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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

TRANSCRIPT IN CONFIDENCE

O/N H-966149

INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING WITH NARRABRI SHIRE COUNCIL

RE: VICKERY EXTENSION PROJECT

PANEL:

**JOHN HANN
PROF CHRIS FELL
PROF GARRY WILLGOOSE**

ASSISTING PANEL:

**DAVID WAY
MATTHEW TODD-JONES**

NARRABRI SHIRE COUNCIL:

**CATHY REDDING
DANIEL BOYCE
STEWART TODD
CAMERON STAINES**

LOCATION:

**GUNNEDAH TOWN HALL
SMITHURST THREATRE
152 CONADILLY STREET
GUNNEDAH, NEW SOUTH WALES**

DATE:

**9.34 AM, WEDNESDAY,
19 DECEMBER 2018**

MR J. HANN: All right. Look, welcome, and, look, thanks for making the time to come and meet us here in Gunnedah. We do appreciate it. I've just got some formality to run through, and then we can get into the detail, if you can bear with us. We've got a new protocol of recording our meetings, which started earlier this year,
5 so that's why we've got all the microphones and the – so I will go through the process, but if we're ready to start? So, look, good morning and welcome, and before we begin I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land in which we meet, and pay my respects to the elders, past and present.

10 Welcome to the meeting today. Whitehaven Coal Limited, the applicant, is proposing to develop the Vickery Extension Project, an open cut mine near Boggabri, New South Wales. My name is John Hann, and I'm the chair of the IPC panel, and joining me are Professor Chris Fell on my left and Professor Garry Willgoose on my right. The other attendees at the meeting are David Way on my left
15 here and Matthew Todd-Jones from our Secretariat, who are assisting us. What I will do, because of the recording, if I just could get you to do your own introductions and then Emily can then attribute – when you speak she will get that accurate - - -

MS C. REDDING: That's fine.
20

MR HANN: - - - if that's okay.

MS REDDING: Yes. Well, thank you for the opportunity. Councillor Cathy Redding. I am Mayor of Narrabri Shire Council.
25

MR D. BOYCE: I'm Daniel Boyce. I'm the Manger of Planning and Regulatory Services at Narrabri Shire.

MR S. TODD: Stewart Todd, S-t-e-w-a-r-t, the General Manager, Narrabri Shire.
30

MR C. STAINES: Cameron Staines, councillor and also on the CCC of Vickery Coal Mine.

MR HANN: Thank you. So, look, in the interests of openness and transparency and
35 to ensure the full capture of the information, today's meeting is being recorded, which I mentioned a little earlier, and we will put the transcript up on our website. Look, this meeting is one part of what's a multi-stage hearing, so this is a new process that has been introduced. What that means is that it's taking place at the preliminary stage and it will form one of several sources of information on which we
40 will base our issues report. So following this process we will prepare and issue an issues report, and that's why it's really important for us to understand what those issues are that Narrabri Council consider important.

We will ask questions throughout the meeting but, look, if you feel that you don't
45 have an answer on the spot, not a problem. You can just put that in writing and send that to us. So, we appreciate the detailed submission you've made, and we thought

the best thing to do was if you could pour out the key matters that you think are of particular issue for our attention and then we will go through them. Now, I'm not sure who – who would like to go – if you would like to kick off. But, look, you've gone through in a great deal of detail, and that's really important for us and helpful for us, but you've also put your recommendations in what you would require in terms of any approval down the track.

MR TODD: Yes. So, thanks, John. If the panel is happy with this format, what we sort of discussed was we poured – probably done exactly what you requested of us and poured out some key issues.

MR HANN: Okay.

MR TODD: But we might just let the Mayor make some opening remarks on probably three of the major themes and then we can then allow Dan probably to go into the technical detail of that, if that's okay by the panel.

MS REDDING: Yes.

MR HANN: Of course.

MS REDDING: All right. Well - - -

MR HANN: Thank you.

