

MR A. HUTTON: Okay. Well, good afternoon and welcome, and thank you for coming on to this teleconference this afternoon. Before we begin, I would just like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. Welcome to the meeting today
5 for the Jindera Solar Farm project. Jindera Solar Farm Proprietary Limited proposes to develop 120 megawatt solar farm approximately four kilometres north of Jindera in the Greater Hume Shire local government area. My name is Andrew Hutton. I'm the chair of this particular commission panel, and I'm joined by my fellow commissioner, Professor Zada Lipman. We're also joined by Stephen Barry and
10 Jane Anderson from the office of the Independent Planning Commission.

In the interest of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting will be recorded and a full transcript will be produced and made available on the commission's website. This meeting is one part of the
15 commission's considerations of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the commission will base its determination. It is important that commissioners have the opportunity to ask questions of attendees and clarify issues whenever it's considered appropriate, and if you are asked a question and you're not in a position to answer that, then we are happy for you to take that on
20 notice and provide a response in writing, which we'll also put up on our website.

I just request too, as we move into the meeting, for the first time that you speak if you could introduce yourself and your role on your project – just the first time, so that that will assist with identifying names and voices on the transcript, and for all
25 members to also ensure that we do not speak over the top of each other, just to ensure accuracy of the transcript as we move through the meeting. So let's begin. I just want to acknowledge – and it's a slightly different order of events, that we've had the opportunity to visit the site, and thank you for that opportunity a few weeks ago. Normally this meeting would be held before that, but we were in the area looking at a
30 number of other projects so it was an excellent opportunity to get boots on the ground and have a look over the project. So thank you for your help on that day.

We have sent through just an agenda, and I guess you've got a presentation prepared that you would like to kick off with. Yes. I think if you're happy, we'll commence
35 with the presentation. Would you prefer we hold questions till the end or are you happy to take questions as we move through the presentation?

MR S. GRASBY: Hi. This is Symon Grasby from Green Switch Australia. We'd certainly be more than happy for you to put your questions as we're going along.
40 That's the format we've tried to build into the presentation.

MR HUTTON: Great. Thank you, Symon. That's appreciated. So what I might do then is just hand over to you, Symon, to take the screen or take control and - - -

45 MR GRASBY: Yes - - -

MR HUTTON: we'll commence the presentation.

MR GRASBY: Okay. Thank you, Andrew. Now, I was hoping that Jin would be able to share her screen and run the presentation.

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MR HUTTON: So, Jin, are you organising that now?

MS K. YU: Yes. Just one second.

10 MR HUTTON: Little bit of feedback there too. That's okay. We'll work with it.

MR GRASBY: Yes.

15 MR HUTTON: So I can see the PowerPoint presentation not yet in presentation – there we are. So that's now in presentation mode. So, Symon, I'll hand over to you and look forward to your presentation.

MR GRASBY: Okay. Thank you, Andrew, and thank you, Jin. So good afternoon everybody. As I was just saying, my name's Symon Grasby from Green Switch
20 Australia. So I've been involved with the project throughout the development cycle working with Hanwha. Thank you very much for meeting with us today. We've got a short presentation. What we tried to do with the presentation is to pick up on those aspects of the project that have evolved during the consultation process, so really since the public exhibition phase. We also have used the presentation to pick up on a
25 couple of points that were in – raised by Andrew and Zada out on the site visits as well. I think also – we'd also just like to note that obviously Mike, Nicole and their whole team at the department has produced their report, which we recognise as being a balanced and fair assessment of the merits of the project, and obviously we welcome their recommendation to approve the project subject to planning conditions.
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Okay. Thank you, Jin. Could we have the first slide? Thank you. Okay. So just a very quick introduction. So the Jindera Solar Farm project is a collaboration between Hanwha Energy and Green Switch. Hanwha Energy are a – an owner and operator of solar farms. They have two already in Australia and have two more,
35 including Jindera, on the development. Importantly for Hanwha, while they are a producer of power, through their company Nectr they're actually also a seller of power, providing electricity to retail customers. Nectr's currently got about 9000 customers. It is a relatively young startup, but it's a very good proposition because we've got a generator and sales going on within the same company lines.
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Okay. Jin, could I have the next slide, please? Right. Thank you, Jin. Okay. So why did we look to Jindera? Well, I think first of all, as we've mentioned, Hanwha is very much about generating renewable energy and supplying that into the grid into its customers. Now, why Jindera specifically, because when we started to look for
45 areas that were suitable for a solar farm, what we realised is that really grid connection is pretty much your primary reason for doing anything. The substation at Jindera, which is operated by TransGrid, is excellently located. It allows power from

the proposed solar farm to be transmitted out on to the 132kV lines that serve rural New South Wales, so that's places like Albury-Wodonga – sorry, I know that's Victoria, but Albury-Wodonga, and then Wagga, and then also, importantly, out on to the 330kV network, which supports Sydney, the Greater Sydney area, Melbourne, and of course all the main power load down the coastal strip.

Jindera has a good solar resource, and also once we started to investigate the area we found that the – we found that there was good suitable land: relatively flat, low value agricultural uses and, most importantly, we found two willing landowners who were both supportive of the idea of solar generation, but also were thinking along the same lines as us, in wanting a project that would allow ongoing agricultural activity alongside solar farming. Thanks, Jin. Could we jump forward again? Okay. I guess you're familiar with the project by now, but just to recap: it's 120 megawatt solar farm connecting to the TransGrid substation. The intention is to continue and co-locate both agricultural activity and solar together on the same site. We have got a VPA with Greater Hume Shire Council. Yes, and as I've already mentioned, obviously we note the DPIE's findings.

