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INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION

APPLICANT MEETING

RE: WHITE ROCK WIND FARM MOD 6

PANEL:	**PETER COCHRANE (Chair)** **ADRIAN PILTON** **WENDY LEWIN**
ASSISTING PANEL:	**XANTHE O'DONNELL**
LOCATION:	**IPC OFFICES** **LEVEL 3, 201 ELIZABETH STREET, SYDNEY**
DATE:	**2.35 PM, MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2019**

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MR COCHRANE: Good afternoon and welcome. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. I'd also like to pay my respects to their elders past and present and to the elders from other communities who may be here today. Welcome to the meeting today on the proposal seeking approval for the modification to the White Rock Wind Farm which includes changing the dimensions of the wind turbines, changing the layout of the approved turbines and ancillary infrastructure, reducing the number of turbines from 49 to 48, increasing the overall project area and increasing the vegetation clearing limits. My name is Peter Cochrane. I'm the Chair of this IPC panel.

Joining me are my fellow commissioners, Wendy Lewin and Adrian Pilton. Xanthe O'Donnell is attending from the Commission Secretariat. 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. The meeting is one part of the Commission's decision-making process. It is taking place at the preliminary stage of this process and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its decision.

It's important for the commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever we feel - consider it appropriate. If you're asked a question and are not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing which we will then put up on our website. I request that all members here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure they do not speak over the top of each other to ensure accuracy of the transcript. Thank you. We can begin. So I think we're in your hands to start with.

MR MADDOCKS: Right.

MR COCHRANE: If you want to tell us about the project and it looks like you've got a presentation for us.

MR MADDOCKS: Okay. So, yes, so my name's Adrian Maddocks, I'm development manager with Goldwind. So I just hand out a presentation. I might not have enough copies.

MS O'DONNELL: I can [indistinct].

MR MADDOCKS: We'll see what we can do.

MR COCHRANE: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MR MADDOCKS: So, thank you for having us today to talk about the project. Um, so I've just given you a presentation which outlines, basically, ah, ah, the details around White Rock Wind Farm and obviously specific about MOD 6. Um, so what

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I'd like to do first is, ah, essentially, ah, run through who we are. Um, I won't dwell too much on specifics but obviously if you've got questions, please ask. Um, so White Rock Wind Farm is owned by, um, two companies. There's, ah, CECP and we've got Brian Hall, deputy general manager for CECP with us today. Um, ah, and we've got Medard Boutry from Goldwind. Um, so CECP own 75 per cent. They're a Chinese, um, ah, technology based service group. I don't know if you want to explain who CECP are to start with? They own 57 per cent of the project.

MR HALL: You've got another slide to cover that.

MR MADDOCKS: Yeah, the next one. Ah, and Goldwind owns 25 per cent. So Goldwind is, is the company that's taking forward the development of the project. Um, they are a sort of leading manufacturer of wind turbines, um, 20 years experience in the industry, ah, with over 44 gigawatts of capacity installed, ah, worldwide. Ah, the primary technology focus is on permanent magnet drive machines, so there's no gearbox. Um, Goldwind Australia was established in 2009 and we now have over 250 employees now. Primary based in Sydney and in Melbourne, ah, but obviously we have multiple projects operating around various states. So over 570 megawatts operating over 1,000, ah, both in construction and in planning. Ah, like, I say, worth 25 per cent owner of White Rock.
So the next slide, um, talks about CECP. I don't know whether, Brian, you want to say anything or you want me to just keep talking?

MR HALL: Oh, no, I think it's just - it's pretty self explanatory.

MR MADDOCKS: So, um, so basically CECP is China's largest technology base service group in the field of conservation, emission reduction and environment protection. Founded in 2006, ah, specialising in development, investment, management, construction operation, maintenance of wind power projects. So the total capacity both installed and under construction in China has reached about 1900 megawatts, which is pretty impressive. Um, like I say, CECP owns 75 per cent of the project. But Goldwind is, first and foremost, sort of developing it on behalf of the proponent White Rock Wind Farm P-t-y L-t-d which represents the project entity.

So we turn to the next slide which is the project background. Um, essentially White Rock Wind Farm was conceptualised around, sort of, 2007 by a company called Epuron who initially took through the site finding signing landowners, development consent, write, ah, initial approvals, um, until it was acquired by Goldwind in 2015. So the project is consented, presented under part three eight, 419 wind turbines with 150 metre tip height, current connection to the 132 kV grid, um, and consists of around 17 landowners across the spread of the project and the map on that page is from the original EA showing the sort of initial, ah, template for the project.

Since it was originally, ah, consented, back in 2012, ah, there have been various modifications. The first modification was withdrawn. That was an initial idea of a 330 kV connection so the first sort of thinking round connecting the entire project into the 330 kV line to the west. Ah, withdrawn for reasons I'm not exactly clear on

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but we then proceeded with an administrative MOD. Around the time it was decided that, first of all, Goldwind acquired the project but also that there was an idea that the project would actually move forward into construction. Um, so stage 2 and stage - sorry, MOD 2 and MOD 3 are predominantly to dealing with the construction of stage 1. So of the initial 119 turbines, it was decide that we would proceed to build 70 of those machines using the GW1212.5 megawatt and have the consent to connection arrangement which is the 132 kV line which runs to the north of the project, as you can see on the map.

So that construction went ahead, um, and we now - we started construction, um, in 2016 and, ah, we became operational in early 2018 for the first, sort of, 70 turbines. Now, amongst the companies it was decided that there was an opportunity now, having built stage 1, that we should consider the remainder of the project and see about, um, building out all the remaining turbines if it was feasible to do so. So the other two modifications and obviously leading up to MOD 6, were related to improving the connectivity of the projects. Um, one of the reasons that the initial 70 turbines was chosen is because there is a capacity constraint on the 132 kV line so it can only take the power that's equivalent to the number of turbines that were installed on to stage 1. So around about 170, 175 megawatts is the limit.

