, Simon. You talk about the reshaping of the development and fewer inverters and less infrastructure. Did that impact on the development's capacity of 120 megawatts?

MR GRASBY: No, it didn't, Andrew. In terms of the inverters, it's just about using different units basically.

MR HUTTON: Right.

MR GRASBY: So that didn't impact the capacity. Also, in terms of the other design changes that have been proposed, no, it doesn't impact the capacity because we can actually use slightly more efficient solar panels which allow us to cover any capacity that was lost by the redesign.

MR HUTTON: Okay. Right. Thank you, Simon. Zada, do you have any questions?

PROF LIPMAN: Yes. Just one or two. Simon, I want to take you back to the slide where you indicated the biodiversity corridor from south to north and in that central area, as I understand it, the – there is to be fencing around some of the fencing to protect the area during sheep grazing - - -

5

MR GRASBY: Yes.

PROF LIPMAN: - - - and I was just wondering what provision had been made for any fauna on the premises to proceed with the corridor given that the fencing is going to be present.

10

MR GRASBY: Yes. Okay. So I think, firstly, it's worth nothing that the fencing is of an agricultural design. It's a stock-proof fence. It's not like the security fence around the outside of the site. The fencing also is along the out edges of the retained areas so it doesn't prevent movement through those corridors because the fencing's sort of on the outside running along the line of those corridors.

15

PROF LIPMAN: Right. Would that be where you erect the poles for the squirrel gliders though?

20

MR GRASBY: Yes. That's correct. There will be poles for the squirrel gliders that traverse that area, allowing them – obviously, allowing them a route in and out of the site.

PROF LIPMAN: Right. Thank you. Just one other question. In relation to dams, I understand that seven dams are to be removed. I wonder if there's currently any water in the dams.

25

MR GRASBY: There will be – periodically there will be water in the dams, but not always. Right now, Zada, I haven't looked at the dams for a – well, probably a couple of months now because I haven't been able to travel out of Melbourne where I am so I don't know if there's actually water in them today. I can find out for you.

30

PROF LIPMAN: No, no. I'm just wondering in the event that there is water in the dams would you be able to utilise that as part of your dust suppression methods and cut back on the use of water that you intend to purchase from the council?

35

MR GRASBY: Yes. Certainly. Where there is water in those dams, yes, we'll put it to good use rather than just pumping it out and letting it go.

40

PROF LIPMAN: And the other dams will be retained for stock. Is - - -

MR GRASBY: That's correct. Yes. Both as a source of water to feed troughs for the stock and also, obviously, as they're used today, for the stock to just walk up and, you know, source the water directly.

45

PROF LIPMAN: Thank you very much.

MR GRASBY: Thank you.

MR HUTTON: Okay. Thank you very much for your presentation. That's appreciated. Thank you.

5

MR GRASBY: Thank you.

MR HUTTON: I'd now like to move on to the next speaker, Martin Salzke. Martin's speaking on behalf of Salzke Enterprises and, Martin, you've been give five
10 minutes. Good morning, Martin.

MR M. SALZKE: Good morning. Thank you very much. I'd like to thank the commissioner for allowing me the time to talk at this meeting this morning. As a
15 fifth generation farmer I, Martin Salzke, own and have worked on our family farm for 35 years which was first purchased in 1897 by my great-great-grandfather. I now have my son working on the farm with me as well. It was chosen in the area for the good soil and reliable rainfall. That is – this is – this, we see, as prime agricultural land with limitations. The limitations are that some areas are too wet and many crops do not survive the areas with the wet conditions. This was experienced when
20 we shifted our farming practice to a more 50 per cent livestock, 50 per cent cropping. We were basically going backwards financially as we could not get the yields because of the low lying areas and this is the reason we primarily graze our land now and produce that land wool and beef.

25 As one of two people in this solar farm close to the Jindera substation and as a person who is willing to investigate alternatives, my late father and I were quick to investigate the option of solar farming as a diversity to our farming business. It gives us the ability to continue with the sheep grazing under the solar panels doing what we do best on our far. I am looking at the solar panels to provide shade and shelter
30 for the sheep and I believe that it will also allow the grass to stay greener longer through the year as the ground will be cooler because of the shading and any moisture early in the year will be retained and allow grass to start growing earlier in the season. The same I expect at the end of the season: that the grass will stay greener longer in the year. We have been working closely with Green Switch
35 Australia for the past three years.