Okay. Jin, let's jump forward again, please. So I think the project benefits, really, for me, they're in two classes or two groupings. One is all about renewable power, the – what this scheme can provide towards that transition towards renewables, and then also economic and more local economic advantages that we can generate from the scheme. We also note that obviously New South Wales government have been very active over the last few weeks, releasing things such as their Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, which I think clearly indicates where the state is heading, in terms of really now trying to accelerate that transition from fossil fuel based generating into renewables.

MR HUTTON: Symon, if I may, just one quick question there.

MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: With that recent announcement, was – and I apologise, I haven't read it in detail, but is there any infrastructure upgrades proposed for the area that your solar farm proposal's in? Is that part of that?

MR GRASBY: Yes. There isn't an upgrade, Andrew. That's a good point, but actually the reason why there isn't an upgrade is there isn't one needed, if you see what I mean.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: It's kind of like because it's such a good location it doesn't need any further support. A lot of the Infrastructure Roadmap is about providing that support where it's actually needed the most in order to release the solar and the wind resources. In Jindera it's interesting that they've deemed it doesn't need anything, which indicates it's a good site. So I think in terms of those targets that New South

Wales is now trying to hit, then Jindera will play its part. No one single renewable energy sources is going to hit the sort of scale and targets that New South Wales want, but we will all play our part if we're successful. I think down at the local level – local economic level then there are obvious advantages to play through if we're

5 successful, and that's construction jobs, full-time operational jobs. The project represents 168-170 million capital investment. That's going to generate income right down into regional and local level, and of course the VPA will create some additional local investment.

10 Can we jump on again, please, Jin? Okay. Just a quick look at the project site then, as I know you're fairly familiar with it already, but what we have is a project's – project that's actually split into a western section and an eastern section linked with a central thinner band. The – over on the western side we had an area of mature

15 planting that we intended to retain, more or less located in the centre of the western development. What we've been able to do through the consultation process, particularly working with the department, is actually ensure that that central area of mature vegetation doesn't become isolated. We now have very good connection from both the south and from the north through areas of retained vegetation and through developing new vegetation that will create some great connectivity and

20 actually help develop the habitat there.

We have also – Jin, if we could jump on to the next slide. The scheme also involves extensive amounts of screening, which we've actually added to again during the consultation process. I think we've added, in round numbers, about one kilometre of

25 additional screening, and in some places we've actually thickened the screening to improve the impact of it. We have screening all the way down Ortlipp Road over on the very eastern side of the site, and of course along the southern edge of the eastern side of the site, and then along Glenellen Road.

30 Jin, if we could have the next slide, please. So just looking at Glenellen Road, the – our proposals in this area have developed quite a bit during the whole process here, and what we've actually now come up with is that we've increased the setback from Glenellen Road from where it was previously at 50 metres to now what is, effectively, 120 metres, which is made up now of – working from Glenellen Road

35 across, then there's an area that will be maintained for agricultural use for grazing, and then a 50 metre wide block of tree planting, and then a further 10 metres before reaching the first solar panels. Now, we believe that that distance, plus all the planting, will actually ensure that we have something that is suitable for the setting in which we're proposing to locate it.

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Okay. Jin, could we jump on again - - -

MR HUTTON: Symon, on that screening - - -

45 MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: - - - discussion there, it's fair, I think, to note that the screening won't benefit, like, during construction. Like, you would – there's no intention to plant the screen then wait for the screen to mature before you move into a construction phase if you were successful with approval, and so you're relying on setback principally in that case?
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MR GRASBY: We are relying on setback, plus obviously managing the construction phase so as to try and minimise the potential for nuisance, but yes, it's fair to say, Andrew, that the landscaping planting can't have developed far enough to give much by way of visual screening for the construction phase. That would be correct.
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MR HUTTON: So with construction – you know, in my understanding, the classic piledriving in the piers or the posts that the panels will sit on - - -
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MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: - - - you're only – you're 120 metres from the residents along that road; what – and I note in the noise assessment that there is some relatively high construction noise limits predicted as part of the model, what sort of additional mitigation measures do you think as an applicant you would look to employ to manage that construction noise, noting that it is a relatively short period – weeks, I think, or maybe - - -
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MR GRASBY: Yes.
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MR HUTTON: I'm just keen to get some feedback on that, if you may, Symon.

MR GRASBY: Okay. Andrew, in order to answer that, would you mind if we jump forward for a minute because - - -
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MR HUTTON: Oh, yes. Yes.

MR GRASBY: That's the one – yes. Okay.
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MR HUTTON: Yes. I'm sorry to – if you like, I can wait till then or you can - - -

MR GRASBY: No. No. Let's take it now.

MR HUTTON: Yes.
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MR GRASBY: Yes. Okay. So what we've done here – and sorry this slide's a bit psychedelic, I'll explain it in a second. What this slide does is just try to show graphically the results of the noise modelling that we've undertaken to look at construction activity. So what this represents is – I think we call it scenario 2 in the detail, but that represents a number of pieces of plant, including multiple piling rigs, all located in one place all doing their job.
45

Okay. Now, what we've done here is that if those – if that source of noise was located in the areas that are coloured red, in relation to any of the receptors that are labelled, then there is potential that that noise would become highly intrusive, okay, and in the orange: moderately intrusive, yellow: clearly audible, and so on. Now,
5 the first thing to note here is that we have no construction work in the red areas, so we can discount those straight away. And then within the orange areas – you can actually see where the proposed construction work overlaps with the orange areas, so that would be where there is potential for moderately intrusive noise.

