



AUSCRIPT AUSTRALASIA PTY LIMITED

ACN 110 028 825

T: 1800 AUSCRIPT (1800 287 274)

E: clientservices@auscript.com.au

W: www.auscript.com.au

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

TRANSCRIPT IN CONFIDENCE

O/N H-1052106

INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING WITH BLAYNEY SHIRE COUNCIL

RE: FLYERS CREEK WIND FARM MOD 4

PANEL: ALAN COUTTS
ALICE CLARK
PROF CHRIS FELL

ASSISTING PANEL: BRAD JAMES

COUNCIL: SCOTT FERGUSON
REBECCA RYAN
MARK DICKER

LOCATION: BLAYNEY SHIRE COUNCIL
91 ADELAIDE STREET
BLAYNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

DATE: 4.03 PM, MONDAY, 22 JULY 2019

MR A. COUTTS: Well, I'm going to start the meeting with reading out a prepared statement and then we'll move on to the meeting from there, if you don't mind. And good afternoon. Thank you for having us at your good offices. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the
5 Wiradjuri people. I would also like to pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Welcome to the meeting today. Flyers Creek Wind Farm Proprietary Limited, the applicant, is seeking to modify the existing project approval to facilitate the
10 development of the Flyers Creek Wind Farm approximately 15 kilometres west of Blayney. My name is Alan Coutts. I'm the chair of this IPC panel. Joining me are my fellow commissioners, Professor Alice Clark and Professor Chris Fell. Brad James from the Commission Secretariat is also helping us on this project. And Christina is providing the transcription services for today.

15 In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the 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. This meeting is one part of the commission's decision-making process. It is taking place at the preliminary stage of
20 this process and will form one of several sources of information on which the commission will base its decision.

It's important for the commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues wherever they consider it appropriate. If you're asked a question and are not
25 in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and to – you can provide that information at a later date.

To assist us with the transcription service, I would ask each of you today to introduce yourselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure that they
30 do not speak over the top of each other, to ensure accuracy of the transcription. So after that, we can now begin. Thank you for joining us today. We appreciate your time.

MR S. FERGUSON: Thank you.
35

MR COUTTS: We've been out today and had a bit of a look around the area which the project covers to get a bit of a feel for the site and for who's being affected, etcetera. We'd be interested, really, in hearing from council, what council's view on the project, whether there are any particular issues that you feel that still haven't been
40 addressed, are you satisfied with the department's assessment report. So now I'll pass it over to you.

MR FERGUSON: Well, yeah, no, thank you – thank you, Alan. I'm Scott Ferguson, Mayor of Blayney Shire. As you can appreciate, this has been a very long
45 project in development, at least 10 years, I can remember, if not a bit longer. So I appreciate that here we are at the pointy end, even though it's another modification.

MR COUTTS: Yep.

MR FERGUSON: Certainly, on the surface we have no – nothing to put forward as far as the modification, the extension of the height of the wind towers. I'm sure there
5 will be some representation from community groups and members tomorrow in regards to that. So – and I guess they'll be – I hope the intention would be that they'll be focusing on the modification, because it has been quite a divisive issue in this community for a long time, as you can appreciate.

10 MR COUTTS: Actually, interestingly enough, there doesn't appear to be any of the key objectives on the list of speakers for tomorrow, so - - -

MR FERGUSON: Well, we were just – I was just saying that on my phone, when this was made public about the the panel was going to come here, I have not
15 received one call over the years with the original consent particularly. Inundated with calls from – from residents. So – but you're correct in saying, as far as this mod is concerned, I personally have not received any contact whatsoever from anybody out there, either for, against or indifferent. So I guess you can draw your own judgments from that. I wouldn't be – I'm pretty sure council haven't received –
20 would that be right, general manager?

MS R. RYAN: That's correct. I am Rebecca Ryan. I'm a general manager. And no, we haven't received any inquiries, letters of objection or for or against or otherwise. Our director of planning environmental services on the Community
25 Consultative Committee, so it's, obviously, been discussed in that area, as well.

MR COUTTS: Yeah. Yeah. Interesting.

MR M. DICKER: Sorry. Director of Planning Environmental Mark Dicker.
30 No. We had some representation a while ago. That was before MOD 4 was even lodged by a neighbour, but nothing recently, so - - -

MR COUTTS: How often does the Community Consultative Committee meet?

35 MR DICKER: We've been ad hoc, particularly because the project has been going for so long, but more recently probably at least quarterly. So - - -

MR COUTTS: Has that gone well?