With solar farming at the end of it our land will be fully returned to agricultural land. There are too many areas around towns which are good farming land now being subdivided into house blocks and they will never be returned to farmland. The
40 farming industry is a very large user for power. Not just on the farms, but in companies making and producing products for the farm. I'm keen on helping the country to help turn away from fossil fuels and help implement the option of renewable energy which will help produce power for our quickly growing nation. We have already seen South Australia have power outages when there was not
45 enough power produced. Now they are producing their own power through renewable energy.

Our 615 hectare farm has established 17 hectares of tree plantation in corridors and blocks of trees in 1985 and that's when I left school to help with carbon emissions. More corridors are to be next year in 2021 and more we've got lined up for 2022. In closing, I believe solar farming will create many jobs initially, from manufacturing,
5 transport, erection, fencing, landscaping, earthworks, hiring of equipment, electricians and many more. Thank you.

MR HUTTON: Great. Thank you, Martin. Appreciate that presentation. I'd just like to call Raymond Jarick, representing the New South Wales Farmers. Raymond,
10 good morning.

MR R. JARICK: Yes. Good morning. Yes. Thank you for allowing me to – the opportunity to address this IPC meeting. Let me say – start by saying that I own and operate a farm 5.5 kilometres north of the proposed Green Switch Jindera Solar Farm and I need to point out I'm currently not a financial member of the New South Wales
15 Farmers Association so the views that I will share are mine and are similar to a large proportion of the shire residents who support renewables but don't want to be drawn into conflict. For those of you who understand the nitty-gritty of dry land farming, you soon realise that financially rarely do you achieve an appropriate return on your assets due to the inconsistency of weather and markets which we have limited control
20 over. We are price takers not price setters.

Job satisfaction and lifestyle play an important part in keeping people on the land. When an opportunity comes along like the solar farm it gives the option to diversity
25 into an alternate form of production and still allows for the grazing of sheep. The income derived from the solar farm effectively becomes a drought proofing income stream. At the end of its life the infrastructure can be simply removed and recycled and the land returned to its traditional uses. Effectively, the solar farm becomes a very good tenant with a number of permanent workers to maintain and manage the
30 investment. No private business spends that amount of money to allow it to decay or burn. As a shire resident I'm extremely disappointed with the Greater Hume Shire for their reluctance to endorse the four solar projects in the shire.

The shire can only do basic maintenance works from its rate base and relies on
35 government grants for any additional projects in the villages and shire. Due to the massive deficits run up by State and Federal Governments thanks to COVID-19 grants will obviously be harder to win in the future. Consequently, obtaining money from alternate sources becomes even more important. If the shire has the desire to actually grow and be able to upgrade roads and increase services and facilities
40 throughout the shire, these opportunities need to be pursued. Lennon Road tops the list of the worst bitumen road in the shire. Just this Jindera solar project alone, Green Switch, in their voluntary planning agreement will see 950,000 go to the shire and 750,000 to a community fund: a total of 1.7 million and if you were to add the other three solar projects, the cash injection to the shire would be heading towards 10
45 million and most of our councillors say they don't want it.

I'll let you be the judge and jury. For the township of Jindera to have a major development in the area creating a large number of jobs during construction and then a few permanent positions ongoing for the life of the project can only be a win-win situation for our town and community in terms of hospitality, increased wages and accommodation. All these knock-on effects will be a lifeline for Jindera and the shire and, most importantly, unlike most other large industrial factories, there will be no noise, water or air pollution affecting the neighbours and the Jindera village. It doesn't get much greener than that. Plus, once the tree lines become established you will struggle to see the panels from the road. If Australia is to meet its reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and maintain its base power production as more coal fired power stations are decommissioned, this project and others must go ahead. If not, the new norm will be frequent power outages during extreme summer temperatures.

Our shire is extremely fortunate to already have the high voltage infrastructure passing through to allow these existing green developments to happen. Let's not cut the head off the goose that lays the golden egg. Thank you.

MR HUTTON: Thank you, Mr Jarick. I'm going to move on to the fifth, speaker, Jenny Kenney. Jenny's got five minutes allocated. Good morning, Jeannie.