Um, but in order to enable stage 2 to proceed, it will be necessary to have that connection through to the 330 kV line where the capacity is much greater and therefore we can export all the power from both stage 1 and what we were thinking around stage 2 into that line. So that's when we put forward modification 4 which consented to the 330 kV connection, um, and a 132 to 33 kV switch station along that line, um, so that was consented back in 2017 and then we had an administration - administrative MOD 5 which was purely about ensuring we could subdivide appropriate land for substation which we realise was an oversight from the original application because the moment we weren't in a position to be able to subdivide the land and also we subdivide - but also we can't subdivide then, ah, leasing was the backup alternative. So that was purely an administrative of MOD 5.

On that basis we then, ah, started designing the, ah, the structure around stage 2, um, and that's why we ended up with MOD 6, um, which I'll talk about in a bit more detail shortly. Um, if stage 2 is to proceed, if we achieve planning consent for the modification, then we would expect to start construction towards the end of 2020, early ‘21, all being well. Um, so, I'll pass out a map which is a more detailed copy of the actual project layout if stage 2 is to - to proceed. This is from the MOD 6 application. Okay.

So the rationale behind MOD 6 was to structure the remaining, um, 49 turbines that were available to construct on the original approval in such a way as to capitalise upon modern technology, you know, new methodologies around assessment criteria. And so, ah,
MOD 6 is about similar to MOD 3 for stage 1 is about structuring the projects in such a way that it, it, it's, it's - enables stage 2 to be built whilst assessing

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appropriately the impacts that resort from that and I'll talk more about the methodology around the assessments shortly.

Um, so MOD 6 is proposing a reduction in the number of turbines from 49 to 48. Ah, we're primarily looking to increase the turbine dimensions from 150 metre tip height to 200 metre tip height with blade lengths up to 85 metres and potentially [indistinct] to 130 metres if - that's if a shorter blade was to be used. Um, it has changes to the project area based on reconfiguration of turbine sites, relocation to what we think are more, um, acceptable locations from - particularly from the visual impact community point of view. Um, it's, ah, has all the ancillary requirements covered such as changes to access track arrangements, cabling, connection circuits and the expansion to the 132 kV substation, construction ancillary facilities that will be required in order to build out stage 2 on the MOD 6. Additional [indistinct] height mass relates to the bigger turbines, um, and obviously variations to the approval conditions as required. I think most specifically here is an increase in the clearance limit to account for the change of methodology and the bigger turbines, um, and, you know, alterations to the project area.

So if we turn over. So the rationale for MOD 6 is that the original approval is essentially it's a 10 year old project that obviously was consent at a time when technology was what it was. We're now 10 years down the track. Things have improved significantly. Turbine design, um, has improved. But in parallel with that, obviously, assessment methodologies have strengthened and, um, ah, basically, ah, we're trying to, ah, ensure that MOD 6 takes account into all those factors, um, not only what we're requesting but also that the assessment methodology, the supply, is appropriate to those requests.

Ah, there's obviously, ah, changes in turbine technology mean that, um, we're looking for bigger machines because that, ah, makes for a more efficient project generation, more electricity we can produce using, essentially, the same sort of footprint. Ah, economically that makes it better for the project and, um, they're more cost-effective. Um, within that framework, we're also looking at then, ah, up-dating the assessment to account for the new changes in assessment methodology, so specifically flora and fauna impact assessment. Um, have I missed a page?

MR HALL: No, it's after the maps.

MR MADDOCKS: All right, okay. Um, and, ah, and obviously we want to make sure that we correctly anticipate the impacts which obviously have changed from the original EA and there's a slide a bit further on which shows the, um – excuse me - how those methodologies have changed. Um, but we want to - yeah, we want to basically make sure the MOD 6 is covering off the right level of vegetation clearance which is why we're, you know, requesting increases in those clearance limits. Um, the next two slides show the map and the detail but I've handed you out a paper copy there, um, we can refer to. So if we look at the key issue slide, um, here we've got the primary sort of considerations of MOD 6. So first and foremost is ecology. We've updated the flora and fauna assessment for the stage 2 area.

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MR COCHRANE: Sorry.

MR MADDOCKS: Sorry. I should put page numbers on. And we've also, obviously, re-submitted an EPC referral. The original consent was not deemed to be a controlled action, um, stage 2, because of the change, and again, the change in methodology and assessment criteria, stage 2 is considered a, ah, controlled action on to the EPC referral which we're in the process of finalising, working through with the department of DOE. Clearly there's a requirement to calculate the off sets and I'll talk more about that shortly.

We've obviously done the visual assessment so we've considered the visual impacts from the larger machines but also the reconfigured layout and the relocation of turbines and how that hopefully improves in most instances the visual impact. We've done updated noise modelling both specifically on a - the size of turbine that may be used for stage 2 but also the cumulative impact with stage 1 to account for the fact that stage 1's already there and stage 2, ah, will be added to it. Um, we've done heritage assessments for the stage 2 areas where they've changed and deviated from the footprint of the project and obviously we've considered aviation impacts, specifically large turbines and night lighting. Excuse me.

So, um, the next slide is a response to submissions. So we submitted our modification application back in January 2018. It went to an exhibition. Sixty-one submissions were received, approximately. Um, obviously the bulk of those from the public submissions with objections to the project. But it's interesting to note that of those public submissions only seven were from within about 25 kilometres of the project and the remaining, sort of, 42 that were deemed sort of public submissions were greater than 25 kilometres away. In fact the next closest was about 375 kilometres away. Ah, even though that was the case, we still focused on assessing all the submissions on the basis of their concerns about the project, whether it be visual noise, shutter flicker, whatever it might be, in ecology.

And so on that basis we submitted the response to submissions which took - addressed those comments, um, and we propose a series of additional mitigation measures including ways to try and minimise noise from the turbines by sector management, if necessary, improved construction methodologies including different ways of panelling, sort of steep slopes and batters because it's quite a hilly area. Um, specific considerations around impacts on key properties such as setting back T95 from the N180, N190 property boundary. We accept the proposition that if, ah, CASA deem it not appropriate to put lighting on a loan, we'll look at it an ADLS, an aircraft detection lighting system to mitigate for night lighting and obviously a commitment to minimise flora and fauna impacts where at all possible.