10 Now, the reason for showing you this slide is actually the areas where that occurs are relatively very small. Now, what that means is that we can use various techniques to reduce noise. What one of those, for example, would be – with this work being in such small areas we can actually stage the work, say, for example, not starting until
15 10 o'clock in the morning and finishing at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, 4 o'clock in the afternoon, so keeping the work in that period of time when most people are out and about, either at school or doing their work. We can also not work on a Saturday, you know, to give everybody a respite at the weekend. We can also use things like mobile screening to actually put up an acoustic screen close in where the piling rigs are, because the amount of work is relatively small.

20 So I think this graphic is helpful because it shows that the areas where impact can occur are small and, therefore, are – you know, are relatively easy to manage. We've of course got to be mindful of the clearly audible area – the yellow area as well, but I think it's more this orange zone where we have a real potential to cause nuisance if
25 we don't manage things properly.

MR HUTTON: Do you propose to do monitoring throughout the construction to validate the model?

30 MR GRASBY: We haven't given a specific undertaking, but yes, our intention would be to do at least some monitoring of our own, just to make sure that we have a clear understanding of what noise is being created around the periphery of the site and then we can check that.

35 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: You know, we can deal with it if it is getting to a point where it's becoming a nuisance.

40 MR HUTTON: Yes.

PROF Z. LIPMAN: Have you given any thought to appointing a liaison officer to liaise with the community on noise?

45 MR GRASBY: Yes. We certainly have. The members of the community who we've been meeting with in face-to-face meetings, we've been explaining to them that what we intend is prior to construction we'll actually bring our construction

managers around to meet our neighbours, our residents, make sure that everybody knows who everybody is, and part of the process would be having a single point of contact as a liaison for the neighbours to ensure that there is always somebody that they can get hold of.

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PROF LIPMAN: Thank you.

MR GRASBY: Okay.

10 MR HUTTON: Thank you, Symon. Apologies for jumping ahead on you there.

MR GRASBY: No. That's fine. Okay. So just coming on to community consultation, there were just a few things we wanted to say on this, really. Our consultation exercise, we think, has been extensive, but we also recognise it needed
15 to be. We've got neighbours close by, we need to talk to them and explain what's going on. We've always tried to keep things accessible, so we've had lots of different ways that people could join in the conversation with us. We have, wherever possible, used face-to-face meetings, and we'd actually like to go on record and say thank you to all the people that have had face-to-face meetings with us, including
20 several who have had more than one meeting – you know, multiple meetings, who worked with us through this process as we've worked on the design and the layout of the site.

Also, importantly for us, if we are successful, then consultation doesn't end at that
25 point. It actually starts again with a new sort of angle to it, which is actually about what we touched on earlier there with Zada's question. It's about informing people about construction and working out the best way to undertake the construction to minimise the potential for nuisance, and then it's also about making sure that people have got liaison during the operational phase as well.

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Okay. If we could jump on again, please, Jin. So this slide just gives us a bit of a summary of how far we've travelled, in terms of site design and other aspects of the project since the feedback came to – started to come in from the end of the exhibition period. We've talked about the increased landscaping, the increased set-off to
35 Glenellen Road already. While we were incorporating that into the design and also while we were working on the habitat areas I mentioned earlier we actually undertook a couple of other pieces of redesign. They were very simple things, but they allowed us to do things like move the inverter slightly, slightly relocate the onsite substation, and these things were done to help ensure that there shouldn't
40 really be any potential for noise in the operational phase of the site.

Okay. We've completed the VPA process, and I'll talk a bit more about that in a second. We actually introduced the idea of a local sourcing plan, which is something the department has slightly picked up on but put their own spin on it and created a
45 requirement for an accommodation and employment strategy. Both of those documents will work together to try and channel as much of our construction spend and operational spend into the local economy.

MR HUTTON: Symon, you'd be aware there's a number of proposals at different stages throughout the approval pipeline, and I note with interest the department's condition around accommodation and employment strategies and the opportunity for you to engage with other projects and also engage with council. There's a few
5 moving parts in that process. How do you see that being an effective way to manage – well, firstly, do you see it as accommodation and employment challenges, and second part of the question is do you see the strategy as an effective way to sort of manage those challenges?

10 MR GRASBY: Yes. Yes. I think there's a couple of things there, Andrew. First of all, we and the other solar farms, if we get our consent, we then need to be careful about the timing of construction. We need to make sure that we're not causing cumulative impacts, either on – you know, we're all trying to get all of our
15 construction staff into the same accommodation at the same time. I mean, in a way that almost becomes self-regulated, but I think on the other side there are some really great opportunities.

If more than one site is consented, then I think what – it has the potential to give the local supply chain the volume of work that it would actually need in order to be able
20 to invest, both in employing more people, but perhaps capital investment to support working with – partnering with multiple solar farms all at once. That could be people setting themselves up to do the panel cleaning. It could be people setting themselves up to do landscape management. But I actually see there's a – there's an awful lot of potential in that if people – you know, if commerce wants to engage with
25 the solar farming community. There's a prospect of having a real hub there where there's – generate prosperity.

Okay. So I – and also we, through our local sourcing plan – our local sourcing plan actually offers a series of ideas. I've used them in other projects, where it promotes
30 engagement with local council, with other bodies that represent local business. So the first part of the sourcing plan is actually engagement with leaders, with the councils, with potential suppliers, and it's all about trying to build up your knowledge of who you've – who have you got in the area that's willing to partner with you, which is slightly more subtle than accommodation and employment
35 strategy. Ours is a sort of level below that where we're trying to get to know everybody and find out who wants to work with us and what can we buy locally.