MS J. KENNEY: Good morning. I probably won't be using the five minutes but - - -

MR HUTTON: That's fine. Thank you.

MS KENNEY: Okay. So my name's Jeannie Kenney. I don't live in the immediate area of the proposed development, but my keen interest is in the welfare of future generations of my family. As my grandchildren will one day inherit this farm or business and hopefully their children will do the same and I see this as a business proposition that has wider benefits for society as renewable energy becomes more widely available. I'm very much in favour of using renewable energy sources and its development in this country of abundant sunshine. We – at our home – we live in Culcairn which is about half an hour's drive from this area, but we have solar panels and hot water.

We've benefited from the savings and we use an Australian-owned provider so we are very much in favour of using solar farms and we support the development of solar farms which can provide not only power but in this instance can simultaneously be used for sheep grazing purposes and the owner of this land is a fifth generation farmer and a good businessman who recognises and understands both the present production capability of the land and the need for diversification to ensure the viability of the business for many future generations and the proposed site will feed directly into the grid which means that added infrastructure isn't required and to build such a complex further west, as it's been suggested elsewhere, that would require substantial federal funding and an extended delay in construction and delivery and – yes. That's about as I can add to the - - -

MR HUTTON: That's fine. Thank you for your contribution this morning, Mrs Kenney. That's appreciated. Thank you. I'd now like to call speaker 6, Jonathon Schulz. Jonathon has five minutes allocated. Good morning, Jonathon.

5 MR J. SCHULZ: Good morning. Thank you, Commissioners, for allowing me to speak in favour of the Jindera Solar Farm. As has been announced, I'm Jonathon Schulz. I'm one of the landholders planning to host the Jindera Solar Farm. Our family has been in the Jindera area since around the 1860s with my forebears settling the property Elmsley. My grandfather bought the property where Hewingley House
10 is situated in the late 1930s with my father and my grandmother moving to and building Hewingley Cottage in the late 1950s when my dad's brother Bert married and he ran the original Schulz property. My parents, my wife and I have purchased other parcels of land to take our landholding to about 1000 hectares. Of this approximately 200 hectares is in the proposed Jindera Solar Farm area.

15 This makes our children fourth generation – well, this will make our children fourth generation farmers on Hewingley. With the income generated from renting to the Jindera Solar Farm, it'll improve our farm financially, it will provide a diverse income stream, provide a healthy retirement income for my father Arnold who is
20 now in a nursing home and will help with success and planning for both of my children who are not willing to stay on the farm without us having to sell the farm. In to grazing, I believe we will get approximately 75 per cent of the grazing potential area of the area under the panels so we'll be able to make use of this valuable agricultural land as well as receive a rent for it. In caring for the
25 environment, we have seen – we have, as you've seen in some of the slides presented earlier, fenced off waterways with Landcare and planted trees, some of which are in the solar farm area and these will be retained.

30 With caring for the environment we are pleased to be able to provide clean, green solar energy from our farm. For animal welfare the panels will provide shelter and shade in the summer time, protection from wind and rain for freshly shorn sheep in the winter time, protection from wind and rain for newborn lambs if we choose to lamb down ewes in the solar farm area. For me, using our land to provide clean, green solar energy is not very different to growing a canola crop to provide biodiesel
35 which is one of the uses of canola. To finish, we look forward to seeing the environmentally innovative way of producing electricity while continuing to use our productive pastures for lamb and wool production with the Jindera Solar Farm and to answer your question to Simon earlier about water in the dams, we do have water in the dams on Hewingley.

40 With the dams that they are planning on filling in we will be building dam capacity in other parts of the farm because we are allowed to collect .06 of a megalitre of water per hectare on the form and we are very close to that limit over our 1000 hectares at the moment and the other comment I'd like to make is the mention of the
45 jobs created construction phase. I thought that's a very valuable part when a lot of jobs have been lost during the COVID time in the last 12 months. Thank you very much for listening to my submission.

MR HUTTON: Great. Thank you, Mr Schulz. Appreciated. Thanks very much. We're now going to move on to Olivia Hanel. Olivia has allocated five minutes. Good morning, Olivia. Sorry, Mrs Hanel, we've just – you're just on mute, I believe. I we just can't hear your audio, your voice.