Excuse me. So the next slide - I just wanted to use this as a way of highlighting the difference in the methodologies that have been applied in terms of calculating the impacts of the project. So on the right-hand side you've got essentially the vegetation mapping and the footprint that was used as part of the original approval back in 2012 and you can see that, ah, the assessment criteria, um, took a very, um,

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simplistic, I think is probably the best way of describing it, approach to determining what the impacts might be. They used corridors around infrastructure, and buffers. Flora and fauna assessment at the time was based around very - again simplistic sort of assessment of clusters of vegetation rather than, um, assessing, um, what could be the potential for the vegetation. Um, it basically said if it's either ribbon gum, scatter vegetation or pasture, exotic rather than considering that some of that vegetation might actually be sort of remnant, sort of ribbon gum habitat, for example.

And on the left-hand side what you see is the type of criteria that we've used to apply to MOD 6. So we've taken a much more detailed approach into our assessment. So first and foremost to the back you have the vegetation assessment which is very broad. It takes the impact corridor and maps all the vegetation within that corridor rather than being very specific around isolated clumps of trees and habitat. Um, and then obviously what we've done is we've created a detailed engineering design to highlight not only where the turbines are going to go and the batters - sorry, the hard stands but also the cut and fill, the batters, the cable, the access tracks and the infrastructure that's required in order to build the project.

And on the next slide you can actually the sort of an example of the civil works that are required in order to, to build out the project. So we move away from the very simplistic - you know, it's - [indistinct] it's a eight meter buffer around a proposed line to a much more detailed engineering design which I think is much more, you know, representative of what the impacts are going to be and assessing the impact. So obviously when we look at the vegetation clearance limits and our request to increase them, it's driven by - as much by the, um, the change in the methodology, not only the change in assessing the vegetation itself but also the engineering works and the more detailed design around what actually we're going to be doing on the ground and that's - that obviously then leads to a magnitude increase on what would the clearance limits be which is why when you look at the numbers, you know, it's - that step or jump is only because we're comparing the old, sort of methodology and calculations versus the new methodology and calculations. Okay.

So if you could slip over from the pictures to the ecology of impact, we talk about those. As I say, it's this change from the old assessment process to the new. The - so the request is to increase ribbon gum, mountain gum from 28 to 93 and I believe that number needs to be higher and I'll explain about that in a second. Um, we've now added in box and woodland, 8.5 hectares, so basically yellow box is impacted by the project. The third bullet point and the first point is, and I believe the IPC panel might be aware of this, um, we have - and there's a slide further on, but we've determined that we are required to request a further increase in the ribbon gum, mountain gum, because now we're looking at even more detail within the stage 1 footprint. We need to consider the impacts within the constructor stage 1 area and I'll come on to that in a second. Um, and an estimated increase is around five to 10 hectares and I'll talk about what I would like to do further on and for the panel's consideration.

Um, obviously we've got larger turbines, larger rotors, increased swept area. That's been considered and assessed and will form, again, a component to the burn -

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adaptive management program. Biodiversity impact's obviously been calculated based on the indicative design of this time and it's noted that we already have secured practically all the offset for stage 1 and stage 2 and I'll explain about that in a second. We've submitted the EPC referral and in its final stages of completing that and we believe that the impacts of MOD 6, um, ah, are consistent with the requirements of an approach about how you calculate those impacts using, you know, current methodologies and the more detailed design. Um, so the next slide explains this issue around the stage 2 cabling and stage 1 area. Are the panel aware of this, this matter?

MR COCHRANE: Yes, yes, we are.

MR MADDOCKS: Apologies for the lateness of this. Um, so essentially the issue here is that MOD 6 in itself at the moment considers all the impacts around the, the, undeveloped area of the project and so what we - what we've been doing now is obviously concentrating on how we bring all that power back into through the remainder of the project. Um, and obviously we need to install cabling through the existing as constructed stage 1 area in order to bring the power through to substation so we can export it from the project. That was always a consideration. It's in section 2.5 of the EA, but it wasn't given a full level of detailed assessment at that time given that we thought that the impacts would be fairly, sort of, minimal. I think that's probably a bit of a naive point of view on our point of view - on our side, really. And by having now, sort of, more confidence that the project is going to proceed, pending, obviously, the panel's approval and DPI's approval, we realise that as we build up the detail around the project, um, that we've kind of overlooked the potential for the impacts within the stage 1 footprint area that stage 2 will create. Okay. So that's why we're bringing this to your attention now.

MR PILTON: These are all underground cables, are they?

MR MADDOCKS: Yes, that's right, that's right, yeah. So essentially I apologise for the sort of the rather sort of high level view of this map that you've got a more detailed letter, I think, that's been provided to you which has a bit more detail and obviously more - DPI is supposed to provide you with a copy. If not, you'll get that.

MR COCHRANE: Okay, haven't seen that.

MR PILTON: It's not going to arrive for a little while.

MS O'DONNELL: Sending it up shortly.

MR MADDOCKS: Okay, right, right, right, okay, fair enough. So - so obviously what we're proposing to do is we've looked at how we can bring the stage 2 cabling through the stage 1 area and realised that there is going to be an impact from that cabling, okay? Um, it was - it was always contemplated that the cabling would come through stage 1 but I think again rather naively we assumed that we could try and capture all that, that impact within sort of the stage 1 footprint. Unfortunately it's not

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feasible to do that. You know, we don't have an opportunity to necessarily run the cabling through areas that have already been disturbed by the stage 1 sort of clearance activities. Um, and as a result, by looking at these additional cables that are coming through and the magnitude of cables which are unfortunately required to build stage 2, um, it's obvious we're going to have a further impact on vegetation within those areas.