Okay. The consultation process also allowed us to look further at how we could use this idea of working both on solar and maintaining agricultural use at the same time.
40 Retention of more mature habitat, we've talked about already. We also – just through the consultation process, actually we reduced the number of access points that we were going to use for maintenance operations, and that actually became quite an easy win when we were talking to people, because we realised that some of our access points were on gravel roads so there's the potential for dust there from our
45 traffic, which we could just avoid. So, yes, it's easy to do that. And then, finally, we adopted all of the recommendations from Transport for New South Wales, in terms

of the junction geometries that they wanted on the accesses and egresses from the site.

MR HUTTON: Can I - can I just take you back before you jump to the next line?
5 Just this issue of land use compatibility and - - -

MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: - - - land capability. Obviously, not just on this project, but on a
10 number of other projects not even in the LGA and other solar proposals. One of the -
the key issues that keeps arising is this productive ag land or land conflict issues.

MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: And I acknowledge that this is a - a temporary land use and it seems
15 that it has got a 30-year project and, you know, we can de-commission a site and get
it back to its ag land. I'm interested, however, in the - in the - the proposal for the
grazing of the sheep, I assume, with - with - with the - the solar farm. And - and are
you - are you of a view or do you have experience in this space to demonstrate that
20 you can achieve, you know, regional averages in wool growth and meat gain and
these sorts of things so that it's a genuine economic enterprise, rather than a - you
know, just a couple of sheep cruising around under a solar panel?

MR GRASBY: Yes. Yes.
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MR HUTTON: Are - are you able to - have you got evidence that - that that can be
achieved or can demonstrate that the - the wool gain - wool growth and the meat
gains can be comparable?

MR GRASBY: Yes. Yes, Andrew. There - there - there is a body of evidence.
30 The - the first point, just to sort of pick off several of the points you make there.

MR HUTTON: Sorry.

MR GRASBY: The first thing is Green Switch actually comes from the UK
35 originally where we operated solar farms with grazing sheep.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: So we have experience in the UK. Now, we agree totally that that's
40 not the same as doing it in Australia. But - but, actually, there are other similarities.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: Now, one of the things that you - you find - and I think this has
45 been borne out now by some of the studies that are being undertaken in - in
Australia. I think Neoen are doing some good work in reporting how they're getting

on with one of their sites. Now, it's - it's about the level of stocking. You can get the - the meat growth. You can get the wool growth. You can get the yields. But what you have to do is recognise that you've got to lower your stocking numbers slightly.

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So we - we were - we were required to undertake or to complete an agricultural impact assessment through - through the consultation process. What we did was that - that assessment was geared - originally, the request was to - to look at the economic impact. So in - in hard currency, what's the effect going to be. But we actually extended that slightly and we - we asked our advisors to look at, "Well, what's the best choices? What's the best thing we can do with the land?" Now, it was interesting that given the - the setting at Jindera, the climate, the soil types, they actually concluded that sheep grazing was the best sort of combination that we could come up with, which is actually a function of the soil classification or - or the soil types. It represents, you know, what - what the - what most of the land is currently used for anyway.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

20 MR GRASBY: But what the - what the agricultural - what the hard numbers told us was that if you reduce your stocking by about 25 per cent, then you actually get a - a 25 per cent reduction in agricultural output - economic agricultural output; because the sheep will grow, the sheep will - will - will mature and yield the same output per sheep. You've just got less of them. Sorry, I'm - I'm - - -

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MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: Yes.

30 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: And - and that was not just - I mean, that was not just based on our view from what we had seen in the UK, but that was the - the studies that our consultants came up with. And as I say, I think where you can get hold of - of evidence of this being now undertaken in Australia, I think the reports that were - that we're seeing are indicating that that is the case.

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MR HUTTON: Yes. So - so in - in summary, you - you - you can do it, but you just - you would expect that there would be a 25 per cent less sheep.

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MR GRASBY: Yes. That - that - - -

MR HUTTON: But they would still - they would still gain the same growth, gain the same wool, make the same meat.

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MR GRASBY: Yes, yes. And the 25 per cent loss is actually just allowing for the fact that - yes. Actually, you've got - you've got slightly less land that they can graze.

5 MR HUTTON: Yes. Okay.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Sir, can I just come in here? I read the agricultural impact assessment, and I thought it was extremely useful that this had been done. I noticed that there were a few recommendations in there in relation to the type of sheep that
10 would prosper in such circumstances. And, secondly, in relation to the type of grasses that were said to be planted in that location. And I'm just wondering how that is going to filter through to your actual proposal.

MR GRASBY: Yes. Okay. So the - the sheep types that were recommended
15 actually fit with what our two land-owning farmers what they're already - - -

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes.

MR GRASBY: - - - rearing on site. They're not particularly exotic sheep in the
20 scheme of things. They're pretty general sheep. And that's not being disrespectful to sheep. What I'm trying to say is that they're kind of, you know, recognised - - -

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes.

MR GRASBY: - - - pretty standard species for - for intensively farming. In - in
25 terms of the - the - the grass types that were recommended. Well, a lot of the pasture already provides those grass species. Then, again, they're not particularly exotic in terms of being far away from what you would plant if you were re-seeding pasture for sheep grazing anyway. Where we haven't got suitable grasses - so the small
30 areas of land are currently being cropped or where we disturb the ground - then it's - it's the intention that we will obviously re-seed those areas.