5

MS O. HANEL: Unmute? Hello?

MR HUTTON: There we go. I think we've got you back. Thank you. Good morning.

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MS HANEL: Okay. Good morning. I'm speaking on behalf of my husband, Phillip Hanel and my son David and daughter-in-law Karen Hanel. We all reside at 100 Klinberg, Jindera and we came here to live here in 1986, purchasing the 42 hectare of 100 acres vacant land. Built our home, sheds, cattle yards, etcetera and we are presently running steers. The proposed Jindera solar farm for Greater Hume Shire would impact us greatly. Other residents would also be impacted for similar reasons. The location of this proposed development, being only four kilometres from Jindera and 20 kilometres from Albury and with the possibility of another large scale solar farm, Glenellen, to be only 320 metres away from the Jindera Solar Farm boundary. Unbelievably concerning.

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We are disappointed that this important public meeting on this issue of the state significant large scale project is not being held locally, in our town of Jindera. I understand the COVID pandemic restrictions, but these could be lifted given the current situation. The assessment report has come out. I have read through it. The important agricultural land with this – with the simultaneously push for four large scale solar farms within our share is extremely difficult for many, as limited protection for the agricultural land for the food and fibre. The draft of the Riverina Murray important agricultural mapping exhibition through November and December 2018, however, the plan is no longer available for public viewing as it is being revised but continues to be delayed. This new mapping is very important.

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Land being used of the 300 or so hectares regarding agricultural land conveniently changed classified – classification 3 downgraded to 4 after geological testing and, of course, there was citing of the waterlogged soil. So this is why this is important. The mapping is very important. Report mentions Klingberg Creek in one section, but there's no Klinberg Creek. It is Klincrop. The four solar farm projects which pushed forward – if pushed forward in the Hume Shire, it has caused overwhelming documentation for reading given the times of release, once again, of the Glenellen EIS and it's come at busy times especially for the farmers with haymaking and halves, etcetera, etcetera. Now, in the report the devaluation, as mentioned, in the – has on all of our properties that join the Jindera Solar Farm site. This has been dismissed again as not being relevant:

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There are no evidence being proven that solar farms devalues joining properties.

This statement is a stark reminder that mostly ordinary Australian citizens are shown little respect by larger business entities. As we are now retired, our home and land were always going to be our retirement and who wants to live next door to a large scale solar farm? Visual impacts. As stated in this report, development has low significant visual impacts. There is more than low impact. As stated in this report, due to boundary trees and vegetation the existing vegetation at residence, etcetera. The vegetation at our residence is caught in wind breaks with fruit trees, etcetera. Much of the site is still visible. We do not just live in our homes. We are country living people and do spend time with farm activities on our property. So we are impacted as many of our neighbours are.

Microclimate. 5.22 and 23 of the report states microclimate as the result of solar panels is lateral temps drop quickly from the perimeter of a solar farm in part due to natural convections which take warm air upwards. There is allowance for wind with – what about a windy day? Being surrounded by panels means a fair chance the temp will be a huge factor for us. Closing comment. We are concerned about the continued loss of agricultural productivity across Australia, especially within Greater Hume Shire, with the four proposed solar plant developments. Whilst we believe very much into renewable energy – we do have solar panels installed – and maybe the 44,000 houses that are mentioned in the report should have them also and developments of this scale should be planned in the right locations. The protection of the agricultural industry as our future capabilities of supplying food and fibre will prove just as important for the overall economy of Australia as the importance of the implementation of renewable energy projects. Thank you very much.

MR HUTTON: Thank you, Mrs Hanel. Thank you to all the previous speakers. We're going to take a short break now and we'll resume at 11.45. Thanks very much.

ADJOURNED [11.19 am]

RESUMED [11.44 am]

MR HUTTON: Good morning and welcome back to the Jindera Solar Farm public meeting this morning. I'd now like to ask Jennifer Jacob to speak. Good morning, Jennifer. You've got five minutes this morning.

MS J. JACOB: Thank you.

MR HUTTON: Yes, good morning.

MS JACOB: Yes. Good afternoon, Commissioners. I am part of a three generational farming family. I strongly object to large scale solar on agricultural land. On the 7th of November last year I was at a well-attended meeting at Jindera.

