New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

RE: GLANMIRE SOLAR FARM (SSD-21208499)

APPLICANT MEETING

COMMISSION PANEL:	DR SHERIDAN COAKES (Panel Chair) CHRIS WILSON RICHARD PEARSON
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	BRAD JAMES OLIVER COPE CALLUM FIRTH
APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:	TIM AVERILL ANTOINE PAVONE CIARA DEERING BROOKE MARSHALL JAMES VAN DEN BROEK
LOCATION:	VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE
DATE:	2.30PM ON TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2023

TRANSCRIBED AND RECORDED BY APT TRANSCRIPTIONS

DR SHERIDAN COAKES: So good afternoon and welcome. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Worimi land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the country from which we virtually meet today and pay my respects to the Elders past and present. Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Glanmire Solar Farm case currently before the Commission for determination. The Applicant, Elgin Energy Pty Limited, proposing to develop the Glanmire Solar Farm The project involves the construction of a solar farm with a generating capacity of approximately 60 megawatts along with the upgrading and decommissioning of infrastructure and equipment over time.

The project also includes a 60 megawatt / 120 megawatt hour battery energy storage system and onsite substation with connection to an existing transmission line operated by Essential Energy via an underground powerline. My name is Dr Sheridan Coakes, I'm the Chair of the Commission Panel and I'm joined by my fellow Commissioners - - -

MS BROOKE MARSHALL: Sorry, Commissioner Coakes, is it just me, I can't pick that audio.

MR TIM AVERILL: Yeah, I can't hear very well either.

DR COAKES: O.K. Can you hear now?

OLIVER COPE: Sorry Sherie. Yeah, that's O.K.

DR COAKES: Yep. O.K.

BRAD JAMES: That sounds clear, yeah.

DR COAKES: O.K. Thank you. We're also joined by Brad James, Oliver Cope and Callum Firth from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission. In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website. This meeting is just one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination.

It is important for the Commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it's considered appropriate. If you ask asked a question and you're not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing which we will then put on our website. If all members here today could please introduce themselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure they do not speak over the top of each other to ensure accuracy of the transcript. So we'll now begin. So thank you everyone for joining us this afternoon. Appreciate your participation and who from your side, Tim, is going to take us through the items and, I guess, the key issues that we've outlined in the agenda which I think you would've received from us.

MR AVERILL: Yes. Yeah, thank you very much for sending those through. Yeah, I'll - I'll be taking - taking us through. We have obviously a presentation that I can share on the screen if that's - - -

DR COAKES: O.K. No, that's - that's lovely, thanks, Tim. And are you comfortable if obviously questions arise if we jump in and ask those questions as we move through the presentation?

MR AVERILL: Yes. I mean, I guess, I can try and work through the presentation quite quickly to have enough time to really - to cover quite a bit at the end as well. As - yeah, as you wish really.

DR COAKES: O.K. Lovely. All right. Thank you.

MR AVERILL: O.K. I'll share my screen. So we're used to using Teams here so - - -

DR COAKES: Yes, we can see that, Tim.

MR AVERILL: Can you see that?

DR COAKES: You're not in presentation mode though, Tim.

MR AVERILL: Sorry? Can you see that? O.K. Bear with me one sec. Yep. One second, hang on. Bear with me a second. Sorry, I just lost it.

DR COAKES: That was working, Tim, it might've - - -

MR AVERILL: Sorry. O.K. We're used to - so I'm used to using Teams. Bear with me a second. Share screen.

DR COAKES: Yes.

MR AVERILL: That's O.K.?

DR COAKES: Yes.

MR AVERILL: Got there in the end.

DR COAKES: Yeah, thanks, Tim.

MR AVERILL: Yeah. Yes, so thanks - thank you very much - firstly, thanks very much for kind of taking the time to go through this with us before the - before the meeting next - next week. We've just done a presentation here which kind of outlines, I guess, the agenda that you sent through and outlines the key issues that you've noted and sent - sent through.

So if I - if I start just first by giving a quick introduction to kind of Elgin and myself. My name's Tim Averill, I head up Elgin here in Australia. So a bit of background to Elgin Energy. We founded in 2009, it's in UK and Ireland. So now going for 14 years, started with four founders and now up to well over 70 people. We are now present in four countries, so UK, Ireland, Australia and Germany. We've - we have a 98 percent success rate in our planning commission so we've got 70 projects through planning, 21 of those projects have been delivered to date and we've got a pipeline of 11 gigawatts throughout the four - four countries.

We've been in Australia now since - well, late 2018. We've got 15 projects in development at the moment and four projects in planning at late stage development. So that's sort of a quick intro into - into Elgin and Australia operations. We're - we're active in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

So just a bit of background to the project obviously itself, the location here. It's obviously Glanmire which is approximately kind of 10kms to the east of - of Bathurst. Just I don't know if you can see my cursor here but we're - going along here is Great Western - Great Western Highway going to Sydney and going along here to Bathurst. We are - we have an existing line that connects into Raglan substation which is currently powered at 11kv and will be upgraded to 66kv. So there are existing easements in place. The area is quite sort of undulating farmland. We'll see - we'll show a few more sort of photos as we go through the presentation. So just onto the - onto the next slide. Sorry?