40 MR DICKER: Yeah.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

MR DICKER: It's quite a good consultative committee, so I think – considering the
45 project has been not really – or in abeyance for five years.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

MR DICKER: Yeah. I think there's been a consistent showing from surrounding members and it has grown slightly in recent – recent times.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

5

MR DICKER: So yeah.

MR COUTTS: All right. Goodo. We'll look forward to tomorrow and see what sort of submissions we get from the public meeting.

10

MR DICKER: Is it public? How many registered to speak?

MR COUTTS: Nine, I think.

15

MR DICKER: Nine.

MR COUTTS: Most of those appear to be - - -

MS RYAN: From Infigen.

20

MR COUTTS: Well, from those that would seem to be supporting the project.

MR DICKER: Seven of them, yeah.

25

MR COUTTS: Just from looking at the – you know, the businesses who might provide services, etcetera.

MR FERGUSON: That is interesting it's a fact that it has been approved, the project.

30

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

MR FERGUSON: So it's well in train. So I guess - - -

35

MR COUTTS: Anyway, we don't need to spend too much time on that. I think it was just a curiosity question on my part and I'm trying to get a bit sense from council as to whether you were getting any pressure from your community.

MR FERGUSON: No.

40

MR COUTTS: No.

MR FERGUSON: No, none at all, which I'm a little bit surprised at, but, as Mark has referred to, it's sort of been in abeyance for five years.

45

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

MR FERGUSON: So I'm not sure whether people have moved on or - - -

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

5 MR FERGUSON: - - - have resigned themselves to the fact that it is going to happen - - -

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

10 MR FERGUSON: - - - regardless of the height, shape or number.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

MR FERGUSON: So - - -

15

MR DICKER: And people are aware because we publicise the – the general manager has a weekly article in the paper and there was a whole article done on the – in the impending IPC meeting, so, yeah, we got it out through our channels as much as we could.

20

MR COUTTS: Yep. Good.

MR FERGUSON: Yeah. Might be a good day tomorrow.

25 MR COUTTS: Yeah. Let's hope so. So is there any specific issues that council has? I'm – I know you've raised the issue of the VPA, which presumably you'll attempt to have some further negotiations with Infigen about that.

30 MS RYAN: So, yes, we've had discussions with Infigen regarding the current VPA, which we feel after those discussions is – provides enough flexibility for us to modify or, you know, have adapt to know that it's five years on.

MR COUTTS: Yep.

35 MS RYAN: And Infigen are going to write us a – they'll provide a formal letter to that effect. There was just some roads there that aren't noted that we've already upgraded which were noted. It's flexible enough that we think that there's – there's enough room in there.

40 MR COUTTS: Good.

MS RYAN: I think that'd be right, Mark?

45 MR DICKER: Yeah. I think – yeah, that's fair. We'd had some conversations about what we'd felt may have assisted the project with some capital works we've done that provided responses to that. And I think we sit comfortable that's a fair deal and with flexibility - - -

MR COUTTS: Yeah. Good.

MR DICKER: - - - for the community.

5 MS RYAN: And there might be some easements or some lease arrangements with any of the underground transmission lines - - -

MR COUTTS: Yep.

10 MS RYAN: - - - that would have to be negotiated, depending on whether there was over – over where the underground transmissions lines were intending to be if they were through any of those road reserves of council.

15 MR COUTTS: Yeah. And you're comfortable that they'll be negotiated with Infigen?

MS RYAN: Yes.

20 MR COUTTS: Yep. Okay.

MS RYAN: Yes. They've certainly been very open to discussions and communicate with council regularly.

25 MR COUTTS: Yep.

MS RYAN: They've presented to council workshops since I've been here for five years at least three times.

30 MR COUTTS: Yeah. Okay.

MS RYAN: They do good – you know, public awareness campaigns that show, Blayney Show, provide community newsletters we promote through our website, as well. So they're very easy to contact and talk to and come and talk to us.

35 MR COUTTS: Good.

40 MR DICKER: The big probably anomaly is there's – there's no guidance. Like, each windfarm does it different and there's no real baseline per megawatt or turbine or anything like that. You know, you start to look around and go, "Well, that one's getting over there. What –" so - - -

MR COUTTS: This is for the VPA?