The Department conducted the meeting well. After hearing all the deep concerns raised, I thought to myself the Department can clearly see now that no proposed solar project should go ahead in our Greater Hume Council area. The chairman said he had looked around our area. He was surprised there was so much cropping. The Department had never received an application with so many – in such a heavily populated area. 25 residences within one k and 48 residences within two k. Then 12 months later both the Walla Walla and Jindera solar proposals are before the IPC.

I find this hard to comprehend as in the Department's referral letter to the IPC it says the same for Walla and Jindera, that the Department has considered the information in detail during its assessment and supports the proposed amendments as they would significantly reduce the impacts of the project and address some of the key issue raised in submissions. Some. The Department has missed the most important issue: the loss of prime agricultural land which was the greatest concern for both the Walla and Jindera submissions and every other submission in our shire. Many landholders in our area and our council sent in detailed submissions to the DPI nearly two years ago, proving that our land is much more important than the present land mapping showed. How can the Department recommend a solar project based on false land classification?

Our council, in all their submissions, found out this land will be mapped as important agricultural land so the sites should be considered constrained under the Department's large scale energy guidelines. Both the solar companies and Departments say they can't use the DPI mapping as it isn't finalised yet so it's not directly relevant to the assessment of the solar farm. That is so wrong. The results are meant to come out this month so please wait for them. I'm concerned that so much emphasis is put on sheep grazing under solar panels. Go out to the Bomen Solar Farm and have a look what has happened there. Sheep grazing isn't happened because of concern with sheep eating the wires.

The New South Wales DPI are doing a four-year trial at the moment. It started mid-last year as there's a limited understanding around the issue of grazing stock around solar panels. Also, some sheep at the Parkes Solar Farm, their wool was caught in the universal joint that run the panel and that is horrible to think of. 60 submissions were worried about the effects of the removal of 34 mature paddock trees on biodiversity and I agree with that. Seven dams, just gone. 20.8 hectares of native vegetation, the loss of natural flora and fauna, especially birds and squirrel gliders. The Landcare have done so much with conservation with the squirrel glider and just an offset credit is required. In August I received an email from the project development manager of Jindera Solar Farm saying:

In the hopes of a favourable determination and to show our commitment to the progressing the proposed project, we are continuing our preliminary site investigation works.

None of the landholders knew till a few days after this started and then JSS say they are committed to being a good neighbour and a positive member of the Jindera

community. That is complete disrespect to landholders. It is being arrogant. Then rumours were going – in – do I finish up now?

MR HUTTON: Please, just finalise your comments, Mrs Jacob. Please conclude.
5 Yes. Please conclude.

MS JACOB: Yes, yes. Okay. Right. It's hard to fit everything in.

MR HUTTON: Yes. I understand.
10

MS JACOB: Yes. Now, the first solar project in New South Wales was completed in June 2015, five and a half years ago. It is now time to stop putting large scale solar projects on agricultural land. We are in the midst of a worldwide financial and economic crisis and pandemic and you have to look at what are some other
15 alternatives. It does not have to be large scale solar on agricultural land to meet the New South Wales energy targets. All these – there are hundreds of thousands of panels coming in from overseas and only one company makes them near Adelaide. Only one company recycles them near Adelaide. Please, do not rush this decision and also, let's keep with agriculture in our shire. Tried and trusted for 150 years.
20 Thank you to our German pioneers.

MR HUTTON: Thank you, Mrs Jacob. If you – also, just to acknowledge that if you'd like to send that submission into the Commission, we're happy to receive that as well given the time constraints. So feel free to send that through.
25

MS JACOB: Yes. Thank you.

MR HUTTON: Great. Thank you very much for that. I'd now like to go to Greg Vonthien. Greg has been given five minutes. Good morning, Greg.
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MR G. VONTHIEN: Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity. My names Greg Vonthien. I'm a fourth generation farmer in the shire now retired and I'm probably the greatest support of solar energy you're going to find anywhere and I think all these projects should go ahead. I've looked at the Jindera one. I've toured
35 it, had a good look at it. I'm very impressed with how they've set it up for wildlife fauna and the fact is with climate change we have to go ahead pretty quickly. I'm very disappointed in Greater Hume Shire Council. They seem to be thinking in the middle of last century or even further back, I think. What these companies are going to do for this shire is quite incredible and will move us into the next century, but with climate change now we've already gone up 1.44 degrees which doesn't sound much,
40 but two degrees is now a tipping point. Not that far away.