MR RICHARD PEARSON: Tim, can I ask a quick question? What is the status of the transmission line approval? Have you lodged any applications there?

MR AVERILL: So we've - we've been working with Essential Energy now for, I guess, quite a few years. We've - we've sent a design through to Essential Energy so they are happy at the current stage of the design process. Obviously if there is DA approval then this will be subject to a final - a plan to develop a detailed - sorry, a detailed design that has to be fully approved by Essential Energy. So at the moment they - they - at a high level basis we've been working through the design of the 11kv and the 6kv and they're happy with it at this stage.

MR PEARSON: Thank you.

DR COAKES: Could I jump in quickly, Tim? Brooke, did you want to (not transcribable)

MR CHRIS WILSON: Yeah, sorry. Can I just add - Sherrie?

DR COAKES: Yeah.

MR WILSON: Can I just add to Richard's question?

DR COAKES: Yeah. And Brooke, I think, also wants to make a comment.

MR WILSON: O.K.

DR COAKES: Do you want to respond to that first just because - to what - - -

MS BROOKE MARSHALL: Yeah, could I please? Yeah, just to say that this is an issue that we discussed early and often with the Department of Planning how much of that transmission - transmission line augmentation should the project assess and agreed that it should be assessed at a high level because it was necessary for the project but - so we did a high level assessment but it is in total control of Essential Energy and not the project and, therefore, it will be subject to a zone part 5 assessment.

DR COAKES: We know that there is - you know, in the Department's draft conditions that there's a deferred commencement condition that's been approved in that regard. Chris, have you got - - -

MR WILSON: Yeah. Just I appreciate the assessment issue, that's not the nature of my question. My question is more about what gives you confidence enough to start construction? Yes, you may have an approval but is that enough for you in terms of commence construction because wouldn't you have - need some commitment to do the upgrade?

MR AVERILL: Yes. So we've been working with Essential Energy now, what, for over two years to going - going through - through the design and they are existing easements in place and they are - have confirmed they are - they are happy with - with these designs.

MR WILSON: (not transcribable) anyway.

MR AVERILL: Yeah. Yes. And so, yeah, we're happy with - with that to proceed with the risk that - - -

MR WILSON: O.K.

MR AVERILL: They're happy - they're happy with these designs, yep.

MR WILSON: Should you be granted approval you'd be comfortable in commencing construction once approval's granted?

MR AVERILL: Yes.

MR WILSON: On the basis that they would build it on your behalf, is that how it works?

MR AVERILL: Yes, yeah, exactly. We'd have to - we'd obviously have to go through a detailed design as well but, you know, most of that - pretty much all of that work has already been done.

MR WILSON: O.K.

MR AVERILL: And it's just - but that would be subject to a DA approval and then we would go - go through that.

MR WILSON: Ballpark five year.

MR AVERILL: Yeah, exactly - exactly, yep.

MR WILSON: All right. Thank you.

MR AVERILL: O.K. Yeah, so just outlining kind of the site here. On the - on the left, you know, we've - we've gone through quite an in-depth consultation phase for the project design. So you can see how this is kind of changed. Early consultation - on the next slide I'll go through that - that process, what we've done through that but we received quite a lot of feedback in terms of, you know, visual impact to begin with so we decided to kind of move the project back from - from the highway because of concern of it being visible from the highway.

It's quite a good site in the fact that it slopes kind of upwards and then back down south-facing going down - down this way. So it is actually quite favourable to be able to kind of blocking out kind of visuals of the project, particularly when going into - into the Bathurst. So, yeah, you can see we've also done setbacks in the north even and we'll go into the screening as well, setbacks down in the south, the southern area as well and obviously waterways and other areas of setbacks but I will just onto the next slide, just the actual consultation that we went through.

The scoping phase we actually did - did quite a lot of consultation as well. So meeting with the - with the Council, a community drop-in, we did two days of consultation there and actually with the EIS phase we - as part of our SEARs we had a CCC that we went through. So we had six - six meetings with - with various stakeholders to go through the project to understand concerns of the project and so this is how we have kind of adapted the project design as we've moved forward - moved through this process.

DR COAKES: And, Tim, just a quick question from me. So on that CCC you've had landholders representatives, representatives from the action group, is that correct?

MR AVERILL: Yes, yeah, we did. I think the action group were there for a couple of the - a couple of the meetings but then didn't - didn't attend after - after that but we had representatives from the Council, BCCAN, Bathurst Climate Change Action Network, and other representatives, local representatives as well. So, yeah, it was a really useful - it was really useful to go through - through the project and to get some feedback as well through that. So it was - it was quite - quite - yeah, quite a lot of kind of consultation going through.

Onto the next slide. Just, I guess, highlighting the key - the key issues that you've - that you added into the agenda but you can see that the graph here these are the main

kind of issues that have been identified and we'll kind of work through now. So the main - the main issues being agriculture and land compatibility. So to the next slide. So loss of rural land. I mean, the kind of - the loss - the long term loss, the only kind of land that will be lost will be about 0.5 hectares, that will be for the substation which is likely probably to be gifted to Essential Energy. Other than that there can still be kind of grazing underneath the panels and then, you know, after decommissioning the project can be kind of returned to - to farming as it has been.