45 MR DICKER: Yeah.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

MR DICKER: So – and communities get confused by that.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

5 MR DICKER: And, look, as a council we did too, because we looked at one and went, “Geez, that’s different to the rate that we’re getting at. What’s” - - -

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

10 MR DICKER: So - - -

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

15 MR DICKER: Just – yeah – it doesn’t provide consistency, I think, for similar developments. When you start to look around - - -

20 MR COUTTS: Yeah. Well, that might be something that you as a council can take up with the Department of Planning, because no doubt it’s an issue that other councils are probably experiencing as well. I know – I know in other areas outside windfarms, you know, there have been some frameworks put in place to assist councils in developing VPAs.

MR FERGUSON: Yeah. The association of and energy-related councils - - -

25 MR COUTTS: Yeah.

MR FERGUSON: - - - have done a lot of work - - -

30 MR COUTTS: That’s right.

MR FERGUSON: - - - in that space, especially in the last 12 months. Taken a long time to get - - -

35 MR COUTTS: Yeah.

MR FERGUSON: - - - to where they have.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

40 MR FERGUSON: But a lot of work’s been done there.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

45 MR FERGUSON: For just that – to have a bit of a consistent approach to the - - -

MR COUTTS: That’s right.

MR FERGUSON: - - - to the VPA, especially with wind generation, but - - -

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

5 MR FERGUSON: - - - by extension, solar farms and all the other renewable energies that are coming online.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

10 MR FERGUSON: So the VPA is a real critical part. And, as Mark's referred to, at the moment it's probably – there's real inconsistency in how that VPA is played out.

MR COUTTS: Yeah.

15 MR FERGUSON: And some more consistency right across the state would be, obviously, welcome by local government.

MR COUTTS: Yep.

20 MR FERGUSON: So small steps, but they are complicated things to negotiate.

MR COUTTS: Yeah. Chris.

25 PROF C. FELL: Sorry. It's often hard to conceive a new development and see what it looks like until it's actually up. But, just out of interest, what's the community response to the Carcoar Windfarm? It's up and they can see it. How would you assess - - -

30 MR FERGUSON: Well, I'm certainly happy to comment on that, because I was actually on council when that – that came in. And it was quite amazing, because the context back then was it was revolutionary. Like, it was the most amazing modern thing that this community had ever seen. I think it was one of the first windfarms in New South Wales.

35 PROF FELL: Of course.

40 MR FERGUSON: I'd be happy to stand corrected on that, but I think it'd be very – if not the first, maybe the second. So it was quite new. Certainly, the land owners out there were very same situation, where the landowners that were having the towers on were quite predisposed to it. Where it was, overlooking Carcoar Dam – there was an interesting group of landholders on the opposite side of the dam that did not want it at all because it completely detracted from their rural landscape that they – they live there – but over the years, they have proved to fit in beautifully with our environment, our community, our – everyone is – like, it was such a tourist attraction
45 when it first happened. It was quite amazing - - -

PROF FELL: Of course.

MR FERGUSON: - - - and it was promoted as that, a bit. We thought, “Well, we will see what happens,” but no one drove past the intersection without driving down there for a sticky beak. I mean, now they’re a bit ho-hum, but back then, the company put in a beautiful lookout right there on this side of the dam, so as you look
5 over the dam up at the - - -

PROF FELL: We noticed that.

MR FERGUSON: Yes. So – and with a bit of interpretation and – so it was really
10 positive and the landowners – and my in-laws were sort of out around that area too – quickly – quickly got used to them and, in fact, the commentary from the general community was that they were just – they were nice. They were pretty and they represented the new - - -

15 PROF FELL: So a futuristic looking community.

MR FERGUSON: Very much so. Yes. Mind you, they’re a lot smaller – I mean, we’ve been to – myself and the general manager have been out to Crookwell, association meetings, and having a look at – we saw those last gigantic ones, which I
20 believe are similar to – and they are massive. It would absolutely dwarf those little ones we have out at Carcoar. So everything in the context, I suppose, but, yes, very well received and they’re just part of the furniture now as, I guess, a lot of the wind farms are around the district.

25 PROF FELL: Thank you. That’s very helpful.

MR COUTTS: All right. Is there any other issues that you would like to put to us for today?

30 MR FERGUSON: Not from planning. That’s pretty much - - -

MR COUTTS: No.

MR FERGUSON: That’s it, really.
35

MS RYAN: No.

MR COUTTS: Okay. No. That’s good.

40 MR FERGUSON: Thanks for that. Thanks for the opportunity to have a quick - - -

MR COUTTS: No. Well, that’s – that’s good. Yes.

MS RYAN: Have you been to Blayney before? Like, had you been out to the site
45 before?

MR COUTTS: Yes. No. I've got some friends who live out on Browns Creek Road, so I visit Blayney on a regular basis, so I'm familiar with the area.