We have to, as came out of the Royal Commission on Bushfires – it came out a demand to stop burning coal, oil and gas as fast as possible and countries around the
45 world now are embracing such a thing. This is happening quite quickly. I'm quite impressed with how they've gone about setting these solar farms up and I think the sooner it happens the better. Business people in Albury-Wodonga that I associate

with are asking some serious questions about the thinking in Greater Hume Shire and I'm a bit embarrassed to answer that, but the solar panel was an Australian invention and possibly the greatest invention of all time, developed by a professor at the University of New South Wales and it is the one thing that gives the planet a chance to survive. What I'm concerned about is what the next generation are going to face with climate change.

In this shire we have a large number of climate deniers, I can assure you, but the facts are that it's happening and all the countries are now realising it and the new US president is really going to move ahead on that front and probably embarrass Australia into doing the same. Now, the National Farmers Federation are committed to being carbon neutral by 2050 so farmers have to change quite rapidly their techniques and so on to comply with that. But the way the climate has been changing, the – well, actually, it was on my phone this morning from weather bureau people saying we're facing more drought and more cyclones due to the temperature increase. And my house is powered by solar and Australian ones at that, but it can run itself 24 hours a day with a battery and it gives me great pride to be able to do that because that's my contribution and it is saving something around 25 trees equivalent of greenhouse gas per month.

So I think Greater Hume Shire Council have got to have a serious hard look at themselves and realise that this is the way we have to go. It is that important and I wouldn't mind if they lined up with a debate with the high school kids here at Culcairn. That'd be interesting to watch because it's their future that these decisions depend on and there has to be a lot more solar going anyway than what is going into this shire. That probably pretty much covers what I want to say, but I'm a great supporter of it and I don't think we have any alternative. So thank you very much.

MR HUTTON: Great. Thank you, Greg. Appreciate your time this morning. I'll now move to our last registered speaker, Lynette LaBlack, who has been allocated with 15 minutes. Good morning, Lynette.

MS L. LABLACK: Good morning. Can you hear me okay?

MR HUTTON: Yes, we can. Thank you.

MS LABLACK: Okay. Thanks for the time. Look, I completely object to the renewable energy con. The New South Wales Government's 100 per cent renewable energy plan is a despicable act that prioritises solar over food. It's a tragedy for Australia. It's based on ignorance or, perhaps, purposeful intent, fraud and scandalous corruption. We've seen this for ourselves in Wagga Wagga. The environmental vandalism and the waste of precious soil. Mythological fantasy has replaced all reason, logic and commonsense. Despite every intelligent reason to not approve these projects, amidst healthy food production, food producing resource land, emission targets are being used – well, emission targets that aren't even substantiated are being used to prioritise future electronic garbage over uncontaminated food supply.

Numerous well-respected scientists and climatologists completely reject this theory. Matt Keane, John Barilaro and Adam Marshall certainly have no comprehension of the impact on rural Australia. They aren't even able to answer basic questions and the Planning Department, well, their inept, ignorant mapping ability is clearly seen in
5 the koala debacle. Extensive areas of New South Wales' best agricultural land has been mapped as non-existent and top class soil labelled wasteland according to Planning Department dunce David Kitto. Wagga Wagga MP Joe McGirr, he's a big instigator of this renewable con. He's actually finally realised that this might not quite be the fantasy he imagined. He has actually recently spoken on the 23rd of
10 November on Channel Seven admitting that the system is broken.

Large scale companies have completely failed to consult and deal fairly with rural communities, instead barging ahead with their planned agenda, totally disregarding individuals and communities as if they don't exist. I think I have – actually have
15 some pictures that apply to that, but I'm a little bit out of order with presentation so may not be able to find that but – anyway, Joe McGirr had originally commented that renewable energy provided or increased local jobs, it protected the biodiversity, the soil, the air quality and the water and that is all completely false. When you consider the whole lifecycle of solar, it's actually a toxic nightmare and I'm – I cannot
20 comprehend how this Department has – and the developer, the Department and the government have completely ignored the land and water contamination risk that these PV solar panels present. I've got some photos there which they might be able to show of some recent hail damage which my family experienced.