Some of them - if we can get the timing right, some of them will actually re-seed
35 before construction begins and try and get the grass ward established so we've actually got something to run on, which the roots obviously lock in the soil then and - and help reduce erosion and dust. So it's good if we can do that before construction. But certainly whatever is left post-construction that is disturbed, then we will just seed through that, let that get established, and then we can introduce the sheep and we're - we're off and running then.

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PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Thanks Symon. Thank you.

MR HUTTON: Thank you.

45 MR GRASBY: Okay.

MR GODINA: Well, I would just jump in with one point as well. This is Alex from Hanwha. Obviously, it will be conditioned to restore soil cover as part of the conditions, and we've committed to do so. So obviously not - not only will we do this as a condition, but it's in our best interests to do so, both in a compliance
5 manner. And obviously, you know, we - we don't want dust. Dust is the enemy of animals. So we - we want that ground cover as good as possible. So we will take the - we will take the recommendations and continue working with these consultants and the land owners to get the best ground cover anyway.

10 MR HUTTON: Thank you.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Thank you.

MR GRASBY: I think just as a final point on this. It's also worth nothing actually
15 how active our land owners have been in telling us what we need to do in order to make their lives not as easy as possible, but - but to ensure that - that when they re-introduce the - the stock back to the land, we've actually thought about things like how - how do they muster the stock, how - how do they - how do they get water to them, how do they feed them when - when their feed needs supplementing. So it has
20 been a - a real process with our land owners to - to come up with something that they believe very strongly is workable, you know. And they - they've been at this for, what, four generations now. So they kind of, you know, know what they're doing.

MR HUTTON: Yes.
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PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes. Thank you.

MR GRASBY: Okay. Jin, I hope you can remember where we had got to. Yes. So we will go onto the next side. Thank you. Okay. So just looking now at - at
30 community benefit a little bit more. It's worth talking about the - the VPA, I think, briefly. The VPA - so the Voluntary Planning Agreement - is worth about 1.7 million to the - to the Greater Hume Shire over the period of the project. We're quite excited about this, because we - we've come up with a way of splitting that money, which I will just talk about briefly now. So we've got about 950,000 goes to the
35 council as capital sums. A big lump when operation begins, and then some smaller payments over the - the subsequent five years, until we total 950,000.

But the bit we're much more excited about is the - the Community Fund. Now, what we're - what we set up there is that we will make available \$25,000 available each
40 year during the 30-year cycle of the - of the site. So that's about 750,000 in total. Now, that money goes to the Community Fund. Any community organisation with a project or just needed ongoing injection of funding, they can apply to that fund to - to - to get a payment. The - the council will manage and operate the fund on our behalf, so it won't be us who control where the money goes. The only thing we have said is
45 that we want to ensure that the - the fund is available to the community. So it must be community related, not just individuals. And we want the fund to be, if you like, positively biased towards our nearest neighbours. So, first of all, money goes to

anyone within five kilometres who makes an application. Then after that, anyone within Greater Hume. The - the 25 - - -

5 MR HUTTON: Sorry, is that - sorry. Is that embedded in some sort of charter or - or

10 MR GRASBY: Yes. The - the Voluntary Planning Agreement has a series of schedules attached to it. And one of the schedules actually talks about how the Community Fund is operated and - and this idea of - of how funds are allocated.

MR HUTTON: Okay. Yes.

15 MR GRASBY: That - that schedule of the VPA will - will actually become the - the constitution of the - the Community Fund itself.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

20 MR GRASBY: So I think just the last thing to say on that is that the - the 25,000 annual payment is index linked so it doesn't eroded over time.

MR HUTTON: Yes. Yes. Yes.

25 MR GRASBY: And we - we really like that. We - we think it's the best way that we could come up with that it - ensuring that money was genuinely available at the community level for people year-in year-out. We - we talked briefly about community benefit arising out of construction activity, so I won't say more about that.

30 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: Also on the operational side, we - we - we intend to create five full-time skilled jobs who will be there on site covering operational activity. But - but, actually, they will need an awfully big supply chain in order to - to supplement that, our - our own staff.

35

MR HUTTON: So when you say "skilled", Symon, are we talking electrical trades folks, or is it project managers, electrical trades, managers?

40 MR GRASBY: Electrical trade, also some mechanical engineering trades, looking after the trackers. They - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

45 MR GRASBY: They would be your - your main staff. And then everything like specialists in landscape management, you would - you would actually just bring those in as contractors. And that brings us back to - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: - - - that whole piece about local sourcing plan.

5 MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: Okay. And then just the point at the bottom was my - my piece earlier where we were talking about this potential to create this solar hub with - with development of current businesses in - in Greater Hume being able to get on to the
10 back of - of multiple solar farms and really carve out some new revenues for themselves. Okay. Let's move on again, please, Jin.

MR HUTTON: Yes. Symon, we're probably setting at about 20 minutes to go.

15 MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: So I will let you know where we are on the clock.

MR GRASBY: Okay. We will go through that slide on agriculture if that's okay. I
20 think we've touched on all the relevant parts already.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: Thank you, Jin. We've seen this one. So we're making a bit of
25 progress. Thanks, Jin, and that one.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: Okay. So one point that you guys raised when you were out on site
30 was about the de-commissioning of solar farms. And - and I think also a question about how you recycle a solar farm. So I think it's worth just having a quick look at that. In terms of the de-commissioning process, then, really, de-commissioning a solar farm is and should be treated as the reverse of building a solar farm. So where
35 you've got a construction management plan to look after the potential for nuisance, before you start onsite works in the de-commissioning, you should have the same thing. You should plan things properly and ensure that, you know, you've got everything covered off before you start the work.