It's in RU1 zoning so kind of farming land. I think a lot of the farmers are now seeing it as very positive as a diversification for kind of drought which is seen as a positive. Impact on the agricultural economy has been seen as negligible there and impact on adjacent land we don't - we don't see any significant impacts there along with also the heat island effect due to setbacks.

The land classification process we'll go into a bit more detail because there's been some work going through the various stages of the scoping and the EIS phase and response to submissions as well so we'll give a bit more of a breakdown because that's been raised.

DR COAKES: Tim, just a quick question there. So are you leasing the land or have you purchased the land?

MR AVERILL: Yeah, so we're leasing it. It's - it's a long term - a long term lease.

DR COAKES: O.K. And the existing landholder then will continue to graze, is that correct, doing some grazing under - - -

MR AVERILL: So - so that is - at the moment the landholder is - is leasing the land out so there is a subcontractor format in place and, you know, this is - so this is an option that can be - can be done, the design, so they can - it can be grazed but at the moment that - that detail has yet to be finalised. There is a grazing licence attached to the lease.

DR COAKES: Thanks.

MR WILSON: Sherrie, can I just ask a quick question?

DR COAKES: Yep, just jump in, Chris.

MR WILSON: Just in relation to subdivision, the application include - includes subdivision. If you're leasing the land why is it necessary to subdivide the land noting that - well, we know that it's prohibited but it's permissible because of the provisions of the - - -

MR AVERILL: So I think that - that's involve - I'll have to, you know, come back to you on that but - - -

MR WILSON: The only reason I ask is that I'm not quite sure why it's necessary to subdivide the land because, I mean, those provisions are - minimum subdivision like is there to, I guess, protect against fragmentation of land and, I guess, I'm interested for two reasons. Firstly, when you would do the subdivision because you wouldn't want to do it if you weren't proceeding or I'd assume then you'd do it after you started construction and then would it be consolidated when you were decommissioning? That's what I'm interested in because you may decommission and you ended up with fragmented land which, you know, is inconsistent with the surrounding subdivision layout. So that's all. I'm just interested, that's all. And my other question was dams. I think there's six or seven dams on site, isn't there? What's happening to those?

MR AVERILL: Yes. So there's - some of them will be - some of them will be infilled and some of them will be left. We can - we can confirm the exact number.

MR WILSON: O.K. Just it wasn't in the Department's Assessment Report, that's all.

MS MARSHALL: Can I just speak to the subdivision?

DR COAKES: Yeah.

MR WILSON: Sure.

MS MARSHALL: The Essential Energy substation will be a permanent asset, it will be gifted to them so they require a subdivision to be created just for their access. So - - -

MR WILSON: O.K.

MS MARSHALL: So it will - - -

MR WILSON: So should you decommission it will stay?

MS MARSHALL: It will stay, yeah.

MR WILSON: Yeah.

MS MARSHALL: Yep. The solar farms, because they're long term leases they have the option to subdivide if that's in the landholder's, you know, preference but they can also just register a long term lease for the duration of the project and that's what's proposed in this case.

MR WILSON: So, Brooke, would the subdivision just be - sorry. Would the subdivision just be the current land and the substation?

MS MARSHALL: It would just be, yeah, for the dividing up the substation.

MR WILSON: O.K. That answers my question. Thanks.

MS MARSHALL: And just with reference to grazing and dams. Grazing is a great groundcover management strategy and for the panels but the absolute priority has to be to maintaining pasture and not over-grazing for soil and water quality and retaining the capability of the land. So the commitments that the project include kind of triggers to pull the grazing off if they're reaching those levels but it's not anticipated like as a full agri-voltaic system it's a groundcover management strategy - - -

DR COAKES: O.K. O.K. Thanks.

MS MARSHALL: - - - as an option to take up.

DR COAKES: O.K. Thanks for that clarification, Brooke.

MR AVERILL: Yeah, just a few photos obviously representing that it can be - can be grazed and, you know, it's - it is - you know, in times where there is water shortages, you know, with the condensation you can get - get more grass sort of growth underneath the panels. Just moving - moving forward. So I think land and soil classification was one of the - one of the key issues which was - has been looked at. So, I mean, initially when we first looked at the site during the scoping report high level mapping of this was classed as 3 and 5 and - so we're aware - you know, sometimes there can be quite a lot of differences in the mapping.

So as part of the scoping report we did a - we had a consultant who did a land and soil classification and that was done through SLR and the findings from that report and - came out that the majority of - you seen in this - the middle picture here of 4 and 5, so green being 4 and red being 5. So we had this during the EIS stage as well. We had the process and the method - the methodology of this peer-reviewed as well and the consultant who peer-reviewed it was - was happy with the method - with the methodology. However, this went through obviously into the EIS and response to submissions DPE raised this as a concern and so they wanted greater detail and more testing on site.

So we did further - further testing on site and we - small granularity so after that this changed again slightly so it's still the majority of class 4. There are pockets of class 3 and also 5 as well. So after doing a lot more testing we have come to, I think it's 40.6 hectares of class 3 and then majority is class 4 and some small area of class 5 as well. Sorry, I didn't hear that.

DR COAKES: I don't think - maybe it was in someone's background I think maybe, Tim.