25 MR HUTTON: I can confirm we can see a photo on the screen now, Mrs LaBlack, tennis balls and hail.

MS LABLACK: Tennis ball sized hail with damage – two pictures of damaged solar panels. This hail also destroyed a family member's car and their roof. So I'm
30 asking if this happens in large scale solar developments in the midst of healthy food producing land, how can the developer, the Department and the government guarantee that this land will not be contaminated by heavy metal leachate? Because once that happens, the surrounding land, how can they guarantee then that the surrounding land is not contaminated by heavy metal leachate? And if this does not
35 happen – not just hail. It could be fire. There's lots of bushfires. I mean, they're talking about the climate catastrophe which is their reason for dumping all of this large scale solar throughout New South Wales. If their claim – if they – well, it stands to reason then that there will be more severe storms, more severe hail, more bushfires. That is even more reason why they should never ever dump toxic solar
40 panels in the middle of food producing areas.

I don't think the Department have any appreciation whatsoever for the food that is grown in these areas. The Walla Walla, Culcairn, Jindera, Glenellen area, they supply oats for Uncle Toby's, they supply wheat for Sanitarium and Sanitarium have
45 told me that they are a very reliable supplier. During times of drought they found the wheat very hard to obtain. SunRice already have limited its ability to produce Australian rice because the Department have dumped large scale development at

Yanco. This is just reprehensible considering Australia has actually run out of Australian-grown rice this year. With only one per cent of New South Wales under irrigation, it's an absolute disgrace that this future electronic garbage is dumped on taxpayer-funded irrigation at great expense to taxpayers and jobs are actually – have
5 already been lost in Yanco because of that solar or plan or development. I'm not sure if it's completely built, but it's already destroyed jobs.

If the city-centric Department and government really want all these solar panels, why aren't they covering all their own buildings and all of the contaminated land in the
10 city areas? I'm actually told that there's a lot of vacant contaminated land even in Albury where solar panels are allowed to go. I mean, this makes far more sense than dumping it where you can grow food and the fact that people are saying you can run sheep on them, well, how do you know the sheep are not going to have heavy metal toxicity levels? This is all unproven. You have to provide the evidence, actually
15 prove that this does not happen. I've already been told that sheep have died in these solar farms, strung up by the – caught up by their wool in the rotating universal joints and died a very cruel death, but you won't hear solar proponents – you won't hear the ABC, you won't hear the Department telling you that because they don't want to tarnish their idealisation of large scale solar.

We've just got some brand new babies born in this area. How can you guarantee the health and safety of this community and these little babies for future? Will the grazing sheep and the surrounding stock have heavy metal toxicity? Will the food that they grow adjacent to these solar developments have heavy metal leachate? This
20 is an untested experiment that needs to be certainly tested way before these developments proceed. There is a callous disregard for this community, a complete failure to appreciate that food is far more important than solar and they refuse to acknowledge the devastating consequence of large scale PV solar land/water contamination would present for this district. Where would the panels go? I mean,
25 this could happen in a few weeks' time at Wagga Wagga. There's 500,000 panels almost.

You're – at the Jindera, Walla Walla, Glenellen, Culcairn area's destined for, what, three or four million. This is insane. Where is the plan? As far as I know, there is
35 not one waste plan for this. They're trying to figure out whether it's possible to recycle them but it seems like that will never happen because it's too difficult and too costly so where are they going to go? I'd like to see Greater Hume Shire present their report on what they are going to do with the, what is it, 500,000 – no, 390,500 panels from Jindera site. Anyway, look, I've got some more. I've got a bit out of
40 order with presentation now, but I'd just like to show you some more of the photos that I've got if I've got time.

MR HUTTON: Yes. Mrs LaBlack, you still have over five minutes so feel free to continue.