MR HUTTON: So, Symon, does that make it a \$169 million de-construction and
40 closure project?

MR GRASBY: No. No. Much smaller numbers involved in de-commissioning. And - and, actually, because you've got recycling in there, you actually have some revenues from the - from the recyclable materials that - that come back in and help
45 pay for some of the de-commissioning process.

MR HUTTON: So it's - it's fair to expect that it will - whether it goes off as a recycled waste, the waste product, or a reusable component, trucks will be moving again to move stuff off the site. So we could expect the same sorts of traffic and transport issues to some extent that we would experience during construction. Is that
5 a fair assumption?

MR GRASBY: There will be - yes, definitely. You need transport to get the materials away. The proposed conditions when - where they're related to transport and traffic numbers, there - there are actually some allowances for traffic movement
10 associated with de-commissioning. So we actually already have some limits around what we can do with transport for the de-commissioning period. But - but, I mean, obviously we would fully intend to work within - within those. But we would also re-do the transport plan, look at it again. The materials may be moving in the opposite direction. But, again, you still need to look at, well, what - what's the best
15 way to do that with the least impacts.

MR HUTTON: Some of the recent SSD solar farm approvals in New South Wales have had an additional condition included which is around the preparation of a de-commissioning management plan that is required to be prepared after construction
20 and the operation. But it articulates the commitments that a company might make to closure, puts it on the public record, and it enables stakeholders to, through the website or some other mechanism, interrogate the proposition of closure and what that looks like. You - the proposed conditions for this particular proposal don't have that condition included. But would you be open to being more upfront and - and -
25 and - and bringing together your - your strategy around de-commissioning and articulating that in a plan that would be made available?

MR GRASBY: Yes. Yes. We - we - we certainly would be. No problem with that
30 at all.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: In - in fact, in our - in our application, we - we've actually said as
35 much. We've said that we would prepare a de-commissioning plan. So we're already sort of in there and committed.

MR HUTTON: Yes. Because the other thing is that - and you're aware of this, I'm sure - is that the consent sits with the land. And so the landholder, if you were to
40 decide - I'm being, you know, extreme, I guess. But if you were to decide that technology has moved on, you no longer want to - want to be in the solar business or you're insolvent for some reason, then the responsibility for closure, as I understand it, would sit with the land owner, the - the farmer, the host farmer, under the consent.

MR GRASBY: That - yes. That would be correct, Andrew. But, of course, we - we
45 would say that there are - there are many layers of decision-making to pass through before you got to a situation where the land owner was left trying to clear up the land.

MR HUTTON: Yes. I - and that's the reality. But there's also examples where companies have quickly disappeared, for a whole range of reasons. And I - again, I'm just trying to put the scenario to you around my personal thinking around closure. There is a risk that, in the future, we could see, you know, in the Greater
5 Hume area, 8000 hectares of derelict solar farms that no one has taken responsibility for. Yes, again, it's an extreme position. But I - but it is certainly unlikely, very low risk. But at the moment, there is limited commitments by proponents to executing their closure obligations. And so I think the plan is a way of articulating that and making it clear. And then - and then the stakeholders can have an expectation that
10 the company has an appropriate provision set aside, however that might be, to execute - - -

MR GRASBY: Yes.

15 MR HUTTON: - - - closure at that point.

MR GRASBY: Yes. And - and if that helps to take away that doubt that people might have, then I think it's - it's - it's great that we have such a plan in place from very early on.

20

MR HUTTON: Okay. It has just been used on recent approvals and I just wanted to, as part of this conversation, I guess, just road test that plan concept with you as a proponent.

25 MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: So thank you for your comments.

MR GRASBY: Okay. Okay. Yes. Let's go to the - thank you, Jin. Yes. I
30 couldn't remember the slide number then. So, basically, just to sum up now. Obviously I think now, just about everybody recognises that renewal energy is the way forward, that we must all now try and get ourselves weaned off fossil fuels. It has - it has been great that New South Wales government is now beginning to provide some real leadership here on this. I mean, it's great for us as solar farm
35 operators, but I think it's great for - for everybody in New South Wales that state government is driving that transition now.

Jindera Solar Farm could be part of that transition if we get our proposal approved. It's a good place to undertake solar farming with a - with a good solar resource and
40 with that all important access to grid. The community consultation for this project has been extensive and has involved a lot of the community. I think what we've ended up with is - is a project - design a project layout that can actually be constructed and - and operated sympathetically without causing disruption to the community. I think there's tremendous potential for the proposed project to create
45 value, to - to - to drive investment in the local economy. The VPA will add to that.

And I think just finally to sum up then. Obviously the scheme has been reviewed by the department independent of us. They've undertaken a very thorough review of the project. And obviously as things stand, they have recommended to yourselves that the - the project is - is suitable for - for consenting.

5

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Thanks.

MR GRASBY: Okay. Thank you.

10 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Thank you very much, Symon. I wonder, Symon, if you would mind if I asked a few questions on biodiversity.

MR GRASBY: Yes.

15 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Andrew, is that all right? Or did you want to?

MR HUTTON: Please. No, yes. You're welcome. Please.

20 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes. Well, I just - one of the first questions I had was you mention in your proposal that you're - you're going to construct two internal access tracks and code them across the existing creeks. And I was wondering whether that had been discussed with BCD and whether any offsets had been required for that.

25 MR GRASBY: Yes. It - it has been discussed but - but not in particular. Not in - in a lot of detail. They didn't really pick up on - on that as being a particularly significant part of what we were proposing to do. The - the offset - the calculation of offsets has included the - for any offsets that relate to construction of - of access roads or - or the crossing point as appropriate. But I don't know off the top of my head. I couldn't quote the - the actual numbers or species to you.