MS REDDING: - - - thank you very much. Yes. I will just make some opening remarks on three of the main issues, and these are remarks that I am hearing from the communities, and the first is in regard to the process. What the community are really looking for is a very transparent and robust process in which – and particularly around the Boggabri community would like to be able to have their say within their community; not particularly to have a hearing around the – in the Boggabri community.

A lot of times a lot of the residents will find it difficult to travel to Gunnedah and, given the fact that the mine is in such close proximity to Boggabri, they are really probably the most affected community. That is probably one of the main – the main things. And at the moment they're just feeling a bit of a lack of confidence in the process. They're feeling that they're not actually being heard, being listened to, so if that could be given a great deal of consideration, that would be appreciated and make them feel inclusive.

MR BOYCE: And if I could just jump in at that point, Madam Mayor, one of the things that council would appreciate is if the IPC can confirm the deadline for written submissions. So council is intending to follow-up its presentation here today, or statements here today, with a written submission to the IPC. We understood that the deadline was 11 January, based on a public hearing to be held yesterday. Just wondering whether there's any clarification on whether that is still the deadline.

MR HANN: I will take that on notice and come back and confirm that.

MS REDDING: Yes.

5 MR WAY: I was going to say I can - - -

MR HANN: Can you confirm that now?

10 MR WAY: So, I can confirm that now. The deadline for written submissions will be based upon when the public hearing is scheduled, so that – we don't have an exact deadline in the sense we don't have a date for the hearing - - -

MR BOYCE: Sure.

15 MR WAY: - - - confirmed, but it will be after the date for the hearing, so it won't be 11 January.

MR BOYCE: Great. Thank you. And - - -

20 MR TODD: I suppose just to be crystal clear, so the date of the written submissions will be post the to be rescheduled public hearing.

MR WAY: Public hearing. That's correct, yes.

25 MR HANN: Correct, yes.

MR BOYCE: Probably while we're on the process side of things, council wrote to the IPC on 30 November requesting a public hearing be held in Boggabri. We would like to ask the IPC to perhaps provide a response to us at this time.

30 MR HANN: You've not had a response to your - - -

MR BOYCE: Not to my knowledge.

35 MR TODD: No.

MS REDDING: No.

40 MR HANN: - - - written – thank you.

MR BOYCE: So, I guess, would the Commission be open to considering that request, is what we're really looking for.

45 MR WAY: Yes. We will be open, but we will have to take that on notice, just as – there will be some logistical considerations that we will have to look at for that, but it will be considered, yes.

MR HANN: That letter was dated the 30th?

MR BOYCE: 30 November, yes.

5 MR HANN: Of November. Okay. Thanks.

MR BOYCE: So, from our perspective, we think having a public hearing in Boggabri would go some way to alleviate some of the concerns that the Mayor has raised in terms of the community that we feel is impacted the most by the project,
10 will have a hearing on their turf, so to speak.

PROF C. FELL: We certainly listened to and heard you on that matter.

MS REDDING: Yes. Yes. Well, thank you very much. If that could be favourable
15 considered it would certainly go a long way.

MR HANN: Okay.

MR BOYCE: If we could just raise a couple more points with the process.
20 Obviously, there has been recent resignations of the panel members, Mr Peter Duncan and Professor Anne Clarke. It's our understanding that there have been some meetings held with the IPC, the department and the proponent where those members that have now declared a conflict of interest took part in those meetings and chaired those meetings. We would just ask the IPC to, I guess, explain to us how
25 you will address potential concerns from a probity and transparency perspective.

MR HANN: All right. Is that a question you would expect a response at this time?

MR BOYCE: Well, I guess in a nutshell, will those meetings be held again with the
30 new panel members?

MR HANN: Well, first of all, because we have recorded transcripts, there's a recording of each of those meetings, so the issues that were raised and addressed at that time - - -
35

MR BOYCE: Sure.

MR HANN: - - - are – benefit from those recordings, but that's something that we're considering at the moment. Bearing in mind the early stage of the process,
40 what it means is it is often the case that we will go back to the applicant, for example, and the department to seek further clarification on particular issues, and in doing that, that's also a time when we can have further briefing that, in my case, being a new chair and new member of the panel, and the same in terms of Chris, that we can get the benefit of additional briefing at that time. So the opportunity is there
45 to do that.