MR AVERILL: O.K. Sorry. Moving on. So - - -

MS MARSHALL: Someone's behind me at the moment.

MR AVERILL: O.K. Just another obviously key issue that's been raised was visual impacts. So even during the scoping report phase we did quite a lot of work on - on visual impacts and looking at mitigation because we wanted to be - we wanted to be

sure that we could - that it wasn't going to be highly visible and also we could - there were ways of mitigating any impacts. So, you know, again that's why we looked at pulling it back 300 metres from - from the highway and looking at all sorts of ways of screening any areas that are - it is possible to see the project.

The results have come on. So unmitigated the results are kind of low for two - two dwellings low impact for R17 and R34 and 17 and 34, I don't know if you can see my - up here and up here, 34 and 17. So you can see where the hill - the hill is there. You come down the hill into - into Glanmire and onto Bathurst down there and then after - and so that was - and very low for six dwellings but after mitigation it's just - it's goes down to very low for just - for three dwellings, that's R4, R5 and R7. So for 4, 5 and 7 up here, these - these three.

I'll just go into a bit more detail also on some of the methodology. So this is a kind of view shed modelling that was used to design the southern setback. So you see we've set back from - on the corner here from this - this dwelling which is R4. So that comes to about, I think, 215 metres to the - to the nearest panel from where this was taken. This - this here you can see is a wire frame and this is the view of what would be seen being the panels, being the blue. So after mitigation this becomes very, very low impact.

DR COAKES: So, Tim, just on R4 and R5 given we know there's - those landholders obviously have completed a number of submissions over the life of the project to date. Were photos taken from their properties? Were you given access to the properties?

MR AVERILL: So, yes, yeah, yeah, we were. We've - there were photos that we - I believe we're not able to use those publicly.

DR COAKES: No. O.K. No. But they participated in the visual assessment?

MR AVERILL: Yes, yeah, that's correct.

MR JAMES: Sorry, Sherrie, to interrupt. APT, do you mind just going on mute. I think we're getting some feedback there.

MS MARSHALL: Can I just say, the montages we've provided to the Department of Planning we gained permission to do that but not to include them with the EIS so we didn't want to include them in this presentation.

DR COAKES: Yeah. No, that's fine. Thanks.

MR AVERILL: Just - - -

MS MARSHALL: That modelling it just takes into account topography, it doesn't take into account any vegetation that the montages will show.

MR AVERILL: Just, I guess, moving onto another slide on visual impacts. This is a picture of driving away from Bathurst towards Sydney. So this is - there are some

glimpses of the project kind of in the distance. Obviously we would be having screening around. Coming into Bathurst, I mean, there's - I think it's zero visibility and so the highest sort of visual impact is actually on Brewongle Lane and that's - that's the road that runs - runs from north to south by the side of the project and we will be mitigating that with further screening going - going down the boundary. I can go into more detail about the screening here.

So you'll see at the north - we've got existing screening around. One, there's a road of trees going along the northern boundary will bolster that and also add further screening going all the way along that northern boundary. This is where the substation and battery will be - we've actually - we moved that further down the hill so that it will be less visible and have more - have screening going - going down this boundary as well. Obviously screening going - going further down these - these two boundaries and wrapping around as well to the - to the south. So there's - there's a considerable amount of screening to try and mitigate any impacts there.

MR WILSON: Tim, can I just ask a question?

MR AVERILL: Yes.

MR WILSON: What's - there's a 40-year life of the development, how long does it take for these trees to mature - the screening to mature?

MR AVERILL: It's - yeah, I mean, there are various - it does - does take some time. I think we will be - will be - part of a condition of the project is to commence the screening and plantings before actually we begin construction and obviously that is also - it's important to be planting at the right time of year and to make sure there's - there is a plan involved to make sure that, you know, there is - there is growth. In terms of how - how high, I think we have some pictures that can demonstrate how - how much growth there will be after five - five and 10 - 10 years.

MR WILSON: O.K.

MR AVERILL: And that was actually in the - in the EIS. Is that correct, Brooke?

MR WILSON: Yeah. No, that's fine. If that's case then I can follow that up. Thank you.

MS MARSHALL: So the intention is to show in the montages what it will look like after five years and then later as they're more development. So that Brewongle Lane shot was three to five years.

MR WILSON: O.K. And just in terms of maintenance and water, I didn't see any - I haven't read your EIS but the water requirements, do you have water on site?

MR AVERILL: Yes, there is a - there is a requirement for water on site. I - off the top of my head I can't confirm the exact amount of water storage on - on site.

MR WILSON: That's O.K. All right. We can follow that up. Thank you.

MR PEARSON: Just quickly on that, Tim. You've got - you have advised that these are local fast-growing species in terms of your selection, I'm hoping you're growing stuff that's (a), indigenous but (b), is - like wattles are pretty much fast-growing generally so I notice you've got a few of them on your list but have you - have you selected the right species for quick growth? Because they can also die quite quickly wattles as well.

MR AVERILL: Yeah. I mean, that is - that's obviously, you know, a major - major concern and the growth and the - looking after, you know, the screening, making sure that the planting holds, I believe we'll have a management plan that is - that is in - it will be put in place to make - to ensure that that - that does hold.