30

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes. No, I wasn't looking for the number of species, but I wondered whether you had a sort of diagram of the proposed internal roads and what clearing, if any, that would involve.

35 MR GRASBY: Okay. We don't have a diagram available within the presentation. There - there isn't - where we cross the creek, there isn't any existing vegetation of any note. We - we chose what - where the crossing point in order to make sure that we weren't having any impact. What you've actually got is actually just species associated with - with grazing. So it - it's all man-made, if you like, sown pasture.

40

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: And how wide are the crossings?

MR GRASBY: So the - the access roads are three metres wide.

45 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Right. Right. Thank you. And were - when we were on the site, we discussed that there might be some clearing associated with the access to

the - the - the substation. Have - has that been finalised as well, or is that still to be done?

5 MR GRASBY: The - the clearing down Ortlipp Road to get to the - to the substation, that has been included in - in the - the calculations for - for offsetting, and it's covered under the BDA.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Right.

10 MR GODINA: I will jump in on two of those points as well. We - we did specifically regarding crossing those retained areas. We did specifically engage with BCD and pretty much leave it up to them to kind of inform what best practice will be. I think that will continue to be an ongoing discussion about the exact
15 construction of the roads. But we did ask, you know, "Do you want gates through this area or do you prefer it being gated on each end?", and - and things like that. So that was done in consult - in consultation with BCD, as was the whole retention area. And, yes - - -

20 MR HUTTON: That's outside of the large square in the centre. You're talking about the interaction with those biodiversity areas outside of that? Because there's no intention to cross through that, as I understand it - correct me if I'm wrong - through the - the big square, if you like, in the middle?

25 MR GODINA: Yes, that's correct. You - you will see on the - on the map currently on screen, there's two kind of grid areas.

MR HUTTON: Well, I can't see, Jin.

30 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: They've gone.

MR GRASBY: It's good to - - -

35 MR GODINA: And that you will - you will see the two Xs on either side of both the north and south portions is where the - it is intended to be gates to get through that area. And there will be a - yes, a - a access road through there as well. And as for the last question. The specific credits we're referring to for the substation are almost that entry point at the substation. So obviously we go down Ortlipp Road, and once we get to the - the trans-grid yard itself, because we don't have the final
40 design of that route yet, we've assumed pretty much a maximum development footprint on that access point. So that - that will be finalised through consultation. And then - then we will probably re-apply through BCD and re-consult to get the - the final footprint. But it will be less than what we've contained in the EIS.

45 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Thank you. Just one other question. Also when we were on site, when - when we were talking about how the offset liability would be discharged, you indicated an interest in acquiring a biodiversity stewardship site,

rather than paying an amount into the fund. Have you had - made any progress on obtaining a suitable site?

5 MR GODINA: We have just recently engaged NGH to - in doing that work. So we're - we're looking at potential sites and we're hoping that probably early in the New Year, in - in January, we will have a better idea of sites we can explore and the cost of doing so. And then, again, start consulting with - with BCD. And, yes, it's - it's definitely our preference to establish a stewardship site and we will be doing all we can to explore that.

10 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Are the sites relevantly local that you have in mind?

MR GODINA: Well, we're hoping to go as local as possible, but that's part of the work we will be doing in the coming months.

15 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: I see, yes. Yes. The other - the other aspect I wanted to pursue, not entirely on biodiversity. But it seems that there was some purchase of Crown land involved. I was just interested on how that was progressing and whether there would be continued access for pedestrians and - and perhaps horse riders or
20 whatever.

MR GRASBY: Yes. Now, Jin, is it possible to put your pointer where the Crown road was? No? Perhaps not.

25 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: You could give us a rough indication. I would - - -

MR GRASBY: Yes.

30 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes.

MR GRASBY: Okay. So the - there was a short length of Crown road that came down from - if we - if we look at the north-west corner of the retained - almost that square shape that gets retained in the centre of the site. There was a Crown road that came down from the northern boundary of the site and almost connected with the -
35 the square that we're going to retain. It didn't actually connect with it. It was like a spur of Crown road that went nowhere.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes.

40 MR GRASBY: That - that piece of land has now been purchased from the Crown and that purchase is complete. There - there is also a - a piece of land in the north-west corner of the site. So, Jin, we need to go further up with your pointer. No. Go up to the red - it's - it's where the red lines are.

45 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: They're the council - council road that was

MR GRASBY: Yes.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes.

MR GRASBY: That's the council road which we're still trying to agree the purchase of that with the council. It - it's now - it's council road, but it has now gone
5 up to Crown Road to get their approval to come back down again. The - the scheme operates fine without it. It's no issue whether we have it or not have it. It - it makes operating the site clearly easier if we can purchase it. But - but, actually, it - it doesn't matter to us one way or the other.

10 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Right.

MR GRASBY: And the road - - -

MR GODINA:

15 MR GRASBY: The road - sorry. Go on.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN:

20 MR GODINA: Greater Hume Shire Council - - -

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Sorry. Alex?

MR GODINA: Greater Hume Shire Council recently voted on the council road
25 purchase. So that has been agreed and is currently on exhibition now. So that's the - the one we just spoke about.

MR GRASBY: Yes.

30 MR GODINA: Maybe - as Symon says, in - in reality, both these roads weren't really roads or used by the public. They were just kind of left-over things from old mapping. And we still retain Sparkes Road which is the - the other Crown road which runs through the middle of the site and things like that.