MR BOYCE: Thank you. Well, I think we might move on to a couple of the things we wanted to touch on from our submission. Obviously, our submission to the EIS was quite comprehensive. However, there's probably two or three themes, in particular, we want to expand on today. The first was the economic benefits and I
5 I guess, having reviewed the preliminary issues report from the department, we felt there was limited scrutiny of the statistics relating to community support or claims about projected job creation.

The Marsden Jacobs Report commissioned by the department made reference to
10 some overly optimistic assumptions and, I guess, from a council perspective, we expect that the IPC and the department will scrutinise those projected employment benefits because it's part of the – I guess, the community concern that the project may not realise all of the job creation and contracting benefits that have been spoken about in the economic assessment.

15 In our written submission to the IPC we will elaborate on some of the, I guess, references we're referring to in the Marsden Jacobs Report; I won't list them all now. But certainly, we endorse the view of the Marsden Jacobs Report, that the – some of the projections and assumptions were overly optimistic.

20 PROF G. WILLGOOSE: Is that in the sense of the actual raw numbers for employment or in terms of the employees that actually are resident within Narrabri Shire?

25 MR BOYCE: I would say both.

MR: Yes.

MS REDDING: Yes.

30 MR HANN: Okay. Yes.

MS REDDING: Yes. Absolutely. That's a genuine concern within the community, that they don't – they feel that probably what's being projected in the EIS is a little
35 overstated and there's not a lot of benefit to the Boggabri or Narrabri Shire.

MR BOYCE: One of the particular matters that council would like to see addressed – didn't appear to be mentioned in any of the EIS documents – was the use of
40 autonomous vehicles. We're talking about a 25-year mine life here so it's our view that at some point there will be the use of autonomous vehicles. So we need to understand whether the economic benefits that perhaps accrue in the first year are going to be there in the 20th year.

MR HANN: All right. Yes.

45 MR BOYCE: If there's nothing else to expand on there, Stuart, I might move onto the social impacts.

MR TODD: Yes. No, like you suggested, there will be further detail of that – the key issues. Yes.

MR HANN: Okay.

5

MR BOYCE: We touched on the social impacts in our submission but, I guess, if I can summarise. The concern of council is that Boggabri, in particular, perhaps won't receive the projected economic benefits but will feel all of the impacts from the project. We have got a situation in Boggabri where there's a cumulative impact of a number of mining projects. We have got Maules Creek open cut, Boggabri, 10 Tarrawonga and Rocglen. And it's our view, having looked at current literature, that this, compounding the impact from multiple mining projects, it really has the capacity to stress the social, human and economic systems around our shire.

15 So we're really looking for the department, in its assessment, to take into account the cumulative impact of all of these projects and, in particular, we want to stress that we would have a concern if the department approached this assessment through the prism of it just being an extension to an existing project. The existing project is not operational. We feel there needs to be an objective assessment of this project in its 20 totality.

MS REDDING: Yes. Because it's – you can't gauge the impacts on the community when the original approval has not even started – hasn't even turned a sod of earth. So even from the original approval, you can't actually say – accurately say what the 25 impacts are going to be, particularly on the Boggabri community. There is – there's no doubt that within that community, they certainly feel that they have gained no benefits at all from these mining operations – and, as Dan stated, there are quite a few mining operations around there – but particularly from any of the Whitehaven mining operations. It's certainly a very valid feeling that there has been no benefits 30 at all to that community. And there's also quite a low level of trust for the proponent in that community.

MR BOYCE: If I can just jump in there. So from our perspective, one of the submissions from the Boggabri Business and Community Progress Association probably summed up the sentiments – and I'm quoting here: 35

There will be little or no benefit to the community of Boggabri from this extension. Rather, we will have serious overload of our infrastructure and ongoing issues that are not being addressed.

40

So for us that summarises the vibe.

MR HANN: Yes.

45 PROF FELL: What would you say, in order of priority, would be the infrastructure things which you would be concerned about, or they would be concerned about?