MS MARSHALL: And longer term species in there like the eucalypts that are going to take a while to do anything effective but be there in the longer term. It's got the faster pioneer species like the acacias and that sort of shrub layer as well and, yeah, they're all appropriate to the vegetation community that occurs there naturally.

MR WILSON: Can I just ask a question again while I'm talking about landscaping. Is there any conflict between the need to prepare - provide the APZ around - around the perimeter with the landscaping or is the APZ provided by the access track? Is that normally the APZ?

MS MARSHALL: Most of the APZ, yeah, is in the access tracks. So we need a 10-metre defensible space so with a six-metre perimeter track around the outside and then with a little more so it can be accommodated.

MR WILSON: O.K. So it doesn't affect your ability to provide the vegetation buffer?

MS MARSHALL: No.

DR COAKES: And am I right in saying that there's six trees to be removed on site, Brooke?

MS MARSHALL: Seven, eight, nine, 10. I can count 10 on - - -

DR COAKES: O.K. No, I just I thought I read six somewhere. I just wanted to confirm sort of in that - - -

MR AVERILL: Eight, nine, 10, yeah, I think it's 10.

MS MARSHALL: It's not many. They're scatter - scatter trees.

DR COAKES: They're scatter trees. O.K. Yep.

MR AVERILL: So another key issue identified is traffic and transport. As we mentioned before it's the Great Western Highway which is - which is quite a major -

major road and there's sufficient capacity to accommodate the construction traffic for the project and obviously no significant impacts, you know, on the road network. I guess, we're also lucky enough that the - the turning had been - there's been considerable upgrades to the turning onto Brewongle Lane. We have also committed to sealing the road from the Great Western Highway, Brewongle Lane to the access of the site as well and there will also be a traffic management plan in place to manage it.

DR COAKES: And I just notice - sorry, sorry, Tim, just quickly I just noticed too in reading that there won't be any access from the south - - -

MR AVERILL: No.

DR COAKES: - - - from Brewongle Lane. No. because I noticed that you've done - seem to have tightened up - - -

MR AVERILL: Yes.

DR COAKES: tightened the condition around given community concern.

MR AVERILL: Yes. Yeah, that's correct.

MR PEARSON: And, Tim, the construction period, did I read 12 months or how long does it take?

MR AVERILL: Yeah. I mean, 12 to 18 months. I mean, we generally think it should be - majority done in 12 months but that - we'd normally say 12 to 18 months for this - for this kind of size project.

MR PEARSON: Thank you.

MR AVERILL: Just moving - moving on. Socioeconomic impacts. So community fund in place, $18,000 to the life of the project. $300 per megawatt was at the uppermost limit for - that was in the solar guidelines when we started - you know, that this project falls under when we started developing the project. As we mentioned, there's going to be - the road, it's going to be sealed, there will be a number of workers at the peak here, rough 150 - 150 workers over that 12 - 12-month construction period.

So I have reasonable - you know, considerable capital value of $152 million injection there. A number of workers obviously will be kind of staying and - and try to utilise the local - local staff as well. Other kind of impacts that we've kind of - that were identified were land values insurance and both were addressed during the consultation and we see it as kind of low - low impact on - on the neighbouring properties as well. Moving forward.

MR PEARSON: Tim, sorry, before you flick off that slide a couple of questions. One is ensure sufficient accommodation for workforce. What are your ideas there?

MR AVERILL: We intend to try and utilise as much local workforce as possible. There is - I mean, Bathurst and Orange obviously fairly sizeable cities or towns nearby where we see that - that there should be, you know, enough accommodation there to - for the workforce for a project of this - of this size which isn't - I guess, in the grand scheme of things of what's being developed at the moment isn't - isn't a huge - a huge project.

DR COAKES: But I guess - - -

MR PEARSON: And the - - -

DR COAKES: Sorry.

MR PEARSON: Sorry, go on, Sherrie.

DR COAKES: Yeah, just building on that. So obviously any strategy would need to be developed in consultation with Council and other service providers just to make sure, I guess, that that local benefit is being enhanced as much as possible? So, you know, just in terms of that accommodation and, I guess, the cumulative piece which we know can be an issue in regions just understanding the concurrence, I guess, of other developments. So more a point than a question. So, Richard, over to you.

MR PEARSON: Yeah. So the other thing I was going to ask about was this insurability issue which seems to be coming up a fair bit with solar farms. Has that been much of an issue in your consultation with adjoining landowners? Have you got any thoughts about how - how real that issue is and how you - how you may deal with it?

MR AVERILL: Yeah, yeah, it has - it has been - has been raised as an issue from adjoining landowners. We - we have done as much - or research and consultation as we can. Been in touch with the Insurance Council of Australia, other brokers and there is very, I guess, limited evidence to suggest there is, you know, any premiums to insurance of adjoining landowners and, I mean, we see any risks that have been identified are mitigated obviously with the design of the project to limit, you know, any - any risk of the project and fire risk which will go into a bit later as well just on that front. So it has, yeah, it has been raised as an issue. Any other questions?

DR COAKES: No, thanks, Tim.