Now, what we're proposing to do in order to address that, acknowledging that we are a bit late to the table on this, um, is that we've got the ideal opportunity now to do those surveys, to up-date that information, um, because we feel it needs to be consistent with the rest of MOD 6 and the assessment of the vegetation clearance rather than relying on the original ecology data. So we've got the ecologists will be going out next week to basically survey those corridor routes and up-date the mapping to be consistent with the rest of the assessment process. Then on that basis we will determine what the additional impact would be from those cables within that - within the stage 1 footprint, less areas that we can consider already cleared and obviously we're going to try and minimise the impact by running cables through disturbed areas close to existing infrastructure where at all possible. We're also going to run those cables in a way such that we minimise the impact - any additional impact as best as possible. So if we can take a clear corridor as opposed to a treed corridor, we're going to obviously do things like that to avoid those impacts. Um, and what we anticipate is that it will require an increased clearance limit and maybe an additional sort of five to 10 hectares of ribbon gum, mountain gum and that's what we anticipate to be the case at this time. So we collect that data, we'll put it to you and then obviously we - - -

MR COCHRANE: Not me.

MR MADDOCKS: Sorry?

MR COCHRANE: Said it's not me [indistinct].

MR MADDOCKS: Something's happening. But the idea being that rather than - if we get it all into the MOD 6 now, which we acknowledge is a bit late in the day, ah, we can resolve it all because the assessment criteria we're proposing to use is basically identical to what we've done for the rest of MOD 6. We're just really up-dating the numbers, confirming that the impact is the same sort of habitat, the same sort of species. It's purely underground cabling we're talking about here. Um, we acknowledge it will increase the quantum of impact for ribbon gum and we don't anticipate it being anything else at this time, subject to survey, of course. And then we will put that back to the DPI, EPBC and obviously yourselves for consideration and then, obviously, we will seek to have that
93 hectares jumped up and then obviously we'll increase the offset requirements accordingly as well. So that's the proposition there and you'll receive a letter about that shortly to confirm that. I'm happy to answer more questions about that later on.

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Next slide. So just on the biodiversity, then White Rock Wind Farm's been very proactive in its ability to create offsets. We obviously had a commitment to provide offsets for stage 1. Um, but also as part of the conditions of approval we were required - required to acquire a property called Tangari, if we built a specific set of turbines. Now, we didn't actually build those turbines but we still acquired the property because the landowner was a bit, ah, ah, problematic, probably the polite way of putting it, for the project. Um, and so it made sense - he was not happy so he was happy to go on his way, if you see what I mean, by us acquiring the project - the property for the project.

We then realised that although we had to satisfy that condition by purchasing the property, the property actually had great potential for offset requirements. So we - with CECEP and Goldwind's approval, what we decided to do was look at the magnitude of offset potential on that land, but across the entire project, not just stage 1, which we were committed to do anyway, but also stage 2 which at this point in time we're not actually obliged to do 'cause we don't have a consent for stage 2. And on that basis we assessed and secured and entered into a bio banking agreement for that property as shown in the map and this currently provides all off sets for stage 1, the 330 kV overhead line, and pending review of the vegetation impacts, all of the impacts for stage 2.

Now, it's also noted that the, um, the impact assessment for stage 2 has taken a very conservative approach. You know, we've put buffers around infrastructure with, I would probably hasten to add, that the engineering design is probably over engineered to account for as, as detail an impact as possible and we would expect that through the
pre-construction and tendering and working with the balance of plan contractor, that we'd be able to bring that down. I can't guarantee it but obviously we're going to try and do what we can to minimise impact, so it's very likely that all the offset is already technically secured for stage 2 even with the increased due to stage 2 cabling within stage 1. Okay?
If not, if for some reason it falls short, there are obviously other methods where we can acquire additional offsets either through expanding the existing site or adding to it on the existing property. We're aware of all the landowners in the area with - who are interested in providing environmental offsets for us, and worse comes to worse, you know, we can acquire credits through the trading mechanism that's currently in place if needed to but we obviously err towards trying to secure local offsets 'cause that's where the project impacts the greatest, obviously.

Um, next slide. One of the key considerations about the project was the visual impact assessment. I know that was brought to, ah, attention through the, the report from the DPIE. So what we've done, obviously, is we've structured stage 2 in a way that we've tried to minimise impact by removing turbines that would otherwise have been quite prominent in the landscape, to neighbours, both involved and non involved. Um, we obviously offered neighbour agreements to try and remove any, sort of, um, ah, concerns by offering benefits to the broader community to account for those impacts, both visual and noise.

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Um, clearly we will be offering landscape, um, screening as necessary and for stage 1, as you can see, we've, we've written to 28 landowners neighbouring the project out to five kilometres. Six have taken up the offer but of - but also of those 28 some have actually signed up to neighbour agreements which kind of removes the need for the landscaping. So we've - we're very proactive in trying to ensure that people have the opportunity to try and mitigate, if they don't like the look of the wind farm, by the by, having landscaping or, you know, signing up to agreements which provide an incentive for them to sort of accept those impacts.

Um, one of the key considerations that was raised through the department's assessment was the impact on residents N180, N190 and L220. Um, now, this - these properties are on the map, I think it's - they're basically the hatched area in here. Ah, and then L220 is this property down here to the south of the turbines. Now, this is one landowner, they own multiple properties within this area and they bought up properties over time. They don't actually reside in this area. They actually live in southern Queensland. Um, we - they were originally part of the project and that's what the hatched area represents on the map.
So at that time, they were - they were interested in hosting infrastructure on their land and, ah, when stage 1 went ahead, obviously they weren't involved, but stage 2 we re-opened discussions around, with all the landowners, about their interest in stage 2. Um, but unfortunately this landowner decided that for, and I believe it's for commercial reasons predominantly, at the time, that they did not want to enter into a further lease arrangement and as a result, despite offering an option to lease and lease arrangement for the property that's hatched, 'cause they would have had infrastructure, neighbour agreements for the remaining properties, they chose not to take us up on that and so we kind of left it there.

Now, on that basis, the department of planning has proposed voluntary acquisition rights to be offered to the owner to account for those impacts and we have no issue with that as a way forward if the panel agrees and the DPIE accept that. But obviously it's pending any further consultation with the landowner that may come about as a consequence. They've never formally objected to the project. They have been kept abreast of what's been happening and through our descriptions and negotiations, but, um, yeah, they've never actually put a submission in against the project for any reason. Um, that doesn't negate their ability to comment, of course. Um, and I'll talk a bit more over the next couple of slides. But finally, on aviation lighting, Sapphire Wind Farm is installed with a 200 metre tip height and they have low level intense - low intensity night lighting.