MR BOYCE: Look, I would say certainly there's the – there's the local road network. That's obviously a key consideration of council as well. However, for Boggabri it's also about frontline services, it's about medical services, but it's also about not necessarily just offsetting an impact. It's actually them being able to harness some sort of - - -

MS REDDING: Benefit.

MR BOYCE: - - - benefit – social benefit - - -

MS REDDING: Yes.

MR BOYCE: - - - economic benefit, to actually see the town prosper.

PROF FELL: So some of the employee money being spent locally - - -

MR BOYCE: Absolutely.

PROF FELL: - - - and being involved in local community groups.

MR BOYCE: Absolutely.

MS REDDING: And relocating – living within the community.

MR HANN: Yes.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes. So I mean, this experience presumably is the result of the mine camp just out of town. So who actually – you know, sort of – where do the people in that camp actually work? Do they work at all the different mines? I don't know – I don't think we know very much about that camp other than, sort of, you know, just sort of seeing that there's a bunch of people living there. Is it – are they Whitehaven employees or are they - - -

MS REDDING: No. No. They're not – the camp is not just confined to any one company.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Right. Okay.

MS REDDING: The camps are actually open to – it doesn't necessarily have to be mining operations.

MR: That's correct. Yes.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Okay.

MS REDDING: It can be any large operation where you have an influx - - -

PROF WILLGOOSE: Right. Okay.

MS REDDING: - - - of - - -

5 PROF WILLGOOSE: Temporary workers.

MS REDDING: - - - temporary workers. And particularly with the Whitehaven Vickery one, they're talking something in the vicinity of 1000 to 1200 construction workers.

10 PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

MS REDDING: And all to reside within that camp or within Boggabri.

15 PROF WILLGOOSE: Which is almost the population of Boggabri.

MS REDDING: It's over the population of Boggabri.

PROF WILLGOOSE: What is the population of Boggabri, roughly?

20 MS REDDING: Nine - - -

MR TODD: In the vicinity of 900.

25 MS REDDING: 900. Between - - -

MR HANN: 900. Yes.

MS REDDING: Yes.

30 PROF WILLGOOSE: Okay. So that's very significant.

MR HANN: Yes. Yes.

35 PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

MS REDDING: Yes. It is very significant.

MR BOYCE: I think, just coming back to the impact as well, I think there's –

40 looking at the population projections in the EIS documentation as well, there's an element of, given the size of the town, an influx of, you know, 100 people to Gunnedah is not going to have the impact that the influx of 50, 60, 70 are going to have in Boggabri.

45 PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes. Okay.

MR HANN: More sensitive - - -

MR BOYCE: Yes. Absolutely.

MR HANN: - - - if you like, to the - - -

5 PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes. Thank you.

MR TODD: If I could probably just add though that I think the council can see the advantages in the actual camp style, especially during that initial spike of – construction workers especially. I will speak – personally, I think I have seen the
10 real estate bubble, so to speak, not burst because we have been able to absorb through that construction period larger workforces. So I think they do serve a good purpose but it's about actually having that balance between not undermining the social and economic benefit but also adding the positivity of having the camp that will – you know, doesn't see the rental prices skyrocket through the roof - - -

15

MR HANN: Yes. Yes.

MR TODD: - - - and, you know, put the lower end - - -

20 MR HANN: It does relieve some pressure, if you like.

MS REDDING: It does.

MR TODD: - - - out of the rental market altogether. So I think they do have their
25 place and I think council would see that, but it's about, again, that fine balance between, yes, where – where does that serve its purpose and then where does the operational staff and the benefit then flow from the – I think it was over 100 estimated to be in Boggabri through the operational phases. I suppose it's that impact after construction.

30

MS REDDING: Yes.

MR TODD: Because I think they serve a very good purpose through the construction in that initial boom of population for construction workers. But that
35 ongoing - - -

MR HANN: So you - - -

MR TODD: - - - how do we manage the hundred plus the families - - -

40

MS REDDING: Yes. The ongoing.

MR TODD: - - - plus the kids.

45 MR HANN: That's right.

MR TODD: Through the operational period, the 24 years of the 25 year life of the mine.