MR AVERILL: So decommissioning and rehabilitation. So there's - we have an agreement with the landowner. There's a bank guarantee, a six-month rent bank guarantee at the start of the lease which is in place and timing to remove the infrastructure. There's obviously, you know, security there in terms of the materials there from the - from the project. We - in terms of - there will be a baseline provided for, you know, a soil survey as well and so the project - the land will have to be put back in a place which is as we found it. There will - in some instances the removal of all the cabling and everything up to a metre below - below the surface. We will -

there's commitments three months to restore post-construction groundcover and maintain 70 percent ground cover through operation. In terms of overall - - -

MR WILSON: Can we just talk about that again, just - - -

MR AVERILL: Yeah.

MR WILSON: So this - this removal of everything down to one metre has come up on a couple of cases. Why aren't you removing - and I understand the substation may - may stay and that won't be an issue but why - why wouldn't you remove everything? Why would - what would be left? If you were to leave something what would be left in the ground?

MR AVERILL: Going down a metre not really - not really anything, it's - I think it's just sometimes the risk - we would obviously try and get everything up and remove everything but it is just - a metre down, you know, there can be some - some cabling that is - that may not be possible to - to remove but, I mean, that is - you know, ideally obviously we want to commit to everything but it's very - I think it's very difficult to get everything from the load at that depth but - because I think actually a lot of this - this is going further down. There is - from other conditions that we've seen in countries is up to, I think, half a metre but - and this goes down - - -

MS MARSHALL: There's a bit of a story behind it, I guess. Most projects commit to removing everything half a metre deep and that means some of the cabling's going to be left - electrical cabling down at 900 mil would be left and then it would just be considered costly and disturbance to pull it up so it can be left but this site – but the Department of Primary Industries said no, look, we would like that to be a metre for this site so we changed half a metre to a metre and I think that was due to the soil capability being higher and more potential for cropping and, therefore, more potential for that infrastructure to get in the way. So I think it's more of a case that most of it, yeah, it's going - practically that means (not transcribable) (3.16.56).

MR WILSON: I mean, I sort of take the view if you can put it in, you can take it out but I think the one metre and the half metre is all based around the ability to restore the land to its agricultural capability, not necessary whether or not you should be leaving infrastructure behind, I guess. Anyway, just thank you for that.

DR COAKES: And just another question just very quickly just around waste. Again as Chris has highlighted we've had a number of cases around construction waste removal. Can you just make a comment around that please, Tim?

MR WILSON: And panels.

DR COAKES: Yeah.

MR AVERILL: I think we actually sort of go - yeah.

DR COAKES: Sorry.

MR WILSON: We've jumped ahead.

DR COAKES: Don't worry, go back and keep going.

MR AVERILL: O.K. Yep. Cool. Yeah. So - so I think, you know, just moving onto other - the other key issue points, you know, hazard - hazard and risks here. So obviously fire is a key risk, you know, and - and concern and, you know, the design of the project, you know, it's designed to minimise any of this - any of the risk, the asset protection zone going around - around the site and bushfire protection. So this is designed - the batteries are kind of - is providing a minimum separation distance between the BESS containers. So, I mean, this is also - there's been agency advice on the design making - making sure that it is - you know, the fire standards have been met and, you know, there's an emergency response plan in place.

So just going on, I guess, just to what we've just discussed there, yeah, previously. So recycling and contamination and waste streams. So, I mean, this is - this is, you know, we'll - the plan will be to minimise this, you know, in accordance with, you know, the requirements and, I mean, recycling of - of - the majority of - of the project there, solar panels, the mounting systems, you know, inverters, as the industry has developed, you know, and it developing we're obviously seeing more and more kind of recycling happen and I think this is going to be a real growing part of - part of the industry, you know, including batteries and lithium iron batteries which we're already seeing, you know, are highly recyclable and, you know, there's obviously benefits on that in terms of cost as well but we see the majority of the project, you know, of the equipment used being, you know, highly recyclable and this - I think the amount of recycling is only going to, you know, continue over the life of this project. In terms of contamination we see this as being, you know, very - very low in a panel contamination there. Yeah, we would consider very - very low - low impact.

DR COAKES: So just clarifying, Tim. So in terms of waste my question was around where that construction waste will be - will be deposited given we have heard again in other cases from local councils around the capacity of their local waste facility. So that was my question.

MR AVERILL: Yeah. I will have to - I haven't got the full answer but I will have to come back to you on this one.

DR COAKES: O.K. That's fine. Yeah, thank you.

MR AVERILL: So other key issues here. Energy security and grid connectivity. So, yeah, we just obviously went through this previously, we've got another map of this but augmentation of existing 11kv design or line for seven and a half kilometres so that will be upgraded back to 66kv. So grid connection into Raglan substation, we're very much along through the grid modelling process, GPS modelling and, you know, there is sufficient grid capacity to connect the project at that substation and there is - there is more than 60 - 60 megawatt capacity there.

Regarding the BESS. Obviously there is a battery there. All of our projects these days have AC-coupled batteries along with the solar. This is so we can participate in F-gas services for frequency response, also system strength and we can - we can shift the power, time-shifting and, you know, these are becoming more - more important, you know, the more and more renewables come onto the system. Any questions on this - on this one?

MR PEARSON: What's the cost of the battery?

MR AVERILL: The cost of the battery is - yeah, about 70 to 80 million dollars but we can confirm the actual breakdown of the cost. Haven't got the exact cost.