45 MS LABLACK: Okay. Look, I also – I just wanted to make the point that I get very, very frustrated when terminology is being misconstrued and the large scale

solar industry is using words like sustainability, clean and green. It's completely wrong. It's – I mean, why – I think I had a picture of Michael Shellenberger why – if solar panels are so clean why do they produce so much toxic waste? It's just an absolute lie. It's so fraudulent. Anyway, so PV solar, large scale solar is not farming
5 nor is it a primary industry. It is an opportunistic, burdening invader sponging on and ruining rural lives and our precious natural environment which may never be restored to its inherent capabilities because of the harm that they are doing and the potential contamination risks that these panels can cause. There's only six per cent or less of arable land in Australia so it is incumbent upon us to preserve and care for
10 our heritage of rich soil and not squander this responsibility for the future of our children.

One of my photos shows – following the hail, it shows a log lying there in the open prior to construction. That's what they call placed in a position that is – hang on –
15 one of the cleared century old trees with vital tree hollow habitats for vulnerable species such as our squirrel gliders and superb parrots retained onsite in a suitable location prior to construction. How is that suitable? And then towards the end of my photos there is that particular log now covered in weeds and Paterson's curse with a totally absent tree screen and it's completely useless. Their environmental
20 destruction does not support clean, green and sustainable nor does their massive waste burden or their whole production manufacturing lifecycle which must be included when it comes to doing comparisons with how good this is for the environment.

I mean, who's even monitoring how bad sulphur hexafluoride is which is being increased massively because of renewable energy. It will remain in the atmosphere for more than 1000 years, this man-made greenhouse gas which is 23,500 times more warming than CO2. Well, I need the Department and the government to provide the facts on that because they are just making this stuff. They're telling us that naturally
30 occurring CO2 is the terrible enemy, whereas I think these large scale solar developments are going to do far, far more environmental damage and they're going to cause a lot of harm for our children in the future. Even my kindy children know that you don't crap in your own food bowl. Anyway, that'll do. I think I've come to the end of it. I've got a bit out of order.

35
MR HUTTON: Thank you. No. That's fine. You've made your points well. I will also just acknowledge that you can send those – your presentation and slides through to the Commission which, you know, I would encourage you to do if you're happy to do that, but we have seen a series of photos on the screen as you've been speaking so
40 thank you very much for your time this morning.

MS LABLACK: I just wanted to say, are the photos still there?

45
MR HUTTON: There is one photo on a screen we have.

MS LABLACK: I was just going to say there were many photos that show that the conditional tree screening that we're all told about - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MS LABLACK: - - - is completely non-existent.

5 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MS LABLACK: It just doesn't – it – and you can even road – the Riverina oils in the background. They had frequent tree screening conditions 10 years ago and they've never been screened either. So even though Wagga Wagga's Bomen Solar is
10 a proven environmental – like, glaring visual amenity nightmare, nobody is going to help us. We've been left to deal with the actual – Chungkong Conglomerate who constructed this thing – on our own. So the State Government's risk-based approach means they don't care. They don't monitor. They think it's all going to be fine and so personally our nightmare is going to go on forever and generations of my family
15 are now going to suffer because people just disregard rural human beings as though we don't even exist. I'd like to know where they're going to get their food from. If this land is contaminated, I don't think God's going to be making any more of it.

MR HUTTON: Okay. Thank you - - -
20

MS LABLACK: All right. Thanks.

MR HUTTON: - - - Mrs LaBlack. I appreciate your time this morning.

25 MS LABLACK: Please apologise to the photo guy because I was very out of order.

MR HUTTON: No. That's fine. Feel free to send those through to the Commission and we'll certainly make sure we give another look at those and we do appreciate it. So thank you very much. That brings us to the end of our – this electronic public
30 meeting today. Thank you again to everyone who participated in the process and Zada and I have appreciated your input very much. Just a reminder that in the interests of openness and transparency a full transcript of today's meeting will be bad available on the Commission's website in the next few days. As I indicated earlier, I do want to remind that the Commission will be accepting written comments from the
35 public up until 5 pm Friday the 4th of December and that's 5 pm next Friday.

You can submit your comments using the have your say portal on our website or you may, in fact, email or post material to us. At the time of the determination the Commission will publish its statement of reasons for decision which will outline how
40 the panel took the community's views into consideration as part of the decision-making process. For now though, thank you for watching the IPC electronic public submission on the Jindera Solar Farm. From all of us here at the Commission, enjoy the rest of your day and good afternoon. Thank you.

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MATTER ADJOURNED at 12.13 pm INDEFINITELY