5 PROF WILLGOOSE: Would you like to see the hundred and their associated families living permanently in Boggabri or would you – I'm - - -

MS REDDING: Yes.

10 MR TODD: Yes, for sure.

MS REDDING: Absolutely.

MR TODD: Yes.

15 MS REDDING: Absolutely. Like – and particularly within the Narrabri Shire, we would like to see as many families move, not only to Boggabri but possibly Narrabri, within that shire, you know. We would like to see an aim of at least 50 per cent.

20 MR STAINES: That's a sensitive market too, because young families want the best for their kids these days, so they want to make sure their welfare and their life being and an education is right for the kids, so.

25 MR HANN: Yes. All right. We need to, I guess, cover quite a bit of ground here, so is there anything else on the social impact side that is critical that you want to draw our attention to now? Otherwise, we will move through to some of the other aspects of your submission.

30 MR BOYCE: Look, I guess just to conclude, as the Mayor has touched on, our reading of submissions and discussions with the community does appear to be that there is a bit of a trust deficit with the proponent, and it's our view that Whitehaven needs to provide nearby agricultural stakeholders with more resources, support and assurance with respect to the actual and perceived impacts of the project. We believe that a well-drafted and meaningful voluntary planning agreement may go some way to address some of these social impacts.

35 MS REDDING: Yes.

40 PROF WILLGOOSE: Can you talk about the trust issue. Are there definitive event – I mean, trust is one of those things that both earned can be easily lost. I'm just wondering if there are particular incidents that, sort of, Whitehaven has lost trust with the community that you can point to.

45 MS REDDING: With the community, I think it's more – it could be explained more to the fact that – they get the feeling that Whitehaven just dismiss them and, probably because they're a smaller community they just don't – they just don't feel that a lot of times maybe their concerns are listened to.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Okay.

MS REDDING: And heard by the proponent. And just this feeling that “I’ve been dismissed”.

5 PROF WILLGOOSE: Okay. So - - -

MS REDDING: Just not – not – not given – probably not given the respect, if I could put it like that.

10 PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes. Okay.

MS REDDING: That they deserve.

15 PROF WILLGOOSE: So that suggests that, for instance, the CCCs are not working. I mean, you’re on the - - -

MR STAINES: They’ve only just started the Vickery one.

20 PROF WILLGOOSE: Okay.

MR STAINES: Yes.

PROF WILLGOOSE: So I’m thinking if the CCCs - - -

25 MR HANN: So it’s early days, though, for obviously - - -

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

30 MS REDDING: With the Vickery CCC it is, but there has certainly been, with the other CCCs there has certainly been - - -

PROF FELL: What’s the general - - -

35 MS REDDING: - - - a lot of issues.

PROF FELL: Sorry – excuse me. What’s the general community feeling about the ability of groups like the EPA or the DPIW to actually do their job of regulating the mining environment, because that presumably flows over - - -

40 MS REDDING: That’s right.

PROF FELL: - - - into what will happen in the future.

45 MR BOYCE: Yes. I think my sense of it is that there’s certainly a concern that there’s perhaps not enough boots on the ground from the compliance perspective. The other point as well, though, is to actually publish and make transparent any

5 compliance or enforcement actions. So when we look at this project, there's a number of aspects to the environmental impact such as, you know, ground water, surface water, etcetera. We've done all the modelling. We now need to prove to the community that the modelling was right, and we need to prove to the community that the conditions are being enforced, and the only way to do that is to make all of the information transparent.

PROF FELL: Okay. Thank you.

10 MR BOYCE: So, I think, just to conclude on the social impact, council does note that not all Boggabri stakeholders are opposed to the project and, indeed, there is some support in the community for the project.

15 MR HANN: All right. What's next on your list?

MR BOYCE: Look, we were going to touch on the transport assessment. We probably need to expand on that in our written submission to you.

20 MR HANN: All right.

MR BOYCE: But, I guess, to summarise, we have some concerns that the transport route for employees from Boggabri, whether they be in town or at the Mac camp, is not practical, and potentially not the safest route.