MR PILTON: Where are they?

MR MADDOCKS: So they're north of the project. Sapphire, basically, is to the north of here and White Rock's down, obviously. Now, um - so they had a modification which allowed them to build, um, I think it's 75, 200 metre tip height turbines and they were required to put night lighting on. Initially the lighting was high - medium intensity but it was seen to be quite, um, sort of, intrusive. Um, so they're working with CASA. They reached an agreement where it was dropped from,

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say, I think it was - I can't remember what the original was, down to 200 candela, I think it is. So it's much more, ah, acceptable.

MR HALL: Medium is 2,000.

MR MADDOCKS: Two thousand, is it? Yeah, I thought it was. I wasn't too sure.

MR PILTON: So are they being constructed, Sapphire?

MR MADDOCKS: They're so Sapphire - - -

MR PILTON: We could have a look at it at night time, if you wanted.

MR MADDOCKS: You can, yeah.

MR PILTON: Thank you.

MR MADDOCKS: That's no problems at all. Um, so our proposition at the moment, stage 1, was not required to have lighting on it because it was only 150 metre tip height. With stage 2, what we're proposing is, obviously, a 200 metre tip height which is comparative with Sapphire. Ah, consultation with DPI have advised that, um, and through CASA, that low lighting is probably required in order to - to build those turbines and the recommendation is that if we do need, ah, if CASA don't advise otherwise then we will need to install an aircraft detection and lighting system. We obviously are prepared to consider that but also would prefer that lighting was looked at in the context of the view of the project in the area, um, given that they've already got lighting installed at a lower intensity level. So we will obviously consult with CASA prior to the start of construction and determine whether an ADLS is absolutely required or whether 200, say, candela lighting is acceptable and obviously we'll stand by whatever, ah, advice is given to us and act accordingly.

MR COCHRANE: It wouldn't be on every turbine, presumably.

MR MADDOCKS: No. So there's a lighting plan within - within the application which highlights which turbines would be lit, um, and, yes, you're right, so of those 48, only probably about - approximately half would have a light on top of them. Yeah. So the next two slides address that visual impact on those two residences which are the subject to voluntary acquisition at this point in time. So the first slides around N180 and 190 which are a property called Mountview. So what I wanted to show here was just that - this is one of those areas where we have actually removed turbines that were quite, sort of, fronting. There's a road that runs kind of, um, east west along this part of the boundary. So we've actually taken out these turbines, as you can see.

The upper montage, um, is the turbines as per the original approval and then the lower montage is the turbines as proposed through constructed stage 1 plus MOD 6

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approved stage 2. Um, and what you can see is that we have actually reduced the spread of turbines from the property - view of the property although the height has actually increased. And so that first turbine that the arrow is pointing to in the lower image is actually the T95 turbine, then you step back to the - to the - to the left of that you've got T93, 92 and then 91 and those are the turbines that were highlighted by the department's, um, consultant in his report.

MR COCHRANE: And, Adrian, the T95 you mentioned, is that in the proposed location, how did that compare to the original location?

MR MADDOCKS: Yeah, so obviously we've set that further back from the boundary as well, as best we can, to minimise the impact but acknowledging that it's still quite a visual turbine. Again these montages don't account for any screening that's already in place, existing vegetation and there are a reasonable assessment of the topography of the environment, um, and obviously when you do the site visit, you can get an appreciation of how that topography might look.

Um, and then the next slide is the Willaroo property. Now, unfortunately this is not a solid - this is just wire line diagram which is printed very poorly, I'm afraid. But essentially that upper line represents the crest of the hills. Anything below that is not visible, um, so what you've got is the brown turbines - I apologise from the poor quality, but the brown turbines are the original EA locations and then the purple turbines are the set back MOD 6 locations. So if you imagine again anything below that crest line is below - is below the line of the - sight of the hill.

Um, what you essentially have is that the, ah, the originally EA approved turbines, although they're being shorter, were more dominant in the view, field of view, because they, they obviously were much closer to the property and closer to the crest whereas what we've done with MOD 6, we actually took those three turbines and pushed them further back to a lower area. So even though the turbines are higher, the actual sort of heights of those machines are, are, you know, in some respect, almost concealed completely and again not taking into account vegetation, although there isn't much - I'll be honest, there isn't much screening on this hill itself.

Um, the other to note about this property is that it's kind of in - amalgamated into a much larger property and the house itself is derelict and has been for many years, but of course it still has to be treated as a residence, um, and again this property is owned by, um, the landowner who owns the N180 and 190. They again were offered a neighbour agreement for this place, despite it being derelict and again chose not to take us up on.

Okay. Next slide. So community engagement. Throughout the project I think Goldwind and CECEP have done a really good job of engaging with the community. Um, not only have we implemented all the requirements with phone lines and websites and newsletters and community consultative committee, I'd like to think we've gone a bit above and beyond. We appointed a local representative during the construction of stage 1 prior to the start of construction and then for about three

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months, six months after the stop - six months after the construction had finished. We had a shop front, as you can see in the middle photo, in Glen Innes. And throughout that, um, construction period of approximately two years, there were 6,800 visits. The lady was very efficient about recording how much people walked through the door and that doesn't account for, um, construction workers, members of the construction team, and it also doesn't count for the 1,500 people that attended the first open day that we ran shortly after construction was completed.

So that was a very - we found that was an excellent way of keeping the community informed not only about where we were up to in the construction but what was happening with the project, where heavy loads were coming, the schedule of deliveries so that people could - either time to see them, which a lot of people wanted to know when they could stop by and have a look but also when to avoid them if they were, you know, local farmers and so on and so forth. Um, the community consultative committee has been on the go for sort of - sorry, do you have a question?

MR COCHRANE: Yes. Is the shop front still open?