MS RYAN: Okay.

5

MS A. CLARK: This is the first time for me.

MS RYAN: Okay. Good. All right. Yes.

10 PROF FELL: And for me.

MS RYAN: And you drove on our brand new road?

MS CLARK: We did.

15

MR COUTTS: We did.

MS RYAN: Road.

20 MS CLARK: Yes.

MR COUTTS: We did. Yes.

MS CLARK: We had a good look at where everything is going to sit.

25

MR COUTTS: Yes. Yes.

MS RYAN: Yes.

30 MR COUTTS: No. We had a good drive around the area and we spent probably three hours or more - - -

PROF FELL: Yes.

35 MR COUTTS: - - - you know, having a look around and - - -

MR FERGUSON: It's quite a feature, that range of hills through there.

MR COUTTS: Yes. It's a pretty - it's actually - - -

40

MR FERGUSON: Sort of, north-south - - -

MR COUTTS: It's a pretty - it's a pretty spot.

45 MR FERGUSON: Yes. Because it's on the tablelands here and then it drops away quite - - -

MR COUTTS: Yes.

MR FERGUSON: Down below Cadia. So it's interesting geography, really.

5 MR COUTTS: Yes. Yes. The drought is hitting a bit hard by the look of it, though.

MR FERGUSON: It's pretty good here. If you go to Parkes, Forbes - - -

10 MR COUTTS: Yes. Well, I've seen – yes. I've seen further out. It's not very good either but - - -

MR FERGUSON: It's bad if – if we don't get rain for the next month or two. It's almost too late out west now - - -

15 MR COUTTS: Yes.

MR FERGUSON: - - - for the wheat crops, so it's - - -

20 MR COUTTS: Yes.

MR FERGUSON: There's a lot more to worry about than wind farms, probably, if it doesn't - - -

25 MR COUTTS: Yes. No. Well, it will be - - -

MR FERGUSON: If we don't get the spring break.

MR COUTTS: It would be water supplies to towns like Dubbo and the like.

30 MR FERGUSON: Correct.

MR COUTTS: Yes.

35 MR FERGUSON: Yes. It gets – it focuses the mind when urban areas - - -

PROF FELL: Of course.

MR FERGUSON: - - - start running short of water.

40 MR COUTTS: Yes. Yes.

MR FERGUSON: And there's lots going on in that space.

45 MR COUTTS: Yes.

MR FERGUSON: A lot of it is unfortunately reactive.

MR COUTTS: Yes. So are you right for water here?

MR FERGUSON: Yes. At the moment, we are. Yes.

5 MR COUTTS: Yes.

MR FERGUSON: Yes. The lake is 50 per cent and we're on level 3.

MR COUTTS: Okay.

10 MR FERGUSON: So - - -

MR COUTTS: Yes.

15 MR FERGUSON: We're certainly looking forward to some spring inflow though.

MR COUTTS: Yes. Because you feed from the dam out there, don't you?

MR FERGUSON: Yes. Lake Rawlins.

20 MS CLARK: Lake Rawlins.

MR COUTTS: Yes.

25 MR FERGUSON: Yes. So Carcoar's irrigation supply is the Lachlan.

MR COUTTS: Right.

MR FERGUSON: And up above that, up near Neville is Lake Rowlands - - -

30 MR COUTTS: Okay.

MR FERGUSON: - - - which is now connected by a pipeline to Orange - - -

35 MR COUTTS: Right.

MR FERGUSON: - - - and it supplies water as far as Grenfell.

MR COUTTS: Okay. Yes.

40 MR FERGUSON: It's a - yes. It's an amazing small - it was built - - -

MR COUTTS: Yes.

45 MR FERGUSON: Yes - just after the Second World War and a beautiful water supply but we need to see that increased as well.

MR COUTTS: Yes. Yes. All right. Well, I don't think we have any more questions.

MS CLARK: I have nothing else.

5

MR COUTTS: No. So thank you for - - -

MS RYAN: Thank you very much.

10 MR COUTTS: - - - coming along and even though it was a short meeting - - -

MR FERGUSON: No. Thanks for the opportunity.

15 MR COUTTS: - - - I think it was a valuable one. It's good for us to get a sense from the local government representatives as to what the community feels about these sorts of projects, so we do appreciate the opportunity to meet with you.

MS CLARK: Thank you.

20 MR FERGUSON: Thank you.

MS RYAN: Thank you.

25 MR COUTTS: Yes.

RECORDING CONCLUDED

[4.19 pm]