25 MR HANN: Right.

MR BOYCE: It is our preference that the proponent look at an alternative route via Braymont Road, which is, essentially, the shortest route A to B and, we feel, a more practical and safe alternative, but we're happy to expand on that in our written submission.

30 MR HANN: If you could, that would be helpful.

MR BOYCE: Sure.

35 MR HANN: All right.

MS REDDING: Yes.

40 MR HANN: Okay.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Specifically, it would be useful to know what it is that specifically is wrong with their proposed route.

45 MR BOYCE: Absolutely.

MR HANN: Yes.

PROF WILLGOOSE: And how – for instance, is there a problem with upgrading it, for instance, relative to Braymont Road, or something like that.

5 MR BOYCE: One of the issues will be a single-lane bridge, which is in need of replacement, but it's our understanding that there is no intention from the RMS at this stage to replace that bridge.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Okay.

10 MR BOYCE: But we will expand on that in our written submission.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes. Good. Yes, that will be good.

15 MR HANN: All right. I'm sorry, we need to progress this. We've got a limited amount of time before our site visit, so what would be helpful is if you could draw out the remaining key matters that you would like us to focus on, and also anything else that you feel you can elaborate on in more detail from a submission.

20 MR BOYCE: Sure. So, look, I think our EIS submission speaks for itself. We probably don't need to go into any more detail at this point in time. Our written submission to the IPC will simply expand on the three themes that we've touched on here today, which will be the economic benefits, the social impact and the transport assessment. So I think that pretty much covers what we want to raise with you today.

25 MR HANN: Can I ask one question around the biodiversity and offsets and the use of the post-mine landscape for rehabilitation to generate offset credits as opposed to returning to agricultural land. I think you made some statements in here which, if you wouldn't mind just clarifying, if you like, or elaborating on, that would be helpful from our point of view. It's an important issue.

30 MR BOYCE: Absolutely. So, from the council and the community perspective, there is a concern with any process that sterilises productive land. The community and the council understand that this project has a finite life, and what council and, we believe, the community would like to see is that the post-mining land use is returned to productive – economically productive land. We feel that that will be best served by it being returned to productive agricultural land and, indeed, we think there should be a requirement on the proponent to return that to at least the class of agricultural land that it was pre-mining, if not improve it further.

35 MR BOYCE: Absolutely. So, from the council and the community perspective, there is a concern with any process that sterilises productive land. The community and the council understand that this project has a finite life, and what council and, we believe, the community would like to see is that the post-mining land use is returned to productive – economically productive land. We feel that that will be best served by it being returned to productive agricultural land and, indeed, we think there should be a requirement on the proponent to return that to at least the class of agricultural land that it was pre-mining, if not improve it further.

40 MR HANN: All right. How does that sit, then, in terms of the offsets that they clearly would need to require off the site and elsewhere? How does that impact, in your view, the availability of land and the land use that it would therefore be required to tie up? Because it's in perpetuity.

45 MR BOYCE: Correct. And I think that's the concern. You know, the biodiversity offsets are in perpetuity. What the – I guess, taking a bit of a parochial view, what

5 the concern is for our community is that, you know, the biodiversity legislation applies across New South Wales. There's opportunities for offsets elsewhere. What we don't want to see in, you know, amidst other communities with declining populations is that this is – this adds to the pressure on the shire in terms of losing employment and losing economic activity.

MR HANN: Okay. Thank you.

10 PROF FELL: Can I just ask - - -

MR HANN: Yes.

PROF FELL: - - - if I might.

15 MR HANN: Yes.

PROF FELL: You have had experience of mining operation. I'm just interested in the broad question of water in the shire and also environmental impacts on the streams and dams. Do you have any particular guidance for us there?

20 MR BOYCE: Look, I think probably we have outlined much of our concern in our EIS submission but - - -

PROF FELL: I'm aware of that.

25 MR BOYCE: Yes.

PROF FELL: I'm just looking at the key item - - -

30 MR BOYCE: Yes. Absolutely. I mean, fundamentally, the community rely on access to groundwater so the community and council won't accept any detrimental impact on the ability of - - -

PROF FELL: Do you feel that the water sharing plan, etcetera, is reasonable?