MR MADDOCKS: No. We - it was specifically, ah, kept in place for construction and the plan is to re-open it - probably won't be the exact location because that's turned into an estate agents, but the plan is to, ah, re-open that shop front, um, to, ah, to go through exactly the same sort of process we went through so successfully with the stage 1, construction, yeah. Now the project's in operation, we have the ops team there and we have a site manager who's involved in organising site visits and letting - I mean, I think it was a school visit the other week that came through and looked at the turbines and so we, we still have those ongoing activities but of course now the wind farm is more just an acceptable part of the - of the location. Um, but, yeah, we certainly perceive the benefits of having that facility during constructing, and we'll repeat that for stage 2. Mod 6 in stage 2, we've had open days, we ..... that through the newsletter, the website. Clearly not promoted it sort of, you know, vastly because it's still subject to the planning approval process, but obviously, assuming this is successful, we'll then ramp up that whole process with a view to, you know, entry into the pre-construction phase and, ultimately, into construction.

I can say we've already signed neighbour agreements. There are approximately 59 residents within 4 kilometres of a wind turbine, with 24 more associated. So we've signed off agreements, we've offered agreements to the vast majority of people within 3 kilometres of all of them, I think, of a wind turbine. We have eight active agreements for stage 1 and there are six agreements signed and pending start of constructions stage 2, because they address stage 2 impacts specifically. Others have been offered and not taken up and, you know, we always stand available if other people express interest in them. We obviously assess whether it's appropriate to sign someone up to a neighbour agreement, based on where they are and their location, but yes, we think we're quite good at ensuring that people have that opportunity if they wish to do so.

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I know that from a community benefit point of view, obviously, there's the investments in construction, there's the construction jobs – I think we had up to 250 people on site during construction of stage 1, slightly smaller for stage 2 – and we've already got an office team of around a dozen people, based out of the facility at the moment, for stage 1. We'll add up to about another five people to cover off the servicing requirements for stage 2, if stage 2 goes ahead.

There's an active community fund already in place offering $2,500 per turbine, so in the first year we gave up $175,000 and last year we gave up $179,000 in community grants. That continues for the life of the project.

MR COCHRANE: That's $2,500 per annum?

MR MADDOCKS: Per turbine, per annum.

MR COCHRANE: Per annum, per turbine?

MR MADDOCKS: Yes. Yes. So that's CPI linked, so like I say, last year was $179,000. You can see in the box on the bottom right, those projects that we were given. And we have grants under $5,000 and grants over $5,000. We're not – with stage 2, we'll add another – up to another 120,000 to that number, and we have – we decided that the – we would open the opportunity to anyone within 50 kilometres of the wind turbine. So we draw a buffer around the project, and anyone within that area, no matter where the community is, even if they can see it or not, they've got the opportunity to put forward an application for those funds. I think it's well received. I think the feedback we get is quite positive.

MR COCHRANE: ..... subscribed?

MR MADDOCKS: Yes. Yeah. I think – yeah. I think - - -

MR HALL: You've got 20 years' worth, though.

MR MADDOCKS: I think it was about 300-odd thousand dollars' worth of applications for that $179,000. Yeah. And like I say, we – they're all vetted on their merits. The panel consists of not just myself and Brian, for example, it consists of members of the local community, yes, who – local councils.

MR COCHRANE: Both councils? As in - - -

MR MADDOCKS: Yes, Inverell and Glenn Innes.

MR COCHRANE: Yes.

MR MADDOCKS: Yes, the project sort of straddles both boundaries. So in conclusion, yes, we're looking to – through mod 6, to structure stage 2 in a way that it maximises the benefit of modern technology, but assesses the impacts using

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current methodologies. We obviously make commitments to ensure that the on-ground impacts are as minimal as possible. We take our offset seriously; we've already implemented offsets for stage 1 and stage 2, irrespective of whether stage 2 goes ahead. That offset is now in place, irrespective. We engage fully with the local community and we will continue to do so through the construction process, similar to stage 1. And we, you know, like to think that what we're proposing is commensurate with the kind of modifications you see for these kinds of projects these days and the impacts are acceptable within that sort of framework. So we – we obviously hope that we'll pass. Thank you.

MR COCHRANE: Thanks, Adrian. Just a question on the modification to the modification. You've got a bit more work to do, apart from the issue of the commission's view - - -

MR MADDOCKS: Yes.

MR COCHRANE: There's the public meeting and public notification, as well. We've got a public meeting scheduled for the 11th, I think it is - - -

MR MADDOCKS: Okay.

MR COCHRANE: - - - of October. So to comply with our obligations for transparency et cetera, we would need to let them know - - -

MR MADDOCKS: Yes.

MR COCHRANE: - - - or anyone who's coming, sufficiently in advance so that they can comment on it.

MR MADDOCKS: Yes.

MR COCHRANE: We'll take some advice on the proper due process, but certainly, if we've a public meeting scheduled, we need to let them know as precisely as possible what that change is.

MR MADDOCKS: Yes. So we've written to the DPEI outlining what our request is. That letter will come through to you, I believe, you know – you're obviously obliged to put that onto your website as a public document. But the intention is that we – because we're in the right time now, we have that opportunity to collect that data, do the assessment, and update the mod 6 biodiversity assessment report, assuming everyone agrees with that process - - -

MR COCHRANE: Yes.

MR MADDOCKS: - - - and present the revised findings within the next, sort of, two months of the outset. So we're happy to provide any additional supporting

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material that you feel you need in order to make sure that everyone at a public meeting is fully aware of what that change is that's being proposed.

MR COCHRANE: I presume it may be appropriate for one of you to - - -

MS LEWIN: Technically, all we need to do is have it in writing that - - -

MR COCHRANE: We have it in writing. Okay.

MS LEWIN: - - - and the fact that the department will also have it is fantastic, because it'll come through the process correctly.

MR COCHRANE: Good.

MS LEWIN: But obviously, the fact of the public meeting and that it is – you're, I guess, getting additional evidence and material, environmental assessments done to be able to support your request – that then means that, arguably, we'd really like to be able, for transparency, to be able to have that available in some way or another at the meeting. So I don't know whether we think about potentially changing the date of the meeting, or if that's unable to be done, then we might need to think about whether there's some sort of way of expediting the documentation that you're looking to submit for the modification for the amended modification.