35 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Right. Right.

MR GRASBY: Yes.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: That - that clears that up.

40 MR GRASBY: Yes. It - it's - it's worth just adding there to what Alex was saying. You - when you were - when you did your site visit, you wouldn't have been able to see these. They - they never actually existed. They were your classic paper roads.

45 PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Paper, yes. Yes. Andrew, can I just ask one more question?

MR HUTTON: Yes. Please. Please.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: I was just interested in - my understanding was that in the north-western section was about nine hectares of land that came under a mining
5 exploration lease, and that the owner of the lease complained about it. I wondered what the outcome of - of the negotiations had been, and where you stand on that.

MR GRASBY: Yes. We - we went back to the - the - the owner of the - it's - it's a
10 - it's an agreement to allow exploration to occur, so an exploration licence. It's not a mining lease.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes. Thank you.

MR GRASBY: And actually before we made our application, we went back to the -
15 the owner and responded on the queries that they had raised. And, actually, we received no further response from them. We - we pointed out to them that they - they had a licence to explore, had done some exploration, but had not gone any further. We also pointed out that the area where our site overlaps with their licence is - is extremely small compared to the footprint of their licence. And - and then we
20 also said to them, "Look, we can - we cannot build our solar farm in that footprint and we still have a project. Or - or we can build the - and then withdraw the solar farm from there if you eventually get licences and all the consents you need to operate your mineral undertaking." But the two - as far as we could see, their - their plans for - for mineral were so far down the line in terms of development that we -
25 we could actually get on and - and, you know, get on with our proposal and then see what they choose to do in the end.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Okay. Have you got any infrastructure on that area -
30 planned for that area?

MR GRASBY: We - we - within what we're seeking permission for, there would be solar panels within that - that area.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Okay.
35

MR GRASBY: But we could easily remove the solar panels from that area, or we may ultimately decide not to put the panels into that area.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes. I - I see.
40

MR GRASBY: Because we had such a lack of feedback from them, we couldn't really decide what was the correct course of action. So we tried to sort of - you know, we've included it in the scheme, but we're open-minded on whether or not ultimately we will - we will build that bit.
45

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Terrific. Thanks very much.

MR HUTTON: Symon, just one last question from me. And - and it's just about the geometry of the site. It's unusual layout with the land bridge that runs through the centre. Can you just talk me through the history of that? I assume it's land ownership site constraint driven. But I'm - I'm just interested in understanding the
5 history between, effectively, the - the western and the eastern areas with a land bridge. And - and, for example, why there wouldn't be a proposition to put solar panels in that middle section.

MR GRASBY: Well, I - I - you've - you've hit the nail on the head in - in a way
10 already, Andrew. It - it is - it is driven by land ownerships.

MR HUTTON: Okay.

MR GRASBY: We - we have two different land owners within the scheme, and
15 we're all looking at what land they had which was suitable for solar farm operations and also allowed us to route our way through to the TransGrid substation.

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: The - the area inter-connecting the - the - the west and the east does
20 have some solar panels within it, but - but small amounts. We - we could have fitted more in there, but we had to - we had to think about what was reasonable, given that we - we don't own the land south of those solar panels. And we have a - a residential receptor, albeit at some distance. But there is one in there. So we tried to cut
25 balance between what we could fit in there without it becoming an issue, but needed to get this - this connection between the two - the two halves of the site.

MR HUTTON: If - if there was a positive determination, would you construct the
30 entire proposal, or is there a stage? You know, do the east block, rest, do the west block, or is it a proposition that, you know, you would do the whole construction process in one campaign?

MR GRASBY: The - the - it's - the proposition is that we build the whole site - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes.
35

MR GRASBY: - - - in - in one run. Albeit, obviously, it's phased, isn't it? So - - -

MR HUTTON: Yes. I mean, yes.
40

MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: Well, you can't - - -

MR GRASBY: But, yes.
45

MR HUTTON: Yes.

MR GRASBY: Yes.

MR HUTTON: Yes. Okay. All right. Look, that - that has been very - very useful
5 and I - and I just want to thank you again for your time. Zada, I just want to make
sure you didn't have any concluding questions that you - left that you might like to
- - -

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: I think - I think I've said everything I wanted to say on
10 that. Thanks.

MR HUTTON: That's great. Look, it's - it's a very useful step in the process for us
to be able to have this conversation and talk through some of the key issues. We
have the benefit of the department's assessment report and EIS and everything else.
But it's always useful to be able to engage with the applicant directly and talk
15 through some of the - the key - the key points, as is the - the ability to get boots on
the ground and have a look at the site. So we thank you for both opportunities. I
think you're aware clearly that we have a public meeting set down for this Friday,
and that will be run through the current COVID-19 process of online through the -
the studio process. So we note that you're - you're down to speak. So we - we look
20 forward to hearing from you again.

Unless - obviously, we will move. This process is one step and we will move
through the process of, you know, making our - making our determination. There
may be a need to - to ask some further questions of you as we move through the
25 process and I - and that will be done through the office of the Independent Planning
Commission with you directly. But at this point in time, I think all that's left for me
to do is thank you for your time today. Thank you for your presentation. If you
haven't already, could you please send that presentation through to - to Jane or Steve
so that we can have that on file to - to put on to the website. That would be most
30 useful. But other than that, good day and - and thank you very much for your time
today. Thank you.

PROFESSOR LIPMAN: Yes, thank you.

35 MR GODINA: Yes. Thank you.

MS YU: Thank you very much.

MR HUTTON: Yes.
40

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[3:00 pm]