35 MR BOYCE: The which water sharing plan, sorry?

PROF FELL: The DPI administered water sharing, if you like, which puts limits on take, etcetera.

40 MR BOYCE: I think if it's enforced. Council accepts that there's a – you know, there's a need for different industries to have access to the water but the concern is that I think the mining project sometimes, by buying water licences and that sort of thing, can actually take more than their fair share.

45 PROF FELL: Okay.

- MS REDDING: And I think, particularly with the water, is where the community impacts really need to be looked at. On what is happening around the whole area of this project, not just the project in isolation but also what is happening within the shire, in regard to the water particularly.
- 5 MR HANN: So this is a cumulative - - -
- MS REDDING: Yes. Yes.
- 10 MR HANN: - - - impact of – in total.
- MS REDDING: That’s exactly right.
- MR HANN: Yes. Okay.
- 15 MR STAINES: And a more stringent – more policed monitoring of the water use too. Like, I think we need to make sure that who is taking the water is getting allocated - - -
- 20 MR HANN: Yes. Yes.
- MR STAINES: Yes. Proper monitoring.
- MR HANN: Okay.
- 25 MS REDDING: Yes. Because one of the concerns around the Boggabri community is the bore field with nine new bores planned and what is that going to do to the water table.
- 30 PROF WILLGOOSE: This - - -
- MS REDDING: It’s - - -
- MR HANN: Yes.
- 35 MS REDDING: Particularly with what else – whatever else is going on around.
- MR HANN: Yes.
- 40 PROF WILLGOOSE: So during the last drought – the 2000 drought - - -
- MS REDDING: Yes.
- 45 PROF WILLGOOSE: - - - the water sharing, as I understand it, when I was involved in some assessment Gateway, to do a water mark, that the landholders around there – and I think it’s the same groundwater zone – were saying that during the last drought they were reduced to 30 per cent of their allocations so instead of

getting, for one unit, a mega litre per year, they were get .3 of a mega litre per year.
Do – I mean - - -

MS REDDING: Yes.

5

PROF WILLGOOSE: Do you see that as, potentially, a – not a trigger point but a point for social concern?

MS REDDING: I certainly would see that as a bit of a point for social – as social concern, particularly now, when you look at our main – you know, the main water source for irrigators and even environmental for our rivers from Keepit. It's dry.

10

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

MS REDDING: We don't know how long that's going to stay dry. If we have – you know, and obviously while that's dry, even the farmers and irrigators who have groundwater bores, they're going to be pumping more. And you have another nine new bores go up - - -

15

MR HANN: Yes. Okay.

20

MS REDDING: - - - it – what will happen to that groundwater is vital.

MR HANN: Okay.

25

MR STAINES: I think if you increase the surface water allocation, that will relieve the groundwater issue too so – I think it's only 10 per cent of the ground – of surface water allowed at catchment. I think if you increase that, that will relieve the pressures off groundwater, the management.

30

MR HANN: Okay. Garry, Chris, do you have any other questions?

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes. There's a lot of complicated issues around the - - -

MR: Yes.

35

PROF WILLGOOSE: - - - licencing and the - - -

MS REDDING: Yes.

40

PROF WILLGOOSE: - - - fact that part of a bore field replaces water that they're extracting from the Namoi at the current time. So – but – so the one thing I notice from the EIS – and I sort of – is that the bore field is an area where there doesn't seem to be, at least based on the EIS, existing bore fields for farmers. Is that correct?

Do – I mean, you're nodding so are you saying - - -

45

MR BOYCE: Look, my understanding – and I’m sort of scratching my memory here but my understanding was that the model had, yes, predicted very minor drawdown on - - -

5 PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

MR BOYCE: - - - agricultural bores.

10 PROF WILLGOOSE: But – so I’m just saying that if the Namoi goes down there, it’s actually sitting on a tributary and I don’t know if that’s Creek that’s the tributary and there doesn’t seem to be any – certainly based on the EIS, there doesn’t seem to be anything in the way of bore fields there currently.