MR MADDOCKS: We might be able to get some preliminary results, yes.

MR COCHRANE: Preliminary results or something from the ecologists, perhaps?

MS LEWIN: I mean, this would come down what the position – I'm sorry, what the commission - - -

MR MADDOCKS: Yes.

MR PILTON: But if we just tell them at the public meeting what's planned - - -

MS LEWIN: Yes.

MR PILTON: - - - and then say that's going to be assessed, so we don't need the detailed environmental assessment at that stage, I don't think it's – we'll obviously have to look at that later on.

MS LEWIN: So you'll need that to - - -

MR COCHRANE: The only risk, even though it's a small one, would be you might want to have another public meeting because it's new information, even if it's relatively small, so there's a - - -

MS LEWIN: We could to a multi-staged public meeting. I don't know that - - -

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MR COCHRANE: It's seems a bit – kind of a bit - - -

MS LEWIN: - - - seems excessive, maybe, for a mod, but - - -

MR COCHRANE: - - - excessive for the nature of the project. And I'm just – well, we might have a discussion after this in terms of whether it is sensible to delay the public meeting - - -

MS LEWIN: Sure.

MR COCHRANE: - - - which would be unfortunate, I think. Anyway, that's - - -

MR HALL: I wonder if a worst-case sort of, you know – letter, perhaps, from an ecologist could give you the worst outlook on that?

MR COCHRANE: Yes.

MR HALL: And then it could only get better from there, arguably, perhaps.

MR MADDOCKS: Yes, that might be possible, because we – I mean, we – based on the current sort of vegetation, if you refer back to that impact slide with, you know, before an impact sort of impact assessment approach, the amount of vegetation we would be looking to clear, in addition, would be around the sort of five to 10 hectare mark.

If we're being really conservative, say, somewhere around the 20 hectare mark is – that assumes that there's full clearance of the corridor, which is, you know ..... but that's just not the case. You've got to look at the vegetation communities and the condition of those communities and whether it, you know, whether it's exotic sort of pasture that you're going through, but I did a rough calculation and, you know, 20 hectares is the absolute maximum I believe it would be.

But obviously, what's of interest here is the impact on the EEC, which, you know, based on the original vegetation surveys that the original DA was done for, that came in around about six to seven hectares of river gum EEC, additional to what we would request, but we acknowledge that that's based off the old sort of data. It's representative to some degree, but of course, now the assessment methodologies are more detailed and therefore that number's going to increase.

MR COCHRANE: I think if you can gather some preliminary advice and the impacts, that would be helpful, because there's just a risk, I think, in terms of going to a public meeting and saying, "Ah, but there's more information to come".

MR MADDOCKS: Yes.

MR PILTON: So you're actually physically talking about – I mean, it's a trench that's a metre away.

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MR MADDOCKS: Well, the trench itself is, what, about half a metre?

MR HALL: It depends on how many cable runs, how many circuits. Some places, if their circuits are coming - - -

MR PILTON: Oh, you have different cables that – oh, yes.

MR HALL: Yes. Yes, coming in. So you might have three, but then when you allow for the excavator or the trenching machine that's got its tracks, plus we give a bit of a buffer, just so we're not at a compliance risk if we go outside that, it's usually, say, eight. For a single table run, probably about eight metres. Is that about what you've allowed for?

MR MADDOCKS: Well, I've got a six-metre corridor.

MR HALL: Six metre corridor? Yes.

MR MADDOCKS: So a three-metre buffer either side. So the actual trench itself, obviously, is quite narrow. The actual sort of ..... digs through the dirt, but on top of that, as Medard was saying, you've got the disturbed – what is essentially a disturbance footprint. Now, if it's just grass, that's fine. You're just churning a little bit of dirt, and we account for that. But by putting in a three-metre buffer on either side we're saying – look, you know, rather than saying this is just disturbance, which you could argue is recoverable, we're saying, "No. We're technically counting it as clearance".

So we're actually sort of over – I think overcompensating for the impact. But equally, you know, there are differences across terrain, but where cables are running parallel, we're assuming the cables can be sited close to each other, but we're still keeping the same buffer. So if you've got three cables in parallel, you've still got a wider corridor than you're impacting.

MR COCHRANE: Do they interfere with each other if they're too close?

MR MADDOCKS: They do, yeah. Yes.

MR HALL: They can.

MR COCHRANE: So you have to have a certain separation?

MR MADDOCKS: Yes, that's right. I think the minimum distance is 2.5 metres.

MR HALL: There's thermal issues, as well.

MR COCHRANE: As well as electromagnetic? Yes.

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MR MADDOCKS: Yes. So we, you know, we're sort of assessing – what we're trying to do, of course, is keep it in the disturbed area that was used for stage 1 where at all possible, but we do acknowledge that there's going to be these impacts for stage 2 that need to be picked up. But, you know – well, I think a primary consideration is avoid clearance of trees and, you know, stick to the disturbed footprint where at all possible.

MR COCHRANE: Now, the EPBC referral – the controlled action matter of national environmental significance is threatened species, isn't it? Is that the snake orchid?

MR MADDOCKS: So the small snake orchid was something that was raised by OEH as ..... as a species that has the potential to be found on site, whereas previously it wasn't picked up as – because of the altitude of the site it was thought that perhaps this doesn't exist, but new research, which we weren't immediately privy to, indicated that it could occur at this altitude. So that was why the recommendation was to carry out the surveys.

In fact, that was one of the reasons that triggered this whole process around the cabling footprint was because we want to go out and do those surveys now, then we realised, well, we're going to have to do through all the company and then – hang on a minute. There was a bit of a domino effect.

MR COCHRANE: Okay. I don't ..... - - -

MR PILTON: I don't have any more. I think I need to see the site before asking any more questions.

MR COCHRANE: Yes. Yes, I think that's - - -

MR HALL: It's been – yes, it's been very dry out there. The farmers are all struggling; you'll see that when you're there. Unless we get a lot of rain and green ..... - - -

MR PILTON: How does that affect when you're trying to restore, you know, batter slopes and things?

MR HALL: Very difficult. Yes, very difficult. There's no – yeah. It's been a challenge and there's more work to be done there.

MR PILTON: So when you get – if and when the heavy rain arrives, you'll lose a lot.

MR HALL: Potentially.

MR MADDOCKS: That's the danger, yes.

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MR HALL: Yeah, but that's consistent with everywhere in the landscape, as well.

MR COCHRANE: Yes. And for your construction work you need a fair bit of water, and water is in short supply as well, is it not, there?

MR HALL: Yes. So we'll be commencing looking at obtaining water access licenses, zero share, and associate allocations, looking at – you know, for the stage 1, when it commenced constructions is one of the wettest winters on record, it was only two and a half years ago, so there was plenty of surface water from farmer's dams, predominantly, but also some other water sources closer to town where the water could be taken from – surface water, streams, with the appropriate allocations and so forth. Those resources are currently dry, so we'll be looking at ground water potential. So there's a bit of work that needs to done there. Yeah.

MR COCHRANE: I do want to ask a question on waste, because Glen Innes raised a question of waste, presumably triggered by something in stage 1. Was that a major concern? Was the landfill there running out or what ..... - - -

MR MADDOCKS: Yes, I think the issue was the amount of waste that was generated from the site - - -

MR HALL: And Sapphire, concurrently, as well. It was two big farms.

MR MADDOCKS: - - - and, yes, we kind of overlapped. So yes, the council was concerned that we were generating a significant amount of waste that was going back into their landfill, especially when they had a limited capacity. I think they were seeking to expand that landfill at the time, but we – I mean we're conscious of that, and we went back to, basically, Goldwind International, who supply the turbines and the components, and as you can imagine, there's a lot of packaging that goes with these things. So we're very keen to ensure that through stage 2, that we have a lot of recyclable materials or material that is, you know, not recyclable in the sense of being destroyed and turned into something else, but as well as in the sense of sending it back to China, if possible, if that's feasible- - -

MR HALL: And reuse.

MR MADDOCKS: - - - and reusing, like, the cradles that are used to carry the blades or hold the turbine components in place for delivery.

MR BOUTRY: It's Medard Boutry. I was involved in stage 1. There was quite a bit of recycling that was done on that project. A big part of that was, obviously, segregation at the source. So we had skip bins for wood only, wood was sent away. Due to some of the fumigation techniques with the methyl bromide, it couldn't be used, like, to be spread on fields, mulched and so forth - - -

MR MADDOCKS: Or burnt.

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MR BOUTRY: Or burnt. No. No burning allowed under the project conditions. But it could be crushed at a small enough size that it was beneficial for other landfills to use as a topping material. Steel was all sent, picked up by a scrap metal company that took it back to Newcastle and processed it there. Containers were donated to RFS and other sources as well, which was good. I guess we had the usual on site, you know, comingled recycling, but nonetheless, there is still, you know, a substantial amount of waste generated, which does – yes, continue ..... it's all – you know, there's waste tickets and all of it's done legally, but yes, the councils still have a concern, particularly with the two wind farms, the volumes were larger than they would normally be used to.

MR COCHRANE: All right. ..... I think, as Adrian says, we'll – I'm sure a site visit will trigger more, and that's scheduled for the 10th, I believe. Or the 11th - - -

MR PILTON: 10th? A Thursday, whatever it is.

MR MADDOCKS: The Thursday is the 10th.

MR COCHRANE: The 10th?

MR MADDOCKS: Yes, yes.

MS LEWIN: Can I just double check there's nothing commercial-in-confidence in this presentation, because we'll need a copy of that to ..... to the website.

MR MADDOCKS: No, that's all fine, I think.

MS LEWIN: That's it? Thank you very much.

MR MADDOCKS: There was a PDF and a Powerpoint presentation. All that's been lodged.

MS LEWIN: Wonderful, thank you.

MR COCHRANE: And one of more of you, presumably, will be available for a site visit?

MR MADDOCKS: Yes, I'll certainly be. Yes.

MR BOUTRY: It was the 11th? It was pencilled in - - -

MR MADDOCKS: 10/11. We'll, 10th September.

MR BOUTRY: Yes.

MR COCHRANE: The 10th. The public meeting is on the 11th.

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MR MADDOCKS: Okay. That's the Friday.

MR COCHRANE: Yes. So we might need to quickly think about that request for the public meeting on the modification.

MR MADDOCKS: The letter you're going to receive about the stage 2 cabling is proposing we'll have the final report by, say, the 8th of November. It's not too long after that meeting, but if we can – I'll talk to the consultant and see if we can get some preliminary analyses, because they go on to site next week. So if we can get something the following week, you know, just in time for that meeting, at least there's some information that can be distributed at that time.

MR BOUTRY: Is it just one week field work, or a few days?

MR MADDOCKS: Yeah, yeah. Because the following week is a short week. Bank holiday.

MR HALL: So it would need to be ready before the meeting, yeah.

MR COCHRANE: Yes.

MR MADDOCKS: Well, the thing is, we can get some preliminary information through, and I think – I'd like to thin we can achieve that and present, at least, a worst-case scenario before we refine it down.

MR COCHRANE: Yes.

MR MADDOCKS: Yes. We'll certainly do our best to do it.

MR COCHRANE: We just want to make sure that the process works smoothly for everyone.

MR MADDOCKS: Yes. We want to be open and transparent about what the impacts are and how they're being addressed.

MR COCHRANE: What's the likelihood, Adrian, of being able to, you know, visit some of the locations that you pointed out in the Powerpoint?

MR MADDOCKS: Yeah, I mean, if you've got particular places you want to visit, we obviously can facilitate that. You can obviously see within the stage 1 array, if you want to see all that, what the constructed wind farm looks like, then obviously we can visit key locations. So perhaps if you can identify where your key concerns are, we can then structure your visit.

MR COCHRANE: Yes. I think we'll do that.

MS LEWIN: Yes, we'll do that.

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MR COCHRANE: Absolutely. Great. Terrific. All right, thank you very much. Thank you for your time.

MR MADDOCKS: Thank you.

MR COCHRANE: And we'll finish up at 2.39. Thank you.

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