MR PEARSON: About half the project cost then.

MR AVERILL: Yes, yeah, yeah, exactly. So - and obviously that's - that's to our storage as well. So here's a bit more detail on the connection, the line connecting to Raglan substation which is - which is here so an upgrade of this 66kv and kind of additional 11kv works as well to connect the project.

MR WILSON: So, Tim, just in terms of the battery. The battery stores energy until, what, a peak - a peak period usually after sundown, is that correct or it could be on a hot afternoon or how does it work? It goes into the grid when power's - is it like a big power station?

MR AVERILL: Yeah. I mean, you know, it depends on how you're actually kind of designing the battery and what services you see the battery performing. So - so it can - mean, depending on events that may be happen, the battery may be called on when say a coal - a power station, you know, goes down and there is, you know, there's some capacity needed for even very short, you know, 10-minute periods or again, you know, it can be used as you said there for, you know, time-shifting to higher value times of the day where you can actually get more money for your power. Like obviously we're seeing more - you're consisting more negative pricing during kind of mid sort of afternoon days so it's - you know, it can be shifted to later on in the day. So it's actually a mix of F-gas services and also time-shifting.

MR WILSON: Thanks.

MS MARSHALL: Can I raise something while you're on that slide, Tim?

MR AVERILL: Yes.

MS MARSHALL: You can see the existing 11kv line, it does fragment agricultural land and it was an issue that was raised by a number of people in the consultation that they were worried this project was going to contribute to that effect where it's difficult to move farm machinery from paddock to paddock with these low 11kv lines. So we made sure - like it's out of our control the Essential Energy design and augmentation works but we made sure in our investigations and in our recommendations we've put

those issues forward so that hopefully it will lead to a better outcome for the Essential Energy work for those landholders.

MR WILSON: On those sections are they - so where does it - so it's underground from - the red's underground and the green through town is that underground as well?

MR AVERILL: No, this is existing, this will just be upgraded conductor.

MR WILSON: All right. So it comes up out of the ground again, does it?

MR AVERILL: Yes.

MR WILSON: O.K.

MS MARSHALL: That's Raglan there, the little residential suburb, that's not Bathurst.

MR AVERILL: O.K. So, I guess, onto ground - groundcover management. You know, there are- there are advantages in obviously giving the land a bit of a - a bit of a rest, you know, from cropping and harvesting activities that can benefit the agricultural land in the longer term, you know, less intense grazing and, you know, shading - shading effects of the panels. So there's obviously groundcover management in place that we - that we need to commit to.

Moving on. Another couple of points was the historic heritage building and the Aboriginal heritage. So Woodside is - is - used to be called Woodside Inn, that's located just to the north - right at the north of the project and, yeah, it was constructed around 1850. So we have moved the project back well away from that behind the trees and supplemented that screening as well. So there should be kind of a limited - you know, or there is limited impact on that - on that heritage building.

On the Aboriginal heritage. So the surveys identified two Aboriginal sites, a culturally modified tree and an artefact. So we've - in agreement with the RAPs this will be kind of relocated and they've - they've agreed - Heritage New South Wales have agreed with these recommendations and also the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment have no concerns regarding this - this process.

Other cumulative impacts. There are other - other projects - the other projects are mainly sort of hydro and BESS projects that are within this area, you know, all a reasonable distance away, 15 - 15 kilometres and up to sort of 40 kilometres away. So we don't see this as cumulative impacts being a big issue for this project.

So just, I guess, summarise from what the DPE Assessment Report stated that the site's got good solar resources and available capacity to connect to the grid. It's consistent with the Commonwealth Renewable Energy targets and is committing 60 megawatts of renewable energy into the NEM and provides electricity for approximately 23,000 homes which is a similar size to Bathurst, so as being, you know, quite a good size for this town. The development footprint, as you've probably

seen throughout the presentation, this has been kind of changed to try an avoid, you know, any site constraints, you know, heritage, water courses, visual impact, so that's changed as we've gone through the process.

The agricultural capability we don't see as that being - being affected or the overall productivity of the region being - won't be significantly reduced. Visual impacts are low and we've tried our best to mitigate this as much as possible where we can and there are also other flow-on benefits there, sort of job - construction jobs and a community benefit scheme and, you know, a decent capital investment going into the area.

DR COAKES: So, Tim, just a question from me on that. So in terms of the VPA I noticed in your submissions before and I think it's on page 84 that you identified a number of local initiatives that have emerged out of your social impact assessment and engagement programs. So are they in addition to the VPA or are they strategies you've put up for consideration as part of - - - .

MR AVERILL: Yeah. So these are - so these are what we've put up for consideration with the Bathurst Council but that's yet to be finalised by the Council and fully committed to the - - -

DR COAKES: So have you got an in-principle agreement with Council?

MR AVERILL: Yes. Yeah, we do have an in-principle agreement for this amount of money per year and we have a letter from the Council agreeing to that but the exact allocation is yet to be decided.

DR COAKES: Yep. No, thank you. And just another quick question from me around oh what's the time, excellent timing by the way, it's 3:31 but in terms of the - your neighbour agreements I noticed that there was reference to a potential neighbour agreement around the residents that's not yet constructed?

MR AVERILL: Not that - I'll have to come back to you on that. I'm not aware of that.

MS MARSHALL: For this project there's no negotiated agreements, no impacts that would warrant a negotiated agreements.

DR COAKES: No. No. O.K. Thanks, Brooke. No, I thought I'd read somewhere around that if that residence was built prior to construction so anyway.

MR AVERILL: O.K.

MS MARSHALL: There is a slightly confusing factor that - there's a few locations were assessed in the visual assessment, they're not dwellings, they're not approved dwellings but the neighbour had said they were thinking of putting a house there so we assessed it as a receiver in the - - -

MR PEARSON: They're allotments with entitlements, is that right?

MS MARSHALL: Yeah, yeah, I believe, yeah.

DR COAKES: O.K.

MR AVERILL: And just lastly we've just got the DPE Assessment Report there, their conditions that they recommend including kind of land management, decommissioning and rehabilitation, traffic management plans, biodiversity management plans and cultural heritage management plans to be - to be put in place which we're - you know, which we're in agreement with absolutely. So - and that's - yeah, that's our - that's our final - final slide.

DR COAKES: O.K. Thanks. Any further questions, Chris, Richard?

MR WILSON: Yeah, just you have the road upgrade works, 450 metres, I presume they're all happening within the current road reserve so there's no need for additional land-taking?

MR AVERILL: No. Yep, there's - that's - yeah, there is - there is some - there is some widening of the land - or of the road required, I believe.

MS MARSHALL: O.K. It's all in - within the Council road reserve, yeah.

MR WILSON: O.K.

MS MARSHALL: The intersection with the highway is sufficient already, it doesn't require anything. In fact, the unsealed access is sufficient as it is but because of dust and local traffic - - -

MR WILSON: Yeah. O.K. So you're really just sealing it. O.K. Yep. Just in terms of the VPA, that was - and I might've missed this, I'm sorry, that was a resolution of Council, was it, or - - -

MR AVERILL: Well - - -

MR WILSON: An in-principle agreement?

MR AVERILL: Yes,. So, I mean, we've got an in-principle agreement, yeah, signed - signed agreement with the Council. If this is subject to the project receiving a DA, you know, approval and this would be - this would be put in place.

MR WILSON: All right. O.K. That's all from me, Sherrie.

DR COAKES: Thanks, Chris. Richard, anything further from you?

MR PEARSON: Yeah. Look, my final - final question is - final point is in relation to the agricultural use of the land whilst the project is in place. So who - whose

responsibility is it to decide whether grazing can occur after you've constructed the project, is that yours or is it the third party leaseholder or is it the owner of - who's going to decide whether it's possible to continue to graze for the 40 years while you've got the panels in place?

MS MARSHALL: Just like any other management plan it would be obligations on the owner and operator to - - -

MR PEARSON: Sorry, I'm struggling to hear you a bit, Brooke, could you just kind of speak up a bit.

MS MARSHALL: Sorry.

MR PEARSON: It could be my connection, I'm not sure.

MS MARSHALL: It's also pouring rain out here.

MR PEARSON: O.K. Well, it's pouring sun where I am but, yeah.

MS MARSHALL: It's - yeah, the groundcover management plan is just like any other management plan of the project. So the operator must comply with that plan as a condition of consent, those plans are endorsed by the Department of Planning prior to construction or operation, whatever they're relevant to. So it will be the operator's responsibility to make sure that monitoring is taking place and the sheep are pulled off and remedial treatments, you know, with management and things like that are undertaken in response to the monitoring.

MR PEARSON: Yeah, but whose - whose decision is it whether to put sheep on there or not? Is that yours or is it the owner? I'm just trying to work out, you know, is that kind of a little bit of a multitude of players on this? I'm trying to work out who - who decides whether to graze it or not?

MR AVERILL: The - the operator would have the ability but the - so also the land - the landowner has a licence - so an option for them to do it themselves within the agreement if the landowner actually wants to graze sheep themselves or then we - if they don't want to we can then have the opportunity to introduce grazing ourselves onto the site. So we always had - with our leases we always give the landowners the opportunity to graze sheep there.

MR PEARSON: O.K. But would you want to do that or, you know do you care or - yeah.

MR AVERILL: Yeah, I mean, ideally, you know, with all our - you know, our projects we would like to - we would like to introduce, you know, grazing because it really - you know, it really helps the project, it, you know, reduces, you know, cost as well. It obviously won't be - you won't have the same numbers of sheep as you would do currently but, yeah, that's definitely the preference is to - is to have grazing on site.

MR PEARSON: O.K. Thank you.

DR COAKES: Thanks, Richard. Any further questions from the team? The IPC team. Brad?

MR JAMES: No questions from me, Sherrie.

DR COAKES: O.K. Great. All right. Well, thank you very much for your time. Unfortunately we're just a little bit over but I think that's been comprehensive. Appreciate you taking the time to present the presentation, Tim, and your team. So obviously we have asked a couple of questions around further information in relation to, I think, the dams, waste disposal, we'll have a record of those anyway on the transcript so if we can get those that would be fantastic and I will call the meeting closed. So thank you very much everyone for your time.

MR AVERILL: Thank you very much for your time. Thank you.

MEETING CONCLUDED