15 MR STAINES: Or – you mean irrigators? I don’t know.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

MR STAINES: No.

20 PROF WILLGOOSE: Is there a particular reason for that?

MR STAINES: I think because of the poor access of water I think around there. I think it’s a bit of a void for the bores around that actual mine site so - - -

25 PROF WILLGOOSE: All right. Okay.

MR STAINES: In that area.

30 PROF WILLGOOSE: Okay. So there may be – there may well be an issue in terms of connectivity between that groundwater – underground water and the main Namoi flood plain. Yes.

PROF FELL: The quantity is not unreasonable - - -

35 PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

PROF FELL: - - - if I can put it that way.

40 PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

PROF FELL: That’s what the EIS says.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

45 PROF FELL: But you can get localised impacts depending on the - - -

PROF WILLGOOSE: That’s - - -

PROF FELL: - - -

PROF WILLGOOSE: And this is what I'm trying to get to - - -

5 PROF FELL: And that's the issue

PROF WILLGOOSE: Is that there's actually not much in the way of knowledge
- - -

10 PROF FELL: No.

PROF WILLGOOSE: - - - of what the groundwater is like around there because
there's no existing - - -

15 PROF FELL: But you will. The problem is if you get a couple of dry seasons and
in fact the horizontal refill – recharge is less and the way this is handled, as you quite
rightly say, Peter, is reduce the allocation that people have per share and that's what
the impact is pointing out.

20 MR: Yes

MS REDDING: It does.

PROF FELL: But – well, Boggabri draws town's water from bores, does it not?

25 MR BOYCE: Yes.

PROF FELL: So again, you're looking at impact. Now, insurance policy says
you can only drop the so much before you're in breach and how do you handle
30 that at a mine? So they're some of the issues that need to be addressed properly in
documentation and the water management plan for the mine which has to be signed
off by DPIW.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

35 PROF FELL: So I mean, you know, these are issues that – water, I would imagine,
is an issue in this – this area.

MS REDDING: Yes.

40 MR: Absolutely.

MS REDDING: Absolutely.

45 PROF FELL: So you know, that has to be tied up properly.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes. And it was an issue in the last drought.

MR HANN: Yes. Yes. All right. Chris, Garry, do you have anything further - - -

PROF WILLGOOSE: No.

5 PROF FELL: That has been very beneficial.

MR HANN: Yes.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

10 MR HANN: Is there anything else you - - -

PROF WILLGOOSE: Well, actually, there is one question that - - -

15 MR HANN: We're just limited in time, Garry, so please just - - -

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes. That's right. Just a quick one I raise. Do you have any views about the railway line?

20 MR BOYCE: In council's submission, we actually made some commentary on that. We did have the WRM Water assessment peer reviewed by our own flood experts.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Yes.

25 MR BOYCE: So generally speaking, we were satisfied with the – yes, with the assessment in terms of the rail line.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Okay. Okay.

30 MR HANN: All right. Anything further from council before we wrap up our meeting? Other than, from our point of view, we certainly appreciate meeting us here and also giving us some good clarification on some of the key issues, particularly around the social economic side, which has been very beneficial for us - - -

35 MS REDDING: Yes.

MR HANN: - - - because you have got such an intimate knowledge of that and we don't.

40 MS REDDING: No.

MR HANN: So that's very helpful.

45 MS REDDING: Yes.

MR HANN: Thank you.

MS REDDING: No – well, thank you for the opportunity of coming and presenting what we wanted to present and just elaborate a bit further. But we will be elaborating even further with another submission.

5 MR HANN: Good. Thank you.

MS REDDING: And particularly on the points that we have raised and that you have also raised. But if – yes. Just – and I’m sure whatever we have said here will be taken into consideration and - - -

10

MR HANN: Indeed it will.

MS REDDING: Yes.

15

MR:

MR HANN: Madam Mayor, thank you very much.

MS REDDING: Thank you very much for that.

20

MR: Thank you.

PROF WILLGOOSE: Thanks for travelling down from Narrabri.

25

MR HANN: Meeting closed.

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[10